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Bob Rae hopeful after Mid-east tour. *Page 16*

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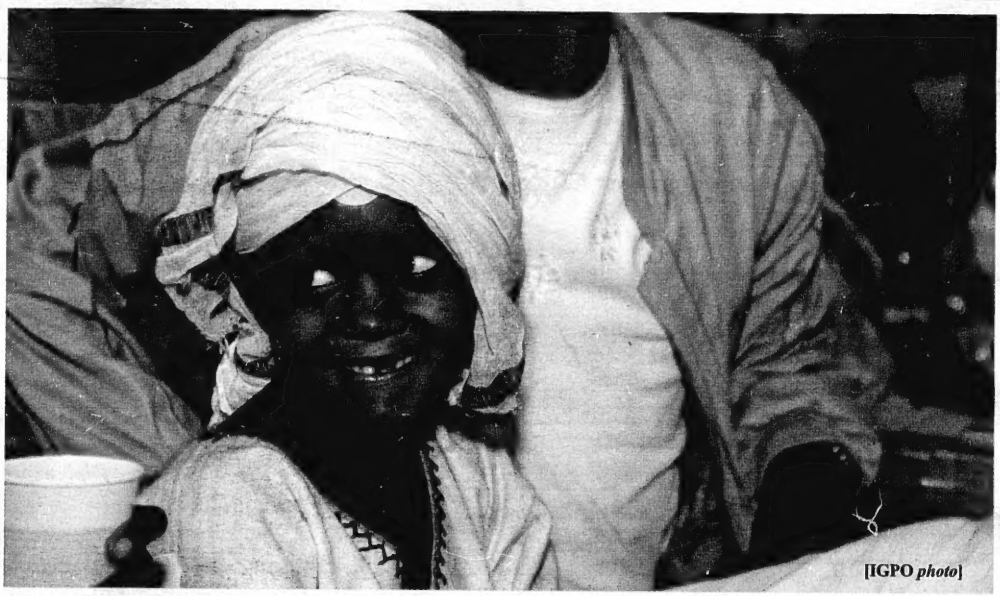

[IGPO *photo*]

Celebrating the story of freedom

Editorial

She is in her early to mid-20s now. She may be in university; she may still be in the army. She may be working; she may be unemployed. She may be married; she may be single. But she is in Israel, an Israeli, free from the sufferings and the terrors that afflicted her family in Ethiopia; free to try to make her life the most that it can be.

The photo captures a moment 18 years ago. The beautiful young girl, smiling so purely, so entirely without guile, that we cannot help but smile back, has just arrived in Israel. She was one of 14,000 Jews who were secretly brought to the Jewish state in May 1991 in a legendary rescue mission that lasted barely more than 36 hours.

The mission was called Operation Solomon after the king whose descendants the Beta Yisrael, the Jews of Ethiopia, were said to be. It will be remembered as one of the most dramatic acts of selflessness and courage on the part of a nation state in the modern era.

The young girl's photo appears on this page because her story – the story of her freedom – is tied so entirely to the story of Pesach. The 18th anniversary of that story, therefore, must also be recalled around the seder table this year.

In addition, recalling the quiet heroics of Operation Solomon is both potent and poignant refutation of the brazenly false accusation that Israel is an apartheid state. This refutation also appears elsewhere in this issue of The CJN. It has appeared in the paper in the past. And it will appear countless times in the future, too.

The CJN believes very strongly in fighting back against the lies blatantly cast at the Jewish state, indeed cast at Jews everywhere, and in particular, against this most detestable of lies, the apartheid lie.

Operation Solomon was carried out ahead of the moment-to-moment advance by rebel military forces on the capital of Addis Ababa. Israel had paid $40 million to then-president Mengistu Haile Mariam to secure the freedom of the Jews seeking desperately to escape to Israel. But the rapid advance of the rebels placed the Jews and their Israeli rescuers in harm's way.

Israel had to move quickly.

The operation began on Friday, May 24, 1991.

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The News in Brief

CANADA

Network Lobbies CJC

TORONTO — Al-Jazeera is lobbying Canadian Jewish Congress in its bid for regulatory approval to hit the airwaves. Tony Burman, a former CBC executive who is managing director of Al-Jazeera English, met last week with CJC representatives to reassure them that Al-Jazeera's two-year-old English service is independent from the controversial Arabic service. In 2003, the CJC and B'nai Brith Canada opposed Al-Jazeera's application for a broadcast license, saying the Qatar-based network broadcasts anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, and glorified suicide bombers. They said the network's Arabic service would violate anti-hate laws. In 2004, the CRTC approved carriage of the Arabic service but imposed restrictions that made airing it difficult. Cable and satellite providers were ordered to "alter or delete" programming to ensure that no "abusive comment" would air. CJC is "struggling with" the English service's approval, CEO Bernie Farber told the Toronto Star. "We recognize the need for free speech to be paramount and the right of broadcasters to ensure they can reach audiences" but "there's no walking away from some of the disgusting, anti-Semitic, Jew-hating broadcasts [Al-Jazeera has] engaged in," Farber said

CIE Gets U.S. Grant

TORONTO — The Canada Israel Experience has received a $150,000 grant from the U.S.-based Covenant Foundation to help train leaders of Birthright Israel trips and develop programming for Birthright alumni, the CIE announced last week. CIE, a division of UI Federations Canada, is Canada's largest provider of Birthright Israel trips, which sends young adults ages 18 to 26 on free, first-time trips to Israel. The grant, to be paid over three years, will help train trip leaders in public speaking and group facilitation, and help trip alumni plan community projects.

WORLD

No Ties, Chavez Vows

DOHA — Venezuela's president said he has no plans to resume ties with Israel in the wake of its military incursion in Gaza. Hugo Chavez told Al-Jazeera March 29 that he would not consider resuming diplomatic relations until Israel reconsiders its "genocidal attitude." Chavez also reaffirmed his close relationship with Iran. He expelled the Israeli delegation in January to protest Israel's Gaza operation.

Wiesel Collects Funds

LOS ANGELES — An e-mail campaign to help Elie Wiesel's foundation in the wake of the Bernard Madoff scandal has raised $400,000. Wiesel, the Nobel Prize-winning author, lost more than $7 million of his own fortune, and his foundation took a $15.2-million hit in the Ponzi scheme. In recent months, small and large donations totalling $400,000 have flowed into the Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, which funds after-school centres in Israel, conferences and humanitarian awards, the Conde Nast Portfolio business magazine's website said. Some of the money went directly to Wiesel and his wife, Marion, but the couple gave everything to the foundation.

Suspect in Paris Shul Bombing Gets Bail

OTTAWA — A Canadian-Lebanese man suspected of bombing a Paris synagogue in 1980 has been freed from jail on $290,000 bail but will be confined to strict house arrest, an Ottawa court ruled last week.

Hassan Diab, 55, was freed from prison March 31 and will remain under house arrest for several months, living with his common-law wife, until judges decide whether he must be extradited to France for his suspected role in planning a terror attack against the Copernic Street synagogue in Paris. Four people were killed in that bombing.

Prosecutors said Diab might try to escape while under house arrest, despite the court's ruling that he wear an electronic tracking bracelet and report weekly to police.

French police told reporters they have evidence that Diab, a former pro-Palestinian activist, is responsible for the attack, and they requested his extradition in order to try him in in Paris, Associated Press reported.

Diab was arrested in November in Ottawa at the request of French police. At the time he had been working part-time as a professor at Carleton University.

The October 1980 bombing of the Copernic Street synagogue occurred during Sabbath evening prayers, when it was packed with more than 300 people.

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Pro-Israel ralliers buy wine to stymie boycott

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

A boycott against Israeli wine organized by Not In Our Name: Jewish Voices Opposing Zionism backfired on Sunday when hundreds of consumers staged a counter-boycott and bought up the Summerhill LCBO's entire stock of Israeli wine in a matter of hours.

The protest, dubbed "Apartheid is Not Kosher," was scheduled to take place at the Summerhill LCBO, at 10 Scrivener Square, between 1 and 3 p.m.

Not In Our Name, an affiliate member of Independent Jewish Voices, had planned to picket in front of the store to distribute information about the Palestinian cause and "Israeli apartheid."

They asked that Jews buying kosher for Passover wine "make [their] Passover apartheid-free" by boycotting Israeli wine brands such as Dalton, Margalit, Barkan, Carmel and Gush Etzion, and instead purchase kosher wines from Canada, Chile, Australia, the United States, Italy, Argentina, France, New Zealand and South Africa.

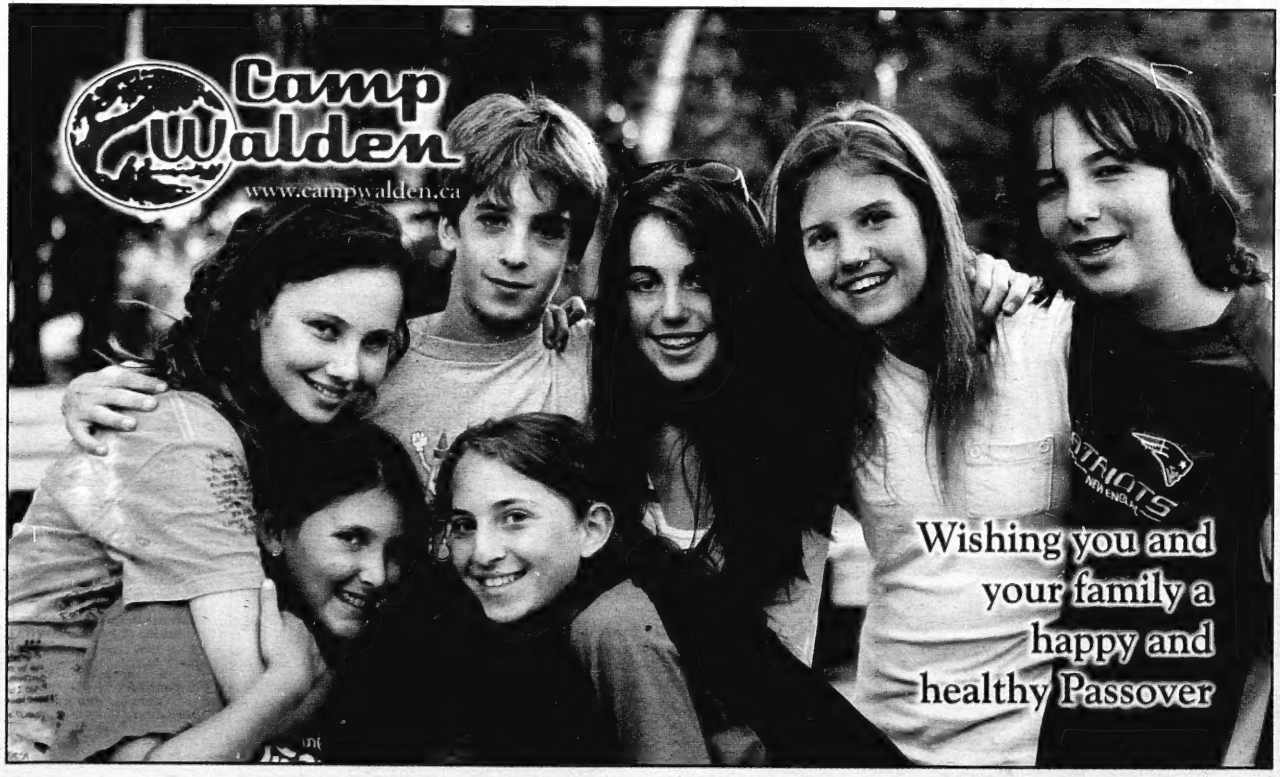
The group also urged people to contact their local LCBO to "tell them you don't support Israeli apartheid and they shouldn't either."

Don Carr, The CJN's president, who went to the demonstration to support the counter-boycott, said that "a forlorn little group of about a dozen protesters stood meekly on the sidewalk on Yonge Street, north of the store. Some carried signs urging the boycott. However, they were swallowed up by the hundreds and hundreds of Jewish purchasers."

Carr said that he learned about the boycott late last month from a member of the Jewish Defence League. He and his wife, Judy Feld Carr, decided to send an e-mail to everyone on their e-mail list, – which included addresses of those who work with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress and others involved in the Toronto Jewish community – to urge them

Continued on page 37

Israel supporters rally in front of the Summerhill LCBO in Toronto.
[Sheri Shefa photo]



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Not taking it anymore!

From the editor's desk...

The defining moment in the 1976 movie Network, the stinging satire about the nature of network television and its influence on passive, TV-centric, North American society is when news anchor Howard Beale (played by Peter Finch) reaches the end of his emotional tether and with a soul-searing cry straight from his heart, shouts into the television camera: "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

Angered by the deteriorating state of the world around him and, more particularly, by his own apparent inability to positively affect his world, he finally explodes in rage. And he urges his viewers to do the same. He urges them to go a window, open it, stick their heads out and shout out loud: "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!" And many do.

Undoubtedly, many supporters of Israel these days feel as angry and as outraged as Howard did.

We are outraged by the constant lies, distortions and the perversions of the truth that are the common parlance of Israel's enemies and their often unwitting anti-Israel confederates in the West.

The biggest of all the lies, of course, is the apartheid indictment. It is so utterly inapt that it is absurd. It has become the rallying cry for hard-core leftists, hard-core anti-Zionists and plain anti-Semites. Despite the absurdity of the accusation, it carries with it the potential for grave danger to the Jewish state, because of the specific precedent set by the dismantling of the only apartheid regime that ever did exist.

Thus when anti-Israel protesters hurl the apartheid calumny at the Jewish state, they are also calling for the dismantling of the Israeli regime.

In their minds, there is room for not even one Jewish state on this Earth.

For those of us who believe the contrary – that there must and always will be a Jewish state on Earth – the apartheid accusation is transparent code for bringing an end to the State of Israel.

Thus, when we hear these deliberate misrepresentations, we feel like Howard: "We are as mad as hell, and we are not going to take this anymore."

Though we may occasionally shout out our rage literally and metaphorically, rarely do we act upon our rage.

This past weekend, however, in Toronto, a large, determined group of Israel supporters did act. They were "as mad as hell," and they did something about it. They stymied yet another odious effort by the anti-Israel cadre at propagating the big lie against the Jewish state. In the result, they also did something tangibly positive for Israel and for their own sense of dignity and purpose.

Two anti-Israel groups, Coalition Against Israel Apartheid and Not in My Name, had planned a demonstration outside the Summerhill LCBO store in Toronto last Sunday. They intended to urge prospective customers to boycott the purchase of Israeli wine.

When they heard earlier in the week of the planned demonstration by the "apartheidists," longtime community activists Judy Feld Carr and Don Carr (the president of The CJN) sent e-mails to friends and others alerting them of the Sunday protest and urging a pragmatic "counter-protest," namely the deliberate purchase of Israeli wines for the upcoming Passover holiday.

The Internet quickly converted the e-mail transmission to a small group into a clarion call to an entire community. As a result of the e-mails, "there was a gigantic turnout of members of the community" at the liquor store last Sunday, Feld Carr said.

"They flocked in, jammed the store and the two locations inside where Israeli wine was on sale were mobbed," Don Carr wrote in an e-mail to The CJN.

To prepare for the anticipated heavy demand for Israeli wines, the manager of the store brought in as much stock as possible. After 45 minutes, the store sold out of their significant supply of kosher Israeli wine. But the "as-mad-as-hell" pro-Israel supporters still kept arriving to show their solidarity with the Jewish state.

"Many people came with large Israeli flags and signs, urging the purchase of Israeli products and decrying the attempted boycott," Carr said.

At one marvellous point in the afternoon, the famed Jewish motorcycle club Yidden on Wheels arrived, honking horns, each biker carrying a huge Israeli flag. Some even put on their tfillin.

A Chabad truck, emblazoned with Happy Passover signs, was there also, loudspeakers blaring. People came to the midtown liquor store from as far away as Thornhill and Richmond Hill. There were hundreds upon hundreds.

"The crowd was in a really festive mood in the bright sunlight," Carr said, "wishing one another 'Chag Samayach' and showing the pleasure they had in doing something quite worthwhile, something very tangible for Israel: buying the wine that they needed for Passover."

What transpired at the Summerhill liquor store last Sunday was described as a "Jewish happening." It was also a Jewish awakening.

Those supporters of Israel determined they "were not going to take it anymore." Mad as hell at the lies emanating from the other side of the street, they refused merely to be passive in the face of the grinding hollering from the anti-Israel crowd.

Satisfied that at least on that one day they were able to stand up for the truth, they went home to prepare for the holiday of freedom and to celebrate their own.

– *MBD*

See JN

SO THAT ALL CAN CELEBRATE: Israel's national soccer team last week assisted in packaging Passover food parcels for the needy. Rabbi Yitzhak Dovid Grossman, head of Migdal Or, a non-profit social needs organization in Israel, centre, organized the event. Giving food to people in need at Passover, a custom known as *Kimcha de Pischa*, dates back to Talmudic times. [Israel photo]

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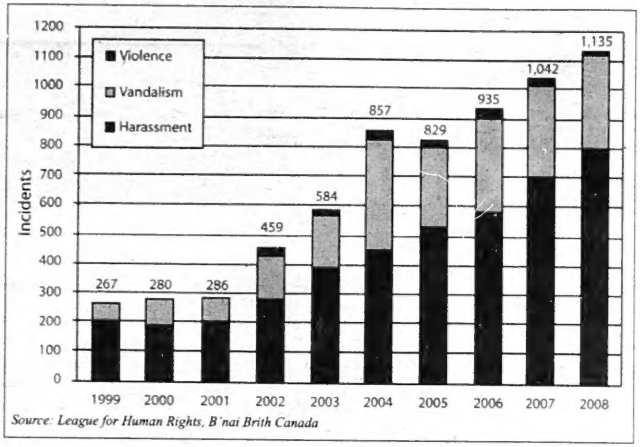

Source: League for Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada

Anti-Semitic incidents reach record highs

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The number of anti-Semitic incidents surged across Canada in 2008, continuing a trend that began in 2002, data released by the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada showed last week.

Altogether, 1,135 occurrences were reported by the League in 2008, an increase of 8.9 per cent over the year before.

"This increase is not an aberration, but the continuation of a growing trend of anti-Jewish prejudice and bigotry on the Canadian scene that speaks both to the pure resilience of anti-Semitism and to the fact that multiculturalism, whether in policy or in practice, does not, in itself, guarantee tolerance and respect," the League stated in its 2008 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents.

Audit released by League for Human Rights

The steep growth in occurrences, which eclipsed those found in Australia and the United Kingdom, reflects "growing tensions in society relating to the current economic downturn," the audit suggested.

"Indeed, in the absence of the type of significant Middle East triggers that traditionally spark spikes in anti-Semitic incidents, the fact that 547 incidents, close to half the total in Canada overall, took place in the last four months of 2008, can indeed be linked to fallout from the developing economic recession and such high profile fiascos as the Bernard Madoff scandal. Historically, anti-Semitism has increased in this type of olimate, as disgruntled citizens seek a scapegoat to blame for their personal difficulties," the report stated.

The audit has been released annually for 27 years and is based on information gathered by B'nai Brith's offices across Canada.

The audit attributed 211 incidents in 2008 to tensions in the Middle East, while noting that anti-Israel incidents were not included in the tally unless they contained an overtly anti-Jewish element. As a result, the findings "give an incomplete picture of the totality of the prejudice that currently targets the Jewish community. This new bigotry often masquerades as anti-Zionism."

In a news release, Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith, said "the overall findings for 2008 demonstrate that anti-Semitism has weaved its way into all facets of Canadian society, tainting the workplace and educational facilities and targeting places of worship and private homes. Failing to act now and hiding instead under the cloak of multiculturalism will set Canada on a path along which so many other countries are currently being propelled, one that sees hatreds such as anti-Semitism turn ever more vicious and violent."

Despite the audit's cautionary message, violent incidents formed only a tiny proportion of the overall number of reported occurrences. Of the 1,135 incidents reported, only 14, or 1.2 per cent, were categorized as violent, and of that number, half were reported in the Greater Toronto Area.

Eight hundred and three incidents were labelled as "harassment" (such as threatening calls and e-mails) and 318 were "vandalism" (such as grafitti).

One of the incidents of violence occurred "where a young man was assaulted in a face-to-face encounter on a public street in rural Quebec while on vacation," while one example of harassment and vandalism cited in the study was a synagogue in Edmonton being defaced and its windows smashed.

Continued on page 14

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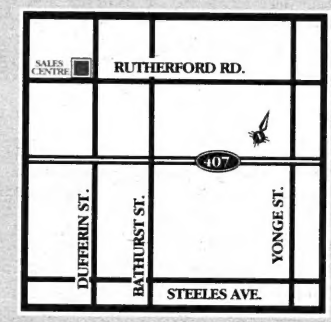

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A unique, historic echoing

Continued from page 1

Israel Air Force historian Arié Egozi recorded that "the group, headed by deputy chief of staff Gen. Amnon Shahak, set up a command post in the [Addis Ababa] airport, while Israeli special forces and paratroops secured the runway and airfield perimeter. An Israeli mobile air traffic control unit performed advisory control, parallel to that given by the airport's tower.

"Some of the flights were performed by a specially configured El Al 747, carrying 1,200 passengers," he wrote.

"By noon on May 24, the preparations were complete and the green light was given for the first aircraft to land. In the next 24 hours, 18 air force C-130s and eight Boeing 707s, aided by nine El Al aircraft – three 747s, four 767s and two 757s – flew 14,000 Jews from Addis Ababa to Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion Airport. All of the El Al aircraft had their logos covered."

So practised and precise were the Israeli rescue preparations that the 747 was on the ground at Addis Ababa for only 37 minutes before leaving with its precious cargo of 1,200 passengers.

Within 36 hours, 14,000 Jews had boarded El Al planes and landed in Israel in a non-stop, round-the-clock operation of daring, courage and compassion.

One can only imagine the excitement, tension, confusion, weariness, relief and worry that infused the crowded chambers of the revamped airplanes during that night and subsequent day.

In quite a unique and an historic echoing of the sounds and emotions through time, the feelings felt by the Jews who left Ethiopia in 1991 likely replicated many aspects of the feelings felt by the Jews who left Egypt some 3,500 years earlier.

They were going to a land none of them had ever seen before except, if at all, in their dreams of the stories remembered, sheltered, told and retold in every generation by their ancestors.

Ironically, but not surprisingly, the story of the Exodus from Egypt would itself become the most famous and most influential paradigm of the story of freedom in western civilization.

The very particularist narrative of our ancient forebears, the freedom of the Hebrews slaves, would eventually bear a widely universal message for all humanity to cherish.

We celebrate that narrative tonight by recalling it in the manner prescribed by our sages, by teaching it to our children, so that they in their turn one day will teach it to theirs.

The young girl whose photo appears on page 1 of the paper may by now be married with a family of her own. If she is, then she most likely will teach the story of her own exodus to her children even as she reaches further back in the collective memory to teach the story of the Exodus of Pesach.

They are both the stories of the Jewish people, purposefully, so that we might have the courage to answer false accusers and the conviction to stand fast to freedom's heavenly arching function: making the world a better place for us all.

25 years ago in The CJN

Some 5,000 people demonstrated in Oberaula, West Germany, against a reunion of veterans of the SS Totenkopf (Death's Head) division. The unit was known for its vicious history of slaughtering Jews and others during World War II.

Dry Bones
THE ANGEL OF DEATH PASSED OVER OUR HOMES!?
YES.
SO WHY ARE WE ALL NOW TRUDGING THROUGH THIS DESERT, LOST AND CONFUSED?!
BECAUSE THE ANGEL OF ECONOMIC DISASTER JUST SMOTE US HARD!!
OH.
IF IT ISN'T ONE THING, IT'S ANOTHER!
SIGH

Editorial Advisory Board: Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ronson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Telem , Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Nelson Wiseman.

Galloway's freedom of speech not impeded

Letter writer Stephen Scheinberg is correct in his assertion that free speech is precious, but he debases the commodity by stretching it to fit the bulky frame of George Galloway ("Free speech is a precious commodity," CJN letters, April 2).

Galloway was denied entry to Canada because of his record of providing financial support to Hamas, which was deemed by the government of Canada to be a terrorist organization. Indeed a cursory search of Google and YouTube will provide much evidence that Galloway provided, by his own admission, close to $45,000 in hard cold cash to Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of Hamas – cash to potentially purchase more rockets and mortar to be used against innocent Israeli civilians.

UNCLE BERNIE STARTS THE SAME FIGHT EVERY PESACH...
...THE HAGGADAH SAYS RECLINE TO THE LEFT, HE RECLINES TO THE RIGHT YELLING "THE LEFT HATES ISRAEL!"

Clearly the decision to bar Galloway from Canada was well within the bounds of the Canadian Border Security Agency. Galloway does not have the right of entry, he does not have the right to ministerial intervention and the fact that he is an elected member of Parliament in the United Kingdom does not give him a pass to finance terrorism. He does have the right to bellow about how he has been abused, but let us be clear: in an era where borders have become increasingly permeable to technology, Galloway's freedom of speech was hardly impeded. What was denied to him was the opportunity to raise funds for terrorist organizations.

Bernie M. Farber
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Jewish Congress

* * *

Galloway ban will backfire

I fear that the Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada are doing the Jewish community a great disservice by strongly supporting the ban of George Galloway from Canada. U.S. Justice Louis Brandeis praised America's founders for knowing that "fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate; that hate menaces stable government; that the path of safety lies in the opportunity to discuss freely supposed grievances and proposed remedies; and that the fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones."

Even though I think the views of Galloway are odious, banning him from speaking will backfire. We are better served by fighting his "evil counsels" with "good ones."

Louis Kalikow
Toronto

* * *

Reprieve from acrimonious dialogue

A very important, and pointed, debate is currently underway within Hamilton's Jewish community about the Hamilton Jewish Arab Muslim Dialogue, the grassroots initiative that sought to open lines of engagement between different groups in our city ("Hamilton dialogue collapses," CJN, March 5).

I know the individuals on both sides of this conversation, and I know their views to be honestly held. I have been closely associated with various anti-racism and community-building initiatives in Hamilton. I think it would be a mistake to judge the value of the dialogue by the tenor of its final days. It may not have been a perfect vehicle for community engagement, but then few perfect vehicles exist.

What is equally true, and more telling, is that during its lifetime, the group successfully engaged disparate communities in ways they have not previously engaged. I was party to that engagement, and I can only tell you that it provided an encouraging, even inspiring, reprieve from what has sometimes been an acrimonious and rhetoric-fuelled dialogue.

Dana Robbins
Hamilton, Ont.

* * *

Passover greetings from Michael Ignatieff

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and our Parliamentary caucus, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all Canadians celebrating Passover, one of the most important Jewish festivals of the year.

Passover commemorates the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their freedom from the reign of the Egyptian Pharaoh. It is a time when families come together at the seder table to retell the story of Passover and renew its message of hope, faith and liberation.

Let the message of Passover inspire all Canadians, regardless of faith, to cherish the principles of tolerance and goodwill. From my family to yours, Chag Samayach.

Michael Ignatieff
Leader of the Opposition
Liberal Party of Canada

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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info@cjnews.com

Netanyahu continues balancing act as he takes office

By URIEL HEILMAN
JTA

The warnings from Israeli pundits and foreign observers alike came almost as soon as Israeli President Shimon Peres had picked Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu to form the next Israeli government.

The message was clear: don't forsake the pursuit of Arab-Israeli peace and risk isolating Israel on the world stage.

So when Netanyahu addressed the Knesset at his swearing-in ceremony last week, observers were listening closely for signs of where the new prime minister intends to lead his country.

"Israel always, and today more than ever, strives to reach full peace with the entire Arab and Muslim world," Netanyahu said. "We do not want to rule the Palestinians."

At the same time, however, Netanyahu carefully avoided any endorsement of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The challenges facing Netanyahu's new government are clear, if formidable – steward Israel through a crippling global economic crisis; prevent Iran from going nuclear; contain threats to Israel from Hamas along its southern border and from Hezbollah along its northern border.

But as with his statements over the past few months, Netanyahu's careful articulations in his inaugural address left uncertain where he stands on the most contentious issue in Israel, and between Israel and governments overseas, the pursuit of a two-state peace deal with the Palestinians.

Even talmudic scrutiny cannot fully elucidate Netanyahu's ambiguity on this point.

"Under the permanent-status agreement, the Palestinians will have all the authority necessary to rule themselves," Netanyahu said, at once suggesting that he will pursue Israeli-Palestinian peace but indicating through omission that statehood for Palestinians might not be the end result.

A later line – "I say to the Palestinian leadership that if you really want peace, we can achieve peace" – gives the impression that Netanyahu is willing to make peace, but also leaves the door open for the prime minister to sidestep final-status negotiations if he deems the Palestinian leadership not ready for peace.

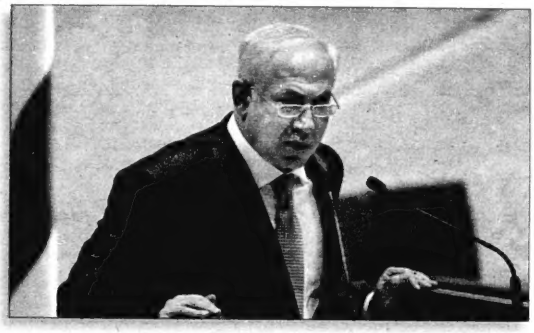
Ron Dermer, a senior adviser to Netanyahu who told JTA he will be the new government's director of communications and policy planning, said Netanyahu's position vis-a-vis the Palestinians is not so different from that of Israel's allies.

"The Palestinians should have all the powers necessary for self-governance, but not the handful of powers that could endanger Israel's security," Dermer said, such as an army, airspace rights, heavy weaponry or treaties with states like Iran. Whether or not such an entity is called a state is an issue of terminology, not ideology, he said.

Now that he has taken office, Netanyahu may not be able to keep up his balancing act – offering nuggets to placate critics on the left and right – for long. But doing so may be crucial to keeping his coalition intact.

Even before the February election, Netanyahu made clear he wanted as broad a coalition as possible if he won. But his refusal to support a two-state solution or agree to a power-sharing deal with Kadima's Tzipi Livni cost him the support of Israel's largest political party in coalition negotiations.

For a while, it appeared that Netanyahu's only allies were on the right – enough to form a government and become prime minister, but not enough to keep him safe from a no-confidence vote if he were interested in substantive progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. And a narrow, right-wing coalition certainly would not have won Israel much favour overseas.



Benjamin Netanyahu's first speech as prime minister again. [Israel Sun photo]

But when Netanyahu succeeded last week in bringing the centre-left Labor party into his camp and promised to be a "partner for peace," his government became more palatable to left-wingers in Israel and to allies abroad. Others, however, blasted Labor for providing what they described as a fig leaf for a right-wing Netanyahu agenda.

Netanyahu has yet to publicly endorse a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, putting him somewhere to the right of both Ariel Sharon and George W. Bush. The new foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, wants to redraw Israel's borders to exclude Israeli-Arab population centres and require loyalty oaths to the Jewish state in a bid to limit the voting power of Israeli Arabs. And the Orthodox Shas party, which holds 11 seats in the coalition, has promised to withdraw from any government that includes Jerusalem in negotiations with the Palestinians.

At the same time, both Lieberman and Shas have voiced support for land-for-peace swaps with the Palestinians.

In Europe, leaders say there is no room for ambiguity on the issue of a Palestinian state.

"Let me say very clearly that the way the European Union will relate with a government that is not committed to the two-state solution will be very, very different," EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana warned in mid-March.

Given Netanyahu's history and the composition of his government, the onus is on the new prime minister to demonstrate to skeptics abroad that his new government – comprised of Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu, Labor, Shas and the religious Zionist Jewish Home party – will not shift course away from the pro-negotiation policies of Israel's last government or adopt positions that will alienate Israel's allies in Washington and Europe.

"On substance, there is not a big gap between Netanyahu's position and the international community's position, certainly not those that are friends of Israel," Dermer insists.

When it comes to President Barack Obama, veteran Israeli political commentator Nahum Barnea wrote in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, there are two questions: "whether Obama will be able to subject his agenda to Israel's, and whether Netanyahu will be willing to accommodate the American president on a series of issues topped by the negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian state. Netanyahu will be able to draw out the negotiations; it is uncertain whether he will be able to fool his rightist partners.

"It is not exactly the government that the voters of Kadima, Likud, Labor or Shas dreamed of, but it is a legitimate government," Barnea wrote. "It must be given a chance."

The 32nd Israeli cabinet

The following is a list, by party, of the Israeli government's ministers.

LIKUD
Prime Minister: Benjamin Netanyahu
Vice-Premier and Regional Co-operation Minister: Silvan Shalom
Vice-Premier and Minister of Strategic Affairs: Moshe Ya'alon
Finance: Yuval Steinitz
Education: Gideon Sa'ar
Justice: Ya'acov Ne'eman (Likud-appointed)
Transportation: Yisrael Katz
Diaspora Affairs and National Public Relations: Yuli Edelstein
Communications: Moshe Kahlon
Environmental Protection and Ministerial Liaison to Knesset: Gilad Erdan
Science, Culture and Sport: Limor Livnat
Minister without portfolio (for citizens' services, computerization and Internet): Michael Eitan
Strategic Affairs: Moshe Ya'alon
Minister without portfolio (for intelligence agencies): Dan Meridor
Minister without portfolio: Benny Begin
Minister without portfolio: Yossi Peled

YISRAEL BEITEINU
Foreign Affairs: Avigdor Lieberman
Public Security: Yitzhak Aharonovitch
National Infrastructures: Uzi Landau
Tourism: Stas Meseznikov
Immigrant Absorption: Sofa Landver

LABOR
Defence: Ehud Barak
Industry, Trade and Labour: Benjamin Ben-Eliezer
Welfare and Social Services: Isaac Herzog
Agriculture: Shalom Simhon
Minister without portfolio (for minorities): Avishay Braverman

SHAS
Interior: Eli Yishai
Construction and Housing: Ariel Atias
Religious Affairs: Ya'acov Margi
Minister without portfolio in Prime Minister's Office: Meshulam Nahari

HABAYIT HAYEHUDI
Science and Technology: Daniel Herschkowitz

OTHER
Health: no appointment, Netanyahu will oversee a deputy minister
Deputy Prime Ministers: Ehud Barak, Avigdor Lieberman, Eli Yishai and Dan Meridor

Opinions

Freedom through community

I was never much of an "organization woman." I didn't join groups and organizations. I was shy and a loner. But living requires forming links with others, and as I developed, I found it necessary to join forces with different people and organizations. That is a necessary and beneficial fact of social life. Inevitably, as we live in a community, that community requires distinct forms of support from both individuals and groups. And it's been my privilege to be part of some wonderful groups.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

This fact of socialization is subtly highlighted in the story of Passover. As the slaves are released from Egypt and their servitude ends, they are not yet truly liberated. First they must reach Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, the beginning of the process of receiving the Torah. But that moment of Revelation is not the complete moment of Redemption. As the story goes, it takes 40 years for them to reach the land of Israel, the sign and expression of their true independence and freedom.

Why 40 years?

The colorful narrative tells of the slaves inability to wait at Sinai. They're a rag-tag group, and their coalition is not yet stable enough to withstand the absence of a visible leader, so they create an idol, a golden image. They need constant direction and supervision. They need their "hands held." Being neither a strong family nor fully formed tribes, they then require 40 years to develop a thriving community. Even after entering the Land of Israel, it takes time for the various tribes to constitute the kind of confederation that will yield a nation.

We should not take the formation of community for granted. It's an essential part of our liberation story. Without community, we achieve nothing. Read the Haggadah carefully for its gems about the importance of communal systems: feed the poor, invite all, educate all, ask questions, sit around a table together, join together, keep culture alive, remember, sing folk songs, enjoy. All require strong organizational infrastructures.

All these elements seem to converge together to remind us that true redemption cannot be achieved by individuals nor families alone. Community is needed, with all its warts and imperfections. We can't survive, much less rescue others, without it. Today, with the economy in trouble, our community is our main resource. Yes governments will attempt bailouts, but many will rely on community for help. Our task is to hold fast, so that our community and its organizations will be able to redeem. Support your community, join an organization. Then we shall be free.

This year, let's remember Harry Bingham

For generations at Purim, many Jews have chosen a personal or communal rescue – times when destruction threatened and was averted – that they would remember as part of their own special celebration of the holiday.

But why not choose Passover as a time to celebrate this rescue? After all, Passover is a celebration of the liberation of an entire nation. What better symbol of liberation than the one from oppression and slavery? But no, Purim, with its larger-than-life figures of good and evil, is a much more suitable holiday for this use, I agree.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

It's hard for our children to imagine how our ability to live openly as Jews is so recent. No matter how robust their encounter with anti-Semitism – as on campus these days – they can hardly imagine that in their parents' or grandparents' lifetimes, Canada's Jews were excluded from resorts and whole neighbourhoods, that in Montreal, hospital staff walked out when the first Jewish intern was admitted, or that Canadian universities had quotas on Jewish students.

Much less can they understand how Canada closed its doors to Jews as Hitler began his program of destruction. Thank goodness we have Irving Abella and Harold Troper's None Is Too Many to document that atrocity.

For those being born now, the Holocaust will be as far away as the Exodus from Egypt. They will never meet an actual survivor of that horror, and their experience will be on film or in books (unless they travel to the camps themselves).

Hopefully they will still know the stories of people such as the patrician Harry Bingham.

Prep school and Ivy League-educated, Bingham, like so many of his class, entered the United States Foreign Service. He was posted to Warsaw and then France as war loomed in the late 1930s. He was at the U.S. consulate in Marseilles when Jewish and other refugees began pouring into Vichy France.

The U.S. State Department was as riddled with anti-Semites and xenophobes as Canada's Immigration Department under F.C. Blair. Bingham was instructed to ignore the pleas coming from Jewish refugees and under no circumstances to issue visas or travel papers. Period.

But Bingham broke with his class and employer and began to rescue Jews. The list includes such luminaries as Marc Chagall, Leon Feuchwanger, Max Ernst, Hannah Arendt, as well as many ordinary and equally threatened Jews.

Thus, in direct contradiction to express orders, he issued visas and travel documents. He also urged and facilitated relief efforts in the squalid camps that the Vichy regime had set up to detain Jews and dissidents, although he didn't know, as we know now, that many if not most of those refugees would eventually be deported to the death camps.

Bingham's efforts gained him notoriety at the State Department, and punishment was soon in coming. He was posted in fall 1941 to Argentina just before the United States entered the war. His career was in tatters, and after the war – having been refused a post in Washington that would have involved him in the post-war prosecution of Nazis – he resigned from the foreign service and spent the rest of his life living with his family of 11 children on the family estate.

His story only came to light after his son William discovered documents attesting to his father's heroic efforts. They are now in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.. In 1998, he and other diplomats, whose total of rescued Jews exceeded 200,000 people who escaped to freedom, were honoured at Yad Vashem.

You can read about Bingham in the March 2009 issue of the Smithsonian magazine and online at Smithsonian.com/Bingham.

This Pesach there will be many things on our minds: economic crisis, perpetual upheaval in the Middle East, and challenges facing Israel. It may be difficult to clear our psyches in order to properly recite the seder story of liberation.

But knowing that there are always good people where only evil seems to flourish should give us hope.

Canada's Jewish communities

Recently, while presiding over several citizenship court ceremonies, I welcomed new Canadians to what I referred to as our Canadian family.

Although we speak of Canada as if all of us belong to a single homogeneous entity, in reality, Canada is essentially a community of communities. We may be English Canadians or French Canadians. We may celebrate our Aboriginal heritage or our English, Irish or Scottish roots. We may live in central Canada or in the so-called alienated West.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

We may hail from the Atlantic provinces or from the northern territories. We may have been born in Canada, or we may be immigrants or the children of immigrants. We may be professional or skilled workers, or we may be unskilled, struggling or even unemployed. We may be Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim or Jewish.

Communities may be defined by any number of criteria – language, heritage, ethnicity, geography, politics, economy or religion. Any one person may belong to several communities at the same time.

From a distance, our Jewish population may be viewed as a single entity, but in reality it is also a community of communities. We may reside in a heavily populated area with a large number of people of Jewish background, or we may be more isolated, living in a smaller centre with few other Jews or Jewish resources. We may come from a Sephardi or an Ashkenazi tradition.

We may belong to an Orthodox, chassidic, Conservative or Reform congregation, or we may be part of the approximately 50 per cent of Canadian Jews who remain unaffiliated and are not formally part of any congregation. We may be active in Hadassah-WIZO, Na'amat, B'nai Brith, ORT, Hillel or any of the major Jewish organizations, or we may belong to none.

The organized Jewish community may be described by a variety of acronyms that further subdivide us by our interests. We may read The CJN, the Jewish Tribune or one of the many newsletters in print or online. For our community advocacy, we may rely on the CJC (Canadian Jewish Congress), the official voice of Canadian Jewry, or we may rely on BB (B'nai Brith). Other leading advocacy organizations include CIJA (Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy), CIC (Canada-Israel Committee), CAFI (Canadian Academic Friends of Israel) and NJCL (National Jewish Campus Life).

It should come as no surprise that we do not agree on all matters.

Within our Jewish community, we hold a diversity of views on contemporary social as well as traditional Jewish issues. We have a variety of opinions on social policies ranging from economics and the environment to private health care. We do not always agree on particular strategies to confront and combat anti-Semitism. Although most consider these measures to be vitally important, we may disagree on the value of hate-speech provisions in anti-discrimination legislation and hate propaganda laws in the Criminal Code. We do not all support and practise the principles of egalitarianism within our own religion.

However, despite our differences and divisions, we do share much in common. We have a common history and many common traditions. We share a legacy of hate, repression and victimization. Whether we are survivors or children of survivors, or whether we have no known relatives who perished in the dark days of Nazi oppression, the Holocaust forms an integral part of the Jewish fabric.

We also share certain values and principles arising out of our common religious traditions. These include the imperatives of respect for our fellow human beings, dignity and kindness in the way we relate to others and love for family and community.

I would hope that we all believe in the notion of freedom of religion as well as freedom of expression, so long as they do not endanger the physical and psychological well-being of others. Although we may not agree on every aspect of Israeli policy, I also hope that we all strongly support the viability and security of the State of Israel.

We may not speak with a single voice on all issues, but ultimately, we should celebrate our Jewish diversity and stand together against any threat to our security and vibrancy.

The Kirshner File

Bibi's back

Ten years after retiring from politics and leaving a legacy of polarization and mistrust in his wake, Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu is back as Israel's prime minister. He is the fourth Israeli premier to gain a second term, following in the footsteps of David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

And in a curious twist of fate, the ex-general who defeated him in the 1999 election, Ehud Barak, has joined Netanyahu's cabinet as defence minister, despite the fact that Barak promised to go into opposition if his Labor party failed to capture at least 20 Knesset seats. In the Feb. 10 election, Barak's party, once a powerhouse, emerged with a mere 13 seats, its poorest-ever showing.

Netanyahu, who assumed office last week after nearly two months of horse trading with potential coalition partners, tried to persuade Tzipi Livni – the Kadima party leader and outgoing foreign minister – to join his government. He reportedly offered her a full partnership and two of the three top ministerial posts, but she declined, explaining that Netanyahu's refusal to commit to a two-state solution was unacceptable, and declaring that she would not serve as a "fig leaf" for his right-wing agenda.

In justifying his controversial decision to ally himself with Netanyahu, the supremely ambitious Barak said that he would be a "counter-force" rather than a "fifth wheel" in cabinet. For good measure, as if to mollify Labor party members who objected to his alliance with Netanyahu, he added that Netanyahu had assured him that he would continue negotiations with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu, in the days leading up to the formation of his government, portrayed himself as a pragmatist an an attempt to ease both domestic and international concerns that he would freeze the peace process, such as it is.

Keenly aware that Israel's ally, the United States, is strongly in favour of a two-state solution, and that the European Union, Israel's largest trading partner, threatened to reconsider its relationship with Israel unless it supports the creation of a Palestinian state, Netanyahu delivered a series of conciliatory statements designed to allay fears.

In a meeting with George Mitchell, U.S. President Barack Obama's special envoy to the Middle East, he said that he would work toward a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority and Israel's Arab neighbours, which eluded his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, and honour Israel's international commitments.

The commitments to which Netanyahu may have been referring turn on three points: Israel's acceptance of the "road map" peace plan (about which he had deep reservations from the outset and which, in any event, was never implemented by either side), Israel's yet-to-be-kept promise to evacuate unauthorized outposts and place limits on settlement construction in the West Bank, and Israel's pledge, within the framework of the Annapolis summit, to settle final-status issues in concert with the Palestinian Authority. Judging by some of his earlier comments, Netanyahu has no intention of honouring these commitments.

Rather than signing a comprehensive agreement with the Palestinian Authority, which was Olmert's objective but which he thinks is premature, given the current schism in Palestinian ranks, Netanyahu wants to refocus talks on rebuilding the Palestinian economy – which was shattered by the second intifadah – and thereby improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians.

The mainstream Palestinian leadership, led by Mahmoud Abbas, rejects that narrow approach, as does the Arab League, the European Union and the United States.

Nonetheless, Netanyahu hopes to proceed with this proposal in co-operation with Jordan. As Netanyahu's spokesperson, Dina Libster, said, "Economic peace has to come first."

As well, in accordance with a U.S. master plan, directed by Gen. Keith Dayton, Netanyahu wants to expand the deployment of Palestinian police beyond Hebron, Nablus and Jenin.

Netanyahu claims that he has no interest in governing the Palestinians or blocking their path to nationhood. Yet he will accept nothing less than a demilitarized Palestinian state with limited powers and sovereignty and insist on controlling its borders, airspace, coastline and electromagnetic frequencies.

In his view, a Palestinian state under present conditions would morph into "an Iranian state, as we saw happen in [the Gaza Strip]." Netanyahu – a critic of the Oslo peace process who nevertheless negotiated with Yasser Arafat and agreed to withdraw from most of Hebron – opposed Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. He warned that a pullout would embolden Hamas to fire Qassam rockets at Israeli towns, kibbutzim and moshavim near the border. He was right, but the continued occupation of Gaza was neither a sensible nor viable option.

Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's new prime minister, greets his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, right. [Israel Sun photo]

On a related matter, Netanyahu has said that he will not be bound by Olmert's commitment to evacuate settlements in the West Bank. "These understandings are invalid and unimportant," he said this past January. But in common with his predecessors, Netanyahu seeks to retain settlement blocs close to Jerusalem and the coastal plain.

In keeping with the thrust of the "road map," Netanyahu has promised not to build new settlements in the West Bank. But in a direct challenge to the "road map," he has assured Jewish settlers that he will permit their settlements to grow: "I will not choke the settlements."

Netanyahu is a fierce opponent of partitioning Jerusalem so as to accommodate the Palestinian quest to establish their capital in the eastern half of the city. His position flies in the face of the parameters laid down by the United States and the Arab League peace plan.

As he put it in February, "We did not return to Jerusalem after praying for it to be rebuilt for 2,000 years in order to give it up."

He is of the opinion that an Israeli withdrawal from eastern Jerusalem, conquered in the Six Day War, would lead to the formation of an Iranian base there. "Hamas will enter and set up an Iranian-backed terror centre," he said.

To Netanyahu, Hamas is an enemy to whom no quarter can be given. "A government under my leadership will overthrow the Hamas rule in Gaza and bring about a cessation of rocket fire," he said about two months ago, after the recent war in Gaza. "There is no choice but to uproot the Iranian-backed regime in Gaza," added Netanyahu, who argues that Israel's military operation in Gaza stopped too soon, before Hamas was irretrievably weakened and its smuggling tunnels were destroyed.

Despite his focus on the Palestinians, Netanyahu says that Iran is Israel's number one problem, not only because of its budding nuclear program, but because of its regional hegemonic ambitions and alliances with Hamas and Hezbollah.

Speaking to the World Economic Forum in Davos recently, Netanyahu said that if Israel can "neutralize" Iran, the dangers posed by Hamas and Hezbollah will correspondingly decrease. But is Netanyahu ready to confront Iran militarily? Will he be satisfied with tough economic sanctions?

Netanyahu is also hawkish on the Golan Heights, which Israel wrested from Syria in the Six Day War, believing that Israel cannot afford to relinquish it. "The Golan will remain in our hands," he said recently.

Yet as prime minister from 1996 to 1999, he dispatched an envoy to Damascus with instructions to inform the Syrians that he was ready for a compromise pact under which Israel would pull back to the 1923 international line. As expected, Syria rebuffed the overture, demanding a withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines.

Several months ago, the Netanyahu camp launched a trial balloon suggesting that an interim agreement between Israel and Syria, within the context of a partial Israeli withdrawal, is attainable.

Syria, however, is not likely to embrace this proposal. For Syria, it is an all-or-nothing game.

To our investors, it's a happy Passover

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Students ready for Pesach

From left are senior kindergarten students Lior Abdurachmanov, Mayan Hyams and Odelya Israilov, who participated in a model seder at Or Haemet Sephardic School.

The nursery class at Torah Tots relives the Exodus of Egypt. Pictured, front row, from left, are Emma Bellamy, Levi Meshwork, Jacob Richmon, Maya Dvir and Jessica Shvartshtein; and back row from left, Dianna Greenspoon and Lauren Black.

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Grade 6 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School display items that were part of a school-wide initiative to collect food for the National Council of Jewish Women's Passover food drive as part of the school's tikkun olam programming. In addition to collecting food, students also helped out by packing boxes for delivery to those in need. Pictured at left, top to bottom are Krystal Barkhordian, Joelle Chandler and Miri Karlik, and at right, top to bottom, Noah Nightingale, Geoffrey Handelman and Jesse Glazer.

January 1945: Auschwitz – Child survivors at Liberation.

January 2005: Auschwitz – Some of the same children 60 years later.

Remembering the Children

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Rising levels of tension reported on campuses

Continued from page 6

In Winnipeg, a boy travelling with his mother on a public bus was threatened and taunted with anti-Semitic slurs, and in Thornhill, Ont. a Russian-language e-mail accused Jews of kidnapping children to use their blood in the baking of Passover matzahs.

The league suggested its findings were consistent with other investigations into hate-motivated incidents. It cited a Statistics Canada study released in 2008 that was based on data compiled in 2006 by Canadian police services. That study found that nearly two-thirds of hate crimes motivated by religion – 63 in all – were aimed at Jews.

In 2008, Toronto police recorded a total of 153 hate-related incidents, 45 of them aimed at Jews, who "were the single most consistently targeted group."

York Regional Police recorded 81 incidents of hate last year, 26 of them against Jews.

The reported suggested university campuses were experiencing rising levels of tension, with 76 incidents of anti-Semitism, up from 36 cases in 2006. "Many students report hiding their Jewish identity and avoiding participation in classroom discussions, in order to avoid negative interactions both in class and subsequently in the corridors, where threats and intimidation are common," the audit stated.

The Internet was a prime area for hate activity, with 405 cases reported, among them "threatening messages."

The audit reviewed the controversy over Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which makes it a discriminatory act to spread hate on the Internet. It noted that Prof. Richard Moon, reporting to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, recommended scrapping the section. The league, however, recommended reform "in order to more meaningfully and efficiently respond to the needs of the day."

The league also recommended declaring Holocaust denial a form of hate propaganda, prosecutable under the Criminal Code, and it called for the banning of racist groups and their symbols.

"However, it would be necessary to ensure careful screening mechanisms to prevent abuses, such as the malicious targeting of legitimate organizations in frivolous complaints," the audit stated.

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Circle of Care seeks hospice volunteers

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Circle of Care needs volunteers for its hospice visiting program, which provides in-home care and support to individuals who face life-threatening illness and to their families and caregivers.

Volunteers provide companionship, relieve caregivers and assist with outings, errands and light shopping.

The Jewish Hospice Program, a partnership of Circle of Care, Jewish Family and Child, Mount Sinai Hospital's Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care, Baycrest and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, provides care for all Jewish residents in the Greater Toronto Area, and the general hospice program is geared to all residents, Jewish and non-Jewish, of the former North York.

Mindy Shiel, hospice volunteer program co-ordinator, said that volunteers, who complete hospice training and receive ongoing supervision, go through an interview process and police check, and must be willing to commit themselves for at least one year.

The 30-hour training program covers such topics as grief and bereavement, body mechanics and ethics, she said. "Volunteers – the agency now has about 50 who served about 90 clients last year – have told me that they feel rewarded, valued and fulfilled from their work," said Shiel, who recruits, interviews, trains and matches volunteers for the program.

With more and more people choosing to remain at home throughout their illness, she said, the agency requires additional volunteers.

Each client has one volunteer who visits once a week for two to four hours, she said. "If the client is all alone, they may put a second volunteer in place if one is available."

Volunteers, who are compassionate, confident, have no issues with death, and can respect clients' rights and decisions, check in regularly with her, she said.

"They're often the ones who inform us if there is a change in the client's status. They develop a relationship with the client and their family, and they've sometimes gone to the funeral and the shivah when the client dies."

She stressed that not all clients are dying. "Some need long-term care. There is no prediction how long the [client/volunteer] relationship will last.

"It is definitely an important program, and it is beneficial for everyone involved."

For information, call Shiel at 416-635-2860.

YRAA – TCK Hockey Champions 2009 | 1

The Queens University Chancellors Scholarship – 2009
Joshua Satok recipient of a four year top scholarship tenable from 2009-10

Weizman Institute Physics Contest | 2
Canadian winners (TCW) – going to Israel to compete at International level

Graduates currently studying in Israel | 3
have a reunion with Rabbi Yeres (TCK) and Rabbi Mandel (TCW)

Girls' TCK Basketball Team won the | 4
Houston US High School Basketball Tournament

OFSAA – TCW Snowboarding Team | 7
Gold Medal (1st place girls) and Bronze Medal (3rd place boys)

DECA – North American competition for young business students – 21 Medals and six top overall winners at Ontario Provincial Competition | 8

TDCAA – TCW Senior Boys Hockey Finalists! | 9

Benson Deverett & Jillian Oliver are winners of the Bessie Lawrence Scholarships for summer intern programmes at Weizmann Institute in Israel | 10

TDCAA – Curling Teams (TCW) earn Silver Medals in finals

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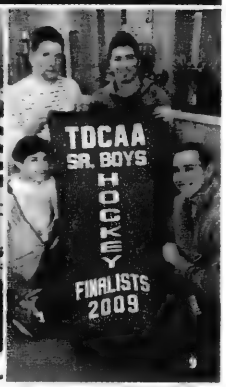

After several successful seasons, our TCK 'Reach for the Top' Team are headed for York Region West regional finals. Will they make TV this year? | 5

"Habitat for Humanity" Project | 6
33 students, staff and 3 Alumni volunteered to build houses in West Virginia, USA

Breaking News...

Jeremy Chad Millennium Scholar 2009 – one of only 240 in Canada

Spring 2009 Alexandra Wolfond & Russell Citron – Gold Medalists Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme; Lucie Pivnick & Shira Strauss in final qualifying stages – together 1% of all Canadian recipients

OFSAA finalists Ariella Daniels – YRAA 200m Free Style Swimming Champion; Justin Hummel & Jordan Tannenbaum – YRAA Tennis

OFSAA – Alpine Skiing (TCW) Success!

Israeli Affairs Committee sends '120 Mishloach Manot' baskets to IDF soldiers

Noam Bergman, TanenbaumCHAT student wrote original music for local production of "The Dybbuk"

Our Musicians visited future TanenbaumCHAT students in the Day Schools | 11

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Israel, Palestinians co-operating on security: Rae

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Mideast peace process is fraught with difficulties and roadblocks, caution and concern, but in one area, there seems to be progress between Israelis and Palestinians, Liberal Party foreign affairs critic Bob Rae said last week.

Joint co-operation on assembling a Palestinian security force for the West Bank seems to be making progress, Rae said after a 10-day visit to the region.

During his visit, which included stops in Israel, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt, Rae met with Israel Defence Forces (IDF) officers, who told him co-operation on the security force "is much better than anybody expected."

The IDF and Palestinian security officials meet every day to discuss how security in the Palestinian Authority-controlled area will be managed, Rae said. Based on his discussions with both sides, "there is a willingness and determination to do what needs to be done."

Rae, who has visited Israel numerous times, including once in 1993 as Ontario premier when he led an official delegation, said Canadians are playing a role in training the Palestinian force.

Nine Canadian Forces instructors are helping train the security detachment and that number will rise to 18. The instructors are under the control of Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton, U.S. security co-ordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Rae said he was asked "for Canadian leadership, for Canadian presence, for Canada to play the role of an effective [interlocutor] we have always been in the past."

Bob Rae

During the Israel leg of his trip, Rae met with officials from the Mossad (Israeli intelligence), Foreign Ministry and the IDF. He also met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security adviser, as well as with journalists and President Shimon Peres. Canadian Ambassador Jon Allen joined him on his visits.

"The clear message from the Israelis was two-fold: that the situation remains tough with regards to Hamas and Hezbollah," including talks through Egypt for the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit, Rae said.

"There is also deep concern about Iran and the importance of understanding how critical it is for the future of the region."

At the time of Rae's visit, Netanyahu was still trying to cobble together a workable coalition, and Palestinians Rae spoke with were taking a wait-and-see attitude on the new government.

In addition, talks between Hamas and Fatah, the dominant Palestinian organizations in the West Bank, were ongoing, U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell had not yet completed his review and Washington had not yet expounded on its policy for the region. Rae said there appeared to be a "sense of realism" in the region and a desire to engage in dialogue once all the new developments play out. In addition, Palestinians were concerned about the expansion of Israeli settlements.

As for negotiations with Hamas, "the fact is direct talks with Hamas are not in the cards until everybody accepts the clear conditions set out by the Quartet and everybody else," Rae said. The Quartet – the United States, Russia, the United Nations and the European Union – have made talks with Hamas conditional on the terrorist organization agreeing to abide by previous peace agreements, give up violence and recognize Israel.

"In many capitals" outside Israel, he heard concern over Iran and its support of Hezbollah and Hamas.

"It is of deep concern in the region and to moderate opinion everywhere," Rae said. "Of concern in every country is the expansion of extremist Islamic fundamentalism, which poses a challenge to moderates and stability."

He was also told "progress on the Israeli-Palestinian issue will help reduce the appeal of extremism."

Rae said his visit to the region grew out of an invitation to speak at the American University of Beirut. He contacted the Canada-Israel Committee and the Canada Egypt Business Council, who partially financed the trip and arranged meetings in the region.

Rae said his talks in Israel were "cordial, candid and friendly. They always know when they're talking to Canadians, they're talking to friends."

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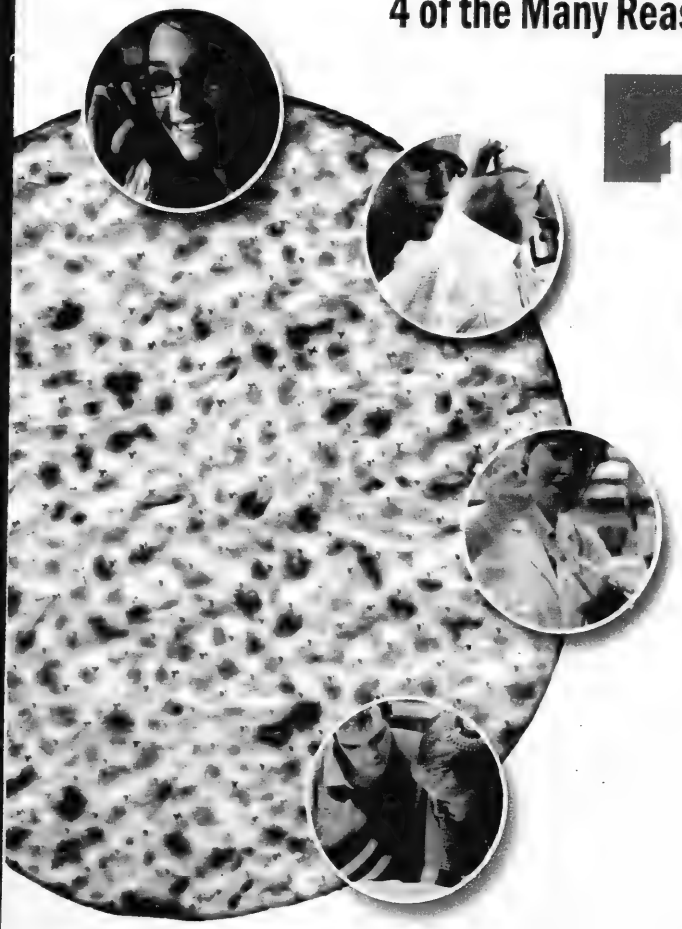

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Foreign media open to persuasion, audience told

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Aryeh Green offered a bit of novel advice for observers of the Middle East whose blood may boil when they read reports by western journalists who toe the Palestinian line. Don't get angry with them, he suggested, make friends with them.

Aryeh Green

A variation on the old theme of catching more flies with honey than with vinegar, Green said he has put that approach to work in Israel, where he attempts to cultivate relationships with foreign correspondents and influence their coverage in a way that brings into play the Israeli position on contentious issues.

Green is director of MediaCentral, an offshoot of HonestReporting, which describes itself as a Jerusalem-based media-liaison organization that provides support services for journalists based in or visiting Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Palestinians have been "shmoozing" reporters for years, with some success, Green told an audience at a downtown law offices of Cassels Brock & Blackwell recently. Green and John Thompson, director of the Mackenzie Institute, were guests of the Speakers Action Group and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association. They spoke on "Israel in the News… a War of Ideas."

MediaCentral helps journalists with information, access to relevant new sources and with materials. Doing so is something of an antidote to the pro-Palestinian line many reporters bring with them to Israel, Green said.

By providing professional services to journalists, MediaCentral can help ensure the reports are more balanced.

"I believe accuracy is Israel's best ally," Green said. "More than that, journalists see themselves as professionals. The majority of the journalists working and reporting in Israel are professionals and doing the best job they can to report from the field. Our goal is to help them achieve their goals."

Still, he conceded, many foreign correspondents in Israel tilt to the Palestinian side and have adopted their perspective. "They are a product of their generation and intellectual milieu that accepts the Palestinian view and that informs their view of the Middle East," he said.

Green, a onetime adviser to former Knesset member and deputy prime minister Natan Sharansky, said the pro-Palestinian perspective can be found in many examples: the description of Israel's security barrier – which is mostly fence – as an "apartheid wall"; or in the labelling of Israeli political leaders such as Benjamin Netanyahu as "hawkish," while Arab leaders like Hosni Mubarak, Mahmoud Abbas and the Saudi leadership are termed "moderates."

Hamas rocket attacks are minimized, with a reporter stating "only 23 Israelis" were killed by them. "Palestinian acts of violence are minimized, while the world media condemns Israel for defensive operations. We should be very concerned by that," he said.

Thompson said the western world is entering a phase of "fourth-generation warfare," which has eclipsed first-generation combat [over territory], second-generation conflict [wars of attrition like World War I] and third-generation war of manoeuvre and psychology [World War II].

"The real objective of fourth-generation warfare is international sympathy," he told The CJN. "Hezbollah in 2006 played for that very successfully, and Israel did not even know that the game had changed."

The most successful practitioners of fourth-generation warfare were the Vietnamese, who lost every battle to U.S. forces but who convinced the American public the war was unwinnable. That led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces, Thompson said.

In Gaza, the media reported on frightened-looking children, "but the people behind them were fine."

Thompson said western countries face an external threat by jihadists and an internal threat from leftists who, like those who saw nothing wrong with Stalin or Hitler, support external enemies.

"As a Scot, Irish Catholic, the defence of my heritage, traditions and culture begins by defending the Jews," he said.

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Galloway threatens to sue CJC CEO

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

British MP George Galloway has threatened to sue Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, for allegedly calling him a terrorist.

Galloway told a crowd in Ottawa via an Internet connection, "I have instructed my lawyers in Canada to bring an action for defamation against Bernie Farber… and CTV for comments he made that they allowed him to make," the Ottawa Citizen reported. "I am not a terrorist. I am not a threat to Canada's national security."

Contacted by The CJN, Farber said "there will be no apology." He also noted "the irony that this poster boy for free speech had absolutely no compunction in trying to silence anyone who wants to criticize his work."

The threatened suit was the latest development in a week that saw a Federal Court judge decline to overturn a government decision to bar Galloway from Canada.

Lawyers for the Respect party MP failed to convince Federal Court Judge Luc Martineau to issue an injunction to temporarily set aside a decision by Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) that prohibited Galloway from entering the country. Despite that ruling, Galloway addressed an audience of 300 or more at Toronto's Metropolitan United Church via video link from New York. He challenged Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney to "come out and debate me like a man."

Kenney had declined to exercise his ministerial discretion to overrule the CBSA decision, which found Galloway had violated Canadian law by providing funds to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization. Galloway was part of a group of activists that delivered humanitarian aid to Gaza following Israel's recent military operation in the territory. He also presented Hamas with $45,000 in cash.

In a 14-page ruling, Martineau said, "I am not ready to exempt Mr. Galloway from the provisions in the [Immigration and Refugee Protection] Act.

"The admission of a foreign national to this country is a privilege determined by statute, regulation or otherwise and not a matter of right," he wrote.

Galloway supporters argued the ban was a free speech issue in which the government tried to stifle criticism of its Afghanistan and Middle East policies.

Meanwhile, in Quebec City, the provincial Liberal government unanimously rejected a motion by Québec solidaire MNA Amir Khadir asking the Ottawa to change its mind and allow Galloway to enter Canada. The motion was supported by the opposition Parti Québécois, but the government, which has a slight majority, was able to prevent it from coming to the floor. Galloway spoke at Concordia University in November 2006.

Czech consulate marks two historical events

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

In a sombre ceremony at the University of Toronto, the Czech Republic recently marked the 70th anniversary of two separate – but ultimately related – events.

On March 14, 1939, the first rescue train of Jewish children, known as the kindertransport, pulled out of Prague, bound for Britain.

One day later, the German army marched into Prague, the Czech capital, transforming a democratic nation into a protectorate of Nazi Germany and dooming its Jewish population.

"We're here to commemorate evil and praise good," a Czech consulate general official said, launching the March 26 evening of remembrance, How We Escaped Hitler, hosted by Prague-born Canadian television personality Hana Gartner.

For the next two hours, these historical events were the subject of an informal discussion by two Czech-born journalists, Peter Newman and Joe Schlesinger, and of an Emmy Award-winning documentary film about the British man who organized the kindertransport, Nicholas Winton.

The meeting was sponsored by the Czech Republic in co-operation with the British consulate in Toronto.

Before it ended, Czech diplomats conferred Order of Tomas Masaryk silver medals – one of the country's highest honours – upon Gartner, Newman and Schlesinger.

Newman, an author and former editor of the Toronto Star and Maclean's magazine, recalled that his father, a wealthy industrialist, cried after his homeland was invaded by Germany.

Newman witnessed the triumphant entry of German troops into Prague, and, looking back, he said quietly, "Czechoslovakia was dying." (In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into the Czech and Slovak republics).

"It was a surrender," said Newman, whose family was permitted to immigrate to Canada as barley farmers, but only in the guise of Catholics.

"The Munich Pact took away our defences," he said in a reference to the infamous agreement that enabled Germany to grab some of Czechoslovakia's territory. "We had only 20 years of freedom, from 1918 to 1938."

Newman speculated that the Czech army could have inflicted horrendous casualties on the German army had it chosen to challenge Germany's invasion.

Peter Newman

Joe Schlesinger

Schlesinger, a retired CBC TV foreign correspondent and one of the 669 Jewish children saved by Winton, described Czechoslovakia as a bastion of democracy, multiculturalism and tolerance before it was swallowed up by Germany.

His parents, having signed him up for the kindertransport, thought he would be back soon.

Their assumption seemed reasonable.

"In Jewish history, there were good periods and bad periods," noted Schlesinger, whose dusky voice accompanied hundreds of first-hand reports from areas of conflict.

For decades, Schlesinger had no idea that his guardian angel had been Winton, a London stockbroker of Jewish origin whose parents had him baptized when he was a child.

All in all, Winton, a humanitarian in the finest sense of the word, organized eight transports from Prague to London and arranged for British foster families to care for the children.

Winton's ninth transport never reached its destination, having been interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

For years, Winton kept his exploits secret, not even telling his wife, Greta. But in 1988, the story came to light after she found a scrapbook of his activities in their attic.

Winton, nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize by the Czech government, will celebrate his 100th birthday on May 19.

Matej Minac's film about him, Nicholas Winton: The Power of Good, narrated by Schlesinger, was screened after Newman and Schlesinger finished their recollections.

The program was augmented by Yuri Dojc's photographic exhibition, What Remained, about the Jewish past in the Slovak Republic.

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David Frum voices concerns about Obama

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

U.S. President Barack Obama has given speeches supporting Israel and denounced Iran's quest for nuclear weapons, but he may try to pressure the Jewish state to make concessions that could harm its interests, conservative political analyst and former Bush White House insider David Frum says.

In a speech titled "A Frightening Question: The Obama Administration and the Security of Israel," given March 26 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Frum, an author, columnist and former economic speech writer and special assistant to former U.S. president George W. Bush, laid out what he described as positives and "concerns" about the new president.

More than 400 people attended the 15th annual Dr. Joseph Weil Memorial Lecture, a fundraiser for the Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital, the only hospital serving the 300,000 residents in the Netanya area.

In his opening remarks, the Toronto-born Frum, who now lives in Washington, D.C., noted that it was a special evening for him to be back in Toronto, as it was the yahrzeit of his mother, prominent CBC journalist Barbara Frum, who died 17 years ago.

On the one hand, he described Obama as a man of remarkable gifts and spoke of the truly epic story surrounding his election. But he noted that although he has read Obama's books, he said Obama revealed very little about himself in them.

Also on the positive side, Frum noted that in the past, Obama has given many speeches in support of Israel, and that he has said that it's unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. As well, Obama had many Jewish friends and supporters in Chicago when he was the junior senator from Illinois, and he noted officials in Obama's new administration who have supported the State of Israel in the past.

But Frum also outlined his concerns about the president, including Obama's attempt to appoint Charles Freeman to the national intelligence service. Frum said Freeman has an intense dislike of Israel and took $2 million from Saudi Arabia.

He added that when Freeman's appointment fell apart and Freeman withdrew his nomination, he blamed his defeat on the Israeli lobby.

Frum commended Obama for his recent address to the people of Iran on an important pre-Islamic holiday, adding that Persians and Jews historically had a close connection.

But he criticized Obama for addressing his message to the "Islamic Republic of Iran" rather than the "Republic of Iran." This, Frum said, validates and is an acceptance of the legitimacy of the current Iranian regime.

He added that it's important for a democratic state to reach out to non-democratic states, and that it's preferable to accept Iran with atomic power than to use force.

Turning to Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, Frum said the issue is difficult but not complex – Palestinian Arabs need only accept Israel.

Citing his own political background, Frum said it's impossible to put pressure on the Arabs, who generally won't budge from set positions, while it's easier to put pressure on Israel, which has shown that it will give way.

Frum expressed fear that Obama may attempt to find a unity between the parties that doesn't exist.

He answered a number of questions from the audience, citing his knowledge of the internal workings of U.S. politics. He cautioned that many times, reasons for decisions don't become public.

David Frum

Responding to a question about Israel's poor public relations, he agreed that it is "awful." Israelis are direct and they let you know what they think, Frum said, adding that Israelis must learn to be more creative. Nevertheless, he said he noticed improvement in Israel's PR during the Gaza war, versus its PR for the 2006 war in Lebanon.

Frum also said it's still too early to say definitively how the Obama administration will approach Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and other looming problems.

Conservative group to fund Melton school

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues (CCCS) – a group started last year as an alternative to the established Conservative umbrella group – has voted to take on the bulk of the funding of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School in Toronto for the 2009-2010 year.

The Mini-School, a project of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that's geared to promoting Jewish literacy, has been operating in Toronto for eight years.

It has been mostly funded privately, aside from the first two years, when UJA Federation's Board of Jewish Education (which became the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education, known as the Mercaz) provided $15,000 a year.

Several synagogues have also provided funding, according to Loretta Tanenbaum, who is both director of the Melton Mini-School in Toronto and executive director of the CCCS.

The program's annual budget depends on a variety of factors including enrolment, number of classes and cost of materials, Tanenbaum said.

Last year, 60 students were enrolled in the program in Toronto. According to the program's website, there are 62 mini-schools in 60 cities throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Aside from Toronto, other Canadian cities that offer the program are Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and London. The latter program is a satellite of Toronto's, and Tanenbaum serves as its consultant. Programs in Ottawa and Montreal have closed down within the last few years, Tanenbaum said.

The CCCS was formed last year with four Toronto congregations as constituents – Adath Israel Congregation, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Beth Tzedec Congregation and Beth Sholom Synagogue. Aside from Beth Sholom, which was unaffiliated, the congregations left the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the umbrella body for about 700 North American shuls, earlier in the year following disagreements over services they received for their membership dollars.

The CCCJ's mandate is "to support community-wide educational initiatives," Tanenbaum said. Supporting the Florence Melton Mini-School, which teaches a gamut of Jewish points of view, "is seen as a trans-denominational way to build community."

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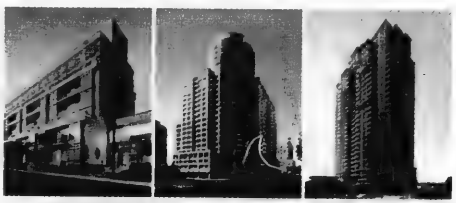
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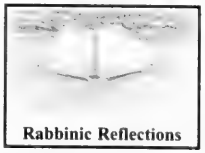
Jewish Life

The lesson in breaking the matzah

By RABBI YOSSI MICHALOWICZ

During the early part of the seder, the leader breaks the middle matzah into two parts. He leaves the smaller part on the table between the other two matzot, while hiding the larger part to be eaten later during Tzafun, the 12th step of seder, when we eat the afikoman.

What is the significance of this part of the seder?



The first time something was broken into two parts in the Torah occurred when Jacob divided his camp into two parts prior to his encounter with his brother, Esau. The Torah relates that Jacob said, "If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it, the remaining camp will survive." On a simple level, it appears that Jacob is saying that even if his enemy can destroy one part, he will never be able to destroy the second part.

The chassidic commentaries explain that Jacob was referring to much more than just the physical structure of the Jewish people. Jacob was symbolically referring to the two parts that make up the human being: the physical encampment and the spiritual encampment – the body and the soul.

Jacob's deeper intention was to show that no matter what the worst anti-Semite tries to do, the most he can ever succeed in is harming the physical entity of the Jewish people. But the encampment of our soul can never be taken away from us. So even if Esau comes to one camp – the physical one – and attacks it, the remaining camp – the spiritual one – will survive.

One can read the countless incredible stories of Jewish spiritual defiance, and can't help but be amazed at the fact that as much as the accursed Nazis were able to physically destroy the Jew, they could not destroy the spiritual camp of the Jew. For that reason, seeing Jews singing and dancing while saying the Shema on the way to the gas chambers enraged the Nazis more than anything else.

Therefore, as we start the Magid, the telling of the story of Passover, we break the matzah into two halves, the smaller part symbolizing our body, which we can see, and the larger part symbolizing the soul. We hide the bigger part to show that, even though we cannot see it and it is hidden from us, it will help us realize that the biggest part of who we are can never be destroyed. And by the end of the seder, at the end of time, it will be revealed in all its glory.

Right now, as we go through history, we begin to wonder if we will survive at all – it is Tzafun – hidden from us. We don't have a way of understanding it, but it is the biggest part.

The smaller part of the matzah is what we say during the recitation of the Haggadah. Yes, we are going to go through all kinds of suffering. But by covering up the bigger part for later, we convey the message that we believe. The greater part of us is hidden. We don't understand where it is and when it will show itself, but it is surely going to come.

The symbolic breaking of the matzah is a huge statement before the recitation of the Haggadah: although we find ourselves in situations where it is sometimes difficult to celebrate freedom, we are performing an act of faith, saying we believe that the greater portion of what we are all about is Tzafun – hidden – and there will come a time when we will eat the dessert.

Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz is the spiritual leader of the Westmount Shul and Learning Centre in Thornhill, Ont.

Tel Aviv turns 100, Part 1

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

O Tel Aviv, the metropolis that lives in the shadow of that other city that is capital of the country and home to three monotheistic religions. I mean, how can Tel Aviv compete when even the Talmud plays favourites? "Ten measures of beauty descended to the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem and one by the rest of the world." Kidushin 49b **[tinyurl.com/telaviv 06]**

Well, this year Tel Aviv is celebrating its 100th birthday, and it's about time that city gets its time in the sun. Here's to the country's economic hub, its cultural capital (and the place I once called home).

Of course, Jerusalem figures prominently throughout the Tanach and our daily prayers. But what about Tel Aviv? Granted, the prophet Jonah boarded a boat in nearby Jaffa in order to avoid blessing the residents of Nineveh. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv08]** And the rabbis Eliezer, Yehoshua, Elazar ben Azaryah, Akiva and Tarphon famously spent a very, very long seder in Bnei Brak that now borders on Tel Aviv. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv10]**

But believe it or not, there really is a prayer that mentions Tel Aviv! It was originally composed in 1959 by Rabbi Isser Yehuda Unterman, chief rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo, in honour of the city's 50th anniversary, and has been updated for the centennial. "Lord of the Universe… Today, we celebrate the centennial of our city… And lo, the city grows larger and more beautiful, always teeming with people and full of life and motion; the voice of Torah is heard in its gates and the noise of workers in its walls, righteousness and charity in its institutions and great clamour in its marketplaces. … Protect our city and its residents, and your people and land which You have chosen." **[tinyurl.com/telaviv 09]**

(For the record, Tel Aviv is mentioned in the Tanach in the Book of Ezekiel 3:15. "Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel Aviv…" However, that Tel Aviv was actually a Babylonian city where exiles from the Land of Israel had gathered. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv07]**)

Jump ahead a few millennia and over to the shores of the Mediterranean where the Home Building Society in Palestine decided to build a new neighbourhood on the dunes north of ancient city of Jaffa. They initially called the area, "Ahuzat Bayit" or "homestead," but soon after they were engaged in a lively debate over a permanent name. How do you feel about these contenders: New Yafo, Neve Yafo, Nof Yafo, Aviva, Beauty, Tranquil, Ivria or Herzlyia? Eventually, Tel Aviv ("Hill of Spring") was nominated – its name reminiscent of the title of Theodor Herzl's book Altneuland (Old-New Land in German). In true democratic fashion, Tel Aviv was selected with 20 votes to Neve Yafo's 15. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv05]**

Although the name Avraham Soskin may not ring a bell, you undoubtedly have marvelled at the work of this photographer. Soskin captured the historic photo of representatives of the 66 families who gathered on the dunes north of Jaffa in 1909 for the "seashell raffle" of plots for the new neighbourhood. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv01]**

According to an article by Barbara Mann, that photo was actually a carefully staged portrait intended to emphasize the marvel of the undertaking. "There is no sign of the city of Jaffa to the immediate south, nor of the Jewish neighbourhoods of Neveh Tsedek and Neveh Shalom [nor] the extensive Arab agriculture in the form of orchards just to the east. The city is formed – yesh me-ayin [something from nothing] – despite the protest of the lone figure at the top of the photo who, as legend has it, yelled out, "*Meshuga'im, eyn kan mayim!*" ("You're crazy, there's no water here!")**[tinyurl.com/telaviv01]**

This new settlement was intended to become a "Hebrew urban centre in a healthy environment, planned according to the rules of esthetics and modern hygiene." **[tinyurl.com/telaviv03]** Visitors to the city can decide for themselves whether the city fathers and mothers succeeded.

Thankfully, the settlers didn't listen to that fabled voice of sanity. Later this month, descendants of those 66 founding families, along with thousands of descendants of the city's builders, will gather for a commemorative centennial photo on the Tel Aviv beach. All are welcome to join! **[tinyurl.com/telaviv01]**

Next week, a peek at this year's celebrations.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

If you will it

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Family feuds, especially around money, can get very nasty. Throw in some religious tension, and watch the sparks fly. A nasty court battle is going on in Chicago, where an Illinois court recently invalidated a will. The judge objected to a clause that disinherited any descendant who might marry a non-Jew, as four of the five grandchildren in this particular case did. As quoted in the Chicago Tribune (Aug. 25, 2008), the judge remarked, "Suppose Max Feinberg had reservations about his descendants' marrying a black person. Do we really want courts to enforce the worst bigotry imaginable?" While Jewish law shares the same abhorrence for any form of discrimination, it appears to this writer that the judge has overstepped his boundaries.

Jewish law is divided into three broad categories: "religious" law, the laws of purity and impurity and those of a monetary nature. Whereas religious norms are fixed by the Torah and developed and interpreted by the Sages, monetary law can be quite fluid. While the Torah regulates much of our monetary dealings, in this realm, and this realm only, two consenting adults can agree to circumvent the laws of the Torah. While the Torah requires a paid bailee to make restitution if the object he is watching is stolen, the two parties can agree to exempt one from payment even in the case of negligence. This ability to contract out of monetary law explains why Jewish employers tend to pay workers only every couple of weeks, as opposed to the biblical obligation to pay every day.

It would appear that bequeathing one's assets, they being of a monetary nature, should be left to the discretion of each person. Thus, not only can (and possibly should) one disinherit a child who turns his back on his people, a person may choose to give their money only to those who actually intermarry. While morally objectionable, it is perfectly legal.

However Jewish law considers the disposition of an estate not just as a matter of monetary law, but rather of religious law. A dead person no longer controls his money – you truly can't take it with you – and thus it's Torah law and not the deceased's wishes that must reign supreme.

From the perspective of the Torah, the male (father or husband) is obligated to support the female (daughter or wife). There is no obligation for a wife to work to help pay for the family expenses – that is the responsibility of the husband, and the prerogative of the wife. The initial liens against an estate are to provide for single daughters until they marry. Amounts above this basic support level would go to the male children (with an eldest male receiving a double portion).

Such an approach doesn't sit will in our egalitarian age, something our medieval sages understood quite well. They advocated using legal mechanisms, adhering to the letter of the law while circumventing its outcomes, in which the "estate" will be allocated just before death, allowing the daughters a greater share in the inheritance. The use of such legal technicalities allows one to remain faithful to the integrity of Jewish law while ensuring that it is responsive to the needs of the day.

Yet, even if no provisions are made for a proper "halachic will," the children are morally bound to abide by the wishes of the deceased. To see children in court fighting over the estate of their parents brings shame to them and dishonours the memory of the deceased. The ethical example that one demonstrates marks a person's true legacy.

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Real Pesach cleaning for Bernie Madoff

Ideas on Identity

By Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

I know Passover is far from Yom Kippur. It's too early to start thinking about tshuvah, but I can't help it.

All the time that I was cleaning my kitchen – vacuuming the floors personally to be sure there were absolutely no bread crumbs left– I kept thinking about a little tidbit of news I read at the end of March from the U.K. Telegraph. It was about Bernie Madoff, the disgraced financier whose Ponzi scheme destroyed many charities, Jewish organizations and individuals.

The Telegraph headline said: "Bernard Madoff was Obsessed with Cleaning, Recalls Employee." A personal courier who worked for Madoff described how he would come to the office at 7:30 a.m. and often see Madoff "vacuuming the floors, personally… everything had to be clean, even if he had to do it himself."

I'm old enough to remember the Wall Street scandals involving other names– many of whom, unfortunately, were Jews. I suppose that Madoff's name will soon be replaced by some other ignoble person whose greed wins out, and their name may or may not be a Jewish one.

But Madoff hurt so many Jewish institutions – some of which I have personal involvement with, such as Hadassah – along with countless individuals who trusted him, that this time feels different from others, and this one feels different than other fraudsters. So not only do I picture Bernie cleaning his cell, I wonder about the nature of forgiveness for this kind of profound moral downfall.

Elie Weisel reminds us that "forgiveness must be sought." So I would like to suggest that Madoff seek forgiveness by using his talents and passion for cleaning working for minimum wage sweeping up late at night at some burger joint where he can experience what it feels like to live hand to mouth.

The concept of revenge is unnecessary here. Instead, why not require Madoff to live under conditions that might give rise to a real change of heart? What if, instead of spending the rest of his life at the taxpayer's expense in jail, he were required to devote his days to working on behalf of the poor, the homeless and the aged, and live off only the small wage he would earn cleaning up after others. We Jews don't have cloisters where he could spend his days in contemplation and prayer. Instead, perhaps the chametz of his life – the assets he gained by exploiting others – can be seized and distributed to his victims.

In the meantime, he can clean up their homes, vacuuming every one of their floors personally, helping those who need an extra hand koshering their homes for Pesach or delivering boxes of matzah to shut-ins. I can only hope that at the end of many years of doing this that there is no book contract or appearance on Oprah waiting for him, just the sound of a vacuum in a small, simple room, the pictures of every person he cheated, and a schedule of clean-up chores for the week ahead.

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Thoughts on Kaddish, nine months in

As Passover arrives, and with it the Yizkor memorial service on April 16, CJN reporter Frances Kraft reflects on the experience of going to synagogue to say Kaddish for her father. She finds it unexpectedly compelling and, although she always hesitates before admitting this, she says she likes it.

– The Editor

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

"We're here for you," "You're going to be OK" – and most of all, "We're your friends" – are words my mother, my sister and I never expected to hear from virtual strangers.

But our lives changed last July after my father, who had been living a busy and fulfilling post-retirement life, died of complications from a fall, and we began attending daily services to say Kaddish.

The prayer, as I knew before, makes no mention of death or the deceased person.

Rather, Kaddish, which praises God, is believed to elevate the soul of the person who has died. But no matter how many times I turn that idea over in my mind, I have no way of knowing, intellectually, whether it's true. Especially at first, I couldn't help wondering if my efforts constituted the equivalent of sending e-mails into cyberspace and not knowing if they had reached their destination.

I also like to think that maybe my father doesn't need my Kaddish because he was a good person, an idea planted in my mind by a family friend during the shivah. Fancifully, she visualized him being ushered to the front of the line to enter what my rabbi refers to as Olam Haba, the "World to Come."

I do know that saying Kaddish connects me to my family, my religion and my shul; and to others who are saying, have said, or will say Kaddish.

My mother, my sister and I never considered not saying Kaddish. To go that route, even if we had engaged someone to say it on our behalf, would have meant ignoring our instincts and rejecting the example that my dad had set.

From the beginning, I have found the experience compelling.

What surprises me most – and it feels, somehow, inappropriate – is that I enjoy it. But I'm not alone. Sandy Hayward, one of the people at my synagogue who has been generous with her emotional support, said that going to shul to say Kaddish was her guilty pleasure.

The pleasure, of course, comes with a price. People seem to think it's a burden to wake up early every morning for services, but I haven't found that part difficult. I am also fortunate to have flexibility both at home and work so that I can attend twice-daily services.

What is difficult is losing a parent. Many aspects of the service remind me of my dad, although they don't usually trigger "grief attacks" the way they did at the beginning.

The traditional 11-month period of Kaddish offers a way to deal with the year of mourning following a parent's death, and it works well in ways I didn't anticipate.

I didn't realize how much of my time at shul would be spent not grieving, although I'm always conscious at some level of the loss of my father, not having been in the habit of attending daily services before last July.

It's also not all about praying, even though prayer is the foundation of the service.

When you think about it – instead of just saying the words by rote – it is grounding to start the day with a service that includes prayers for a blessing on the earth, for the health of those who are sick, for peace.

There are also other benefits in having a routine. Unexpectedly, I find myself leaving shul better equipped to start my day, having mentally checked off the first major item of the morning.

At the same time, there is a sense of community that has little to do with prayer per se.

Seeing familiar faces every day is part of it, and shared perspectives play a role too. Brenda Cooper-Geffen, who lost her mother in late December, said we have a bond because we have chosen to mourn our parents in the same way.

People often remark on the warmth they feel at our synagogue, Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am. My mother, my sister and I were moved by the fact that even strangers told us they were sorry for our loss. We were embraced – sometimes literally – by the congregation.

I used to hesitate about offering condolences to someone I knew only slightly, let alone a stranger. That changed almost immediately.

Brenda and I were talking recently about the camaraderie that is evident in our daily minyan. Whether our fellow shulgoers express friendship in words or more implicitly, they are there for us when we need support. And we are OK.

Shivah dos and don'ts

Recently, The CJN received a number of unrelated requests to publish a guide on what to do and say when paying a shivah visit. We have put together the following list using articles previously published in this paper, as well as outside sources.

• Don't hesitate to visit if you didn't know the person who died or are not a close friend or relative of the mourners. Visits from neighbours, colleagues and synagogue acquaintances remind mourners that the community, not just their own small circle, cares about them.

• Do visit during the day – particularly in the morning – if you want quality time with the mourner when fewer visitors are present.

• Don't convey condolences second-hand. Call, visit or send a card yourself.

• Do think about what you want to say before you go to the shivah – particularly what you want to say at the beginning and end of your visit.

• Do take your cue from the mourners regarding the topic of conversation and how much they feel like talking.

• Arrive on time if you are going for prayer services. Men should bring tallit and tfillin for morning services.

• Do limit small talk with other visitors in front of the mourners. It's better to catch up in another room, or after the visit.

• Do allow mourners to express grief without trying to change the subject or distract them.

• Keep visits short unless you are a close friend or family member.

• Do offer to help if you are staying longer, even if it's just to bring a cup of coffee to the mourners. Other ways to assist include taking children to school, or shopping for needed items. Be ready to help in ways that the mourner considers helpful.

• Do offer condolences to all the mourners who are nearby.

• Do share stories about the person who has died. Mourners often find it comforting.

• Don't question decisions that mourners have made, particularly health-care decisions that preceded the death.

• Do be sensitive to kashrut needs if you are providing food. Sephardi mourners do not eat meat during the shivah week.

• Don't arrive too early in the morning, or stay too late at night.

• Don't tell a mourner what to expect or that you know how he or she feels. Alternatives are, "Some people find that…"; "You might find that…"' or "I found that…"

• Don't arrive at meal times, unless you are helping to serve a meal and clean up. This may be the only time mourners have with each other, without visitors.

• Don't join the family at the table unless you are invited.

• The traditional Hebrew words of comfort when leaving a shiva house are "*HaMakom yenachem etchem b'toch sha'ar avelei Tzion vi'Yerushalayim.*" ("May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.") They do not pre-empt the need to offer personal words of comfort.

• Do call when the shivah is over. Another visit or an offer to help in a specific way may be welcome, particularly if a mourner is older or doesn't feel like going out.

Other resources include:

• Grieving… Personal Reflections, and Turning Grief into Gratitude, both by Rabbi Reuven Bulka

• To Comfort the Bereaved, by Rabbi Aaron Levine

• The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning, by Rabbi Maurice Lamm

— F.K.

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We should enter Pesach with renewed vigour

By RABBI REUVEN P. BULKA

It is a pleasure to extend Pesach greetings to you all on behalf of Canadian Jewish Congress, including my wonderful co-president, Sylvain Abitbol, and the dedicated CJC team.

Another year, another Pesach.

As much as it seems like same old, same old, we do whatever we can to not make it seem like same old, same old. Certainly, those around the table will immediately sense if we treat the seder that way – that is, as a chore that has to be done, the quicker the better.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka

Without some measure of excitement, the seder will lack energy, purpose and meaning. So, it's highly recommended that we enter Pesach with renewed vigour.

Admittedly, this is easier said than done. But if you contemplate the issue more comprehensively, it will become apparent that this challenge of renewal is not restricted to Pesach. It is around us everywhere we turn – be it as spouses, as parents or as employees.

The more we see every day as a new opportunity, to be seized with enthusiasm, the more likely we are to succeed in our appointed mission, be it to infuse marriage with true affection, to transmit unconditional love to our children or to achieve the best results at work.

But we would be superhuman if we never felt a drop in enthusiasm, a sense of being tired, perhaps even drained. And the onerous preparations prior to Pesach, interspersed as they are with our usual obligations, become a recipe for exhaustion.

This is not a case of outsiders asking the impossible. Everyone is aware of the challenge without being asked by others. We ask this of ourselves, knowing full well that a good burst of fresh energy is most desirable, but not knowing where is the reservoir from which to gain that energy.

There are no magical answers, just some of the old stand-bys, such as daily exercise, periodic time-outs, days off, sharing the load, etc.

This year, we enter Pesach if not with new energy, at least with a new – as in 21st-century – challenge. We have seen this develop before our eyes: the slow but steady stream of anti-Semitic invective, sometimes couched in an anti-Zionist cloak, sometimes more blatant. And it's everywhere. Anti-Semitism is not new, but the modern variety is a new variation on an old theme.

Thankfully, we have a government that is vigilant in fighting it, and we are extremely grateful for this. We are also heartened that the official opposition supports the government in this vigilance, as do the other political parties, who have also spoken out strongly against anti-Semitism and intolerance. The fact that all political parties are on the same wavelength demonstrates that this is not merely a Jewish fight. It's a fight to maintain Canada and its sacred values intact, as a respectful, appreciative, harmonious society.

Pesach is well appreciated as the Festival of Freedom. To be free means to have human dignity, something we wish for everyone, including the estimated 27 million people who as you read this are still living as slaves. Yes, 27 million – if not more. And we are not including in this count those who are living under brutal, oppressive regimes.

On Pesach, the focus has been not merely on gaining freedom, but on what we do with that freedom, graduating from "freedom from" to "freedom towards."

That should not change. But we cannot escape the immediate communal challenge to achieve freedom from hate, from ill will, from denigration, from enmity.

That is a challenge for which we will need renewed individual and collective energy, at least as much energy as those adversaries who purvey the distasteful and often venomous words and deeds that are contrary to what we are all about, to what Canada is all about.

Where to find the reservoir for that energy? Perhaps in that effervescent well known as "no choice." We have no choice but to energetically confront this evil, because there is no choice, no acceptable alternative to a society infused with friendliness and a co-operative spirit.

I wish you all a meaningful, vigorous and fulfilling Pesach.

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka is co-president of Canadian Jewish Congress.

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Child Holocaust survivor pens memoir

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Child Holocaust survivor Nelli Rotbart says that while it took her only two weeks to write her Holocaust memoir, Out of the Fire, on paper, she has been writing it in her mind for 40 years.

Rotbart was eight years old when the war started, and as with most survivors, she ultimately lost most of her immediate family. On Sept. 15, 1943, Rotbart, her parents and her older sisters, Sima and Eva, were ambushed in the woods where they were hiding in Poland. Nelli and Eva survived. The other family members were murdered.

The first 30 pages of her book are about her life in rural Poland in the 1930s and her memories of family and friends and neighbours. Her life was like that of any child who is a member of a loving family. Her father operated a store and was a cattle buyer. Her mother brought in additional income as a seamstress. Rotbart says she was a somewhat mischievous child with a passion for reading.

On Sept. 1, 1939, when the first German bombs fell on her village, everything changed. "It was the beginning of the end," she writes.

The next 70 pages recount her life on the run from the Nazis.

She observes that the signs were there before the war started, as many people had passed through the family's village over the summer months, fleeing east in anticipation of what was to come. She recounts the well-known restrictions against Jews. Her father lost his business. She and her sisters couldn't attend school. They had to have a large Magen David on the front of their house and wear the yellow star. There was frequent Nazi harassment.

The family was deported to a ghetto in 1941. They escaped from the ghetto, only to end up in another, They escaped again in 1942 and found temporary shelter with a sympathetic Polish farmer.

In the spring of 1943, the family was on the run again until they were found out and attacked in the woods. Eva and Nelli separated shortly after that and Nelli eventually found shelter with a Polish family where she pretended to be a Polish Christian girl.

The rest of Out of the Fire tells of her years living in the Soviet Union after the war.

"I was 14 when the war ended," she recalls. "I heard that there was going to be a transport to Russia leaving from Lublin. "I was romantic and naïve. I wanted to get out of Poland. I wanted an education. I thought that Russia was a country where there was no discrimination and everyone was equal."

It was only later that she realized her mistake.

On arrival in the Soviet Union, she says, she was placed in an orphanage for foreigners operated in Kiev by the NKVD, the Soviet secret police that was a forerunner of the KGB.

Nelli Rotbart

"The director was a nice lady who found me work in a factory," Rotbart recalls.

Over the next eight years, she was able to finish school and get training as a librarian. Her first posting as a librarian was in a village called Nikolajev on the Dneister River in Ukraine. After a year there, she was able to find work at a library in Odessa.

In Odessa, she married Aron Kaptsan, an engineer and chess player. (They divorced after they came to Canada in the early 1990s.)

Shortly afterward, Kaptsan found a position in Liepaja, Latvia, and Rotbart found work in a naval library. The couple had one daughter, Sima.

"In 1972, after the Helsinki Accords made it possible for Jews to leave Russia, my sister, Eva, who was living in Winnipeg, sent us an invitation to come here," Rotbart says.

"At that time, my husband didn't want to leave. When we finally agreed to apply to leave in 1979, the Afghanistan war was underway and the doors were closed."

Rotbart and her husband became Refuseniks, Soviet citizens who were denied permission to emigrate, and they were immediately dismissed from their jobs. "We were refused permission to leave five times," she recalls. "Finally, in 1982, they let us go."

Rotbart originally finished her manuscript seven or eight years ago and tried shopping it around to various publishers without success.

"I gave up trying to get it published," she says. "I did send a copy though to Concordia University, whose Judaic studies department was collecting memoirs of Holocaust survivors in Canada. The university put my memoirs on the Internet. People from my home village in Poland read my story and contacted my son-in-law by e-mail. They sent pictures of the village and we have kept in touch."

Rotbart eventually decided to self-publish after receiving encouragement from Carla Divinsky of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada. She had close to 300 copies printed, half of which she has given away to friends and relatives, schools and universities. She has some copies for sale in local Winnipeg bookstores as well as in Chapters in Toronto.

Also included in her book is a poem, The Doomed, which she composed when she was 13 and in hiding in the fields on a scorching hot June day in 1943. While she had long forgotten the poem, she found when she came to Canada that her sister, Eva, had memorized it. The poem is now also on display at Yad Vashem.

SENIORS MEET THE CONSUL: Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general in Toronto, stimulated residents at the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community with his recent talk on Israel and the Middle East. Pictured, front row from left, are committee members Blema Mazin and Marilyn Fine; second row from left, president Reuben Cipin, program committee members Rhoda Freidin, Monty Mazin, Sylvia Walt, Saralyn Fine and Sharyn Cipin, and back row from left, Gissin and Anna Feldman.

[Joe Myers photo]

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Wishing our customers & friends a Happy Passover

Salad combinations with a different twist

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

I tend to introduce as many fruits, vegetables and salad greens into the menu as I possibly can during Passover week. I try to keep the matzah, matzah meal and farfel to a minimum in the following recipes. You can usually substitute any dried fruit for any other dried fruit in these recipes.

MELON AND ORANGE VINAIGRETTE

1 cup cantaloupe, cut into cubes
2/3 cup orange juice
2/3 cup vinegar
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground ginger

In a blender or food processor, combine all of the ingredients and process for 1-2 minutes or until smooth and creamy. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Use as a dressing for salads or fruit or to add flavour to grains or vegetables. Makes 2 cups.

CLASSIC FROZEN FRUIT SALAD

This fruit salad recipe is a kid favourite at any dairy meal.

3 tbsp. finely chopped maraschino cherries
1 can (8 to 9 oz.) crushed pineapple, drained
2 cups sour cream
3/4 cup sugar
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1/8 tsp. salt
1/3 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
1 banana, ripe but still firm, chopped

Place chopped cherries on paper towels to absorb moisture; set them aside. In a bowl, combine the sour cream, sugar, lemon juice and salt; stir in the pineapple, walnuts, and cherries. Stir in chopped banana. Spoon the mixture into paper-lined muffin cups and freeze until firm. To serve, let stand at room temperature for a few minutes to soften just slightly. Serves 8 to 10.

APPLE AND TUNA TOSSED SALAD

1 medium head romaine lettuce, torn into bite-size
1/3 cup chopped walnuts
2 cups diced apples, unpeeled
1 (6 1/2-oz.) can tuna, drained
1 (11-oz.) can mandarin oranges, drained
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 tsp. lemon juice
1/2 tsp. sugar
salt and pepper to taste

In a large bowl, combine the lettuce, walnuts, apples, tuna and mandarin oranges. Toss together.

In another bowl, combine the mayonnaise, lemon juice, sugar, salt and pepper. Mix well. Toss the dressing with the salad. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

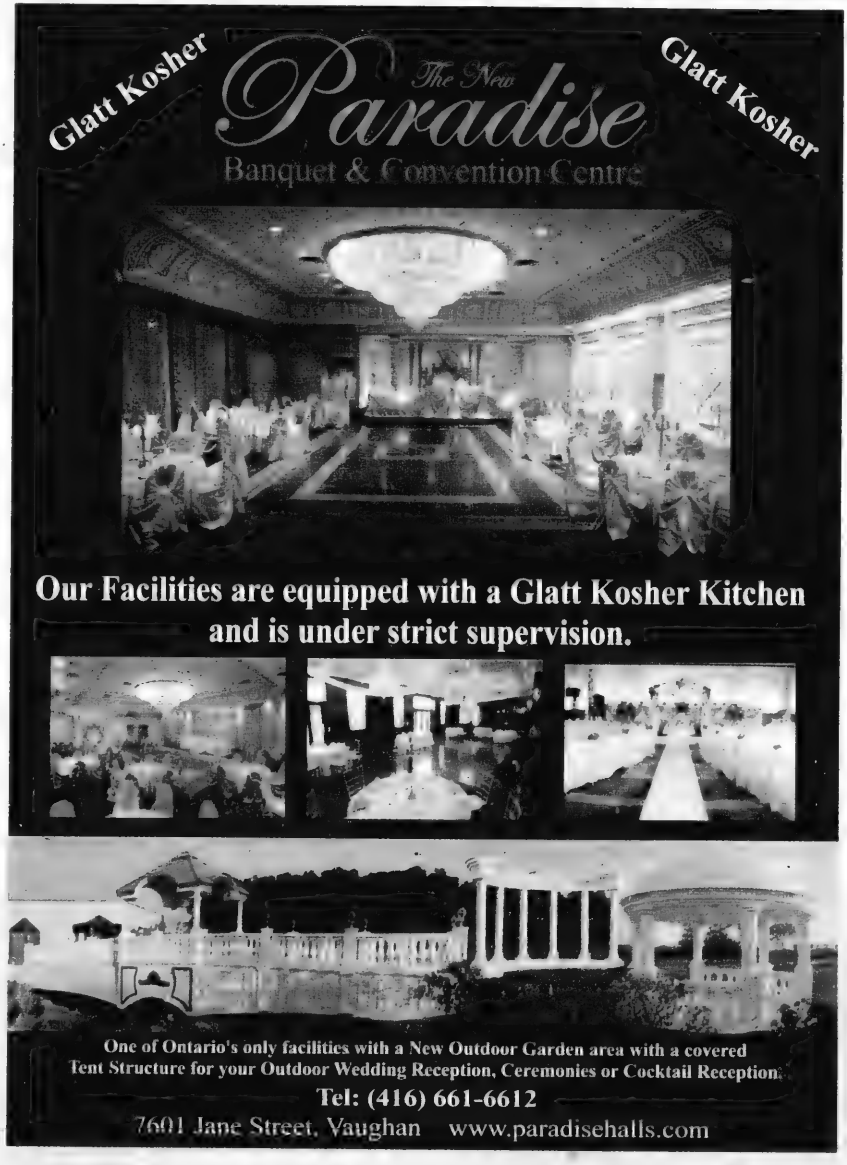
CHICKEN, BROCCOLI, RAISIN AND CASHEW SALAD

This recipe is great for using up left-over turkey or chicken

1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sugar
2 tbsp. vinegar
1 tsp. paprika
1 large bunch broccoli flowerets
1 cup white onion, chopped
2 cans mandarin oranges, rinsed and drained
1 1/2 cup soft raisins
1 cup cashew pieces
2 to 3 cups turkey or chicken, cut into small pieces

In a bowl, combine the mayonnaise, sugar, vinegar and paprika. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, onion, oranges and raisins. Just before serving, add cashews and chicken or turkey. Toss with dressing and serve. Serves 10 to 12.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Hillel trip to India will focus on helping others

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

July will be a month of firsts for Hillel of Greater Toronto as five Toronto students will join five Israeli students on a tikkun olam trip to India.

Rebecca Woods Baum, Hillel of Greater Toronto's immersive experience program co-ordinator, said this is the first time Hillel has worked on a trip with Hillel Israel and it will be the first time Hillel Toronto will travel to India.

Woods Baum said she was connected with the Israeli Friends of the Tibetan People (IFTP) through the efforts of IsraAID, a co-ordinating body of Israeli NGOs and groups that are active in development and relief work around the world.

"Through the IFTP, we are actually working with a Tibetan woman who is helping to organize the trip in India. It was IsraAID that came up with this idea and brought all these organizations together," Woods Baum said, adding that this is a pilot project for IsraAID founder Shachar Zahavi as well.

On July 12, five Toronto university students will travel to Israel to meet with five Israeli university students and participate in a four-day pre-trip orientation.

Woods Baum and the 10 students will travel together to India on July 16, where they will volunteer for four weeks in Dharamsala, a city that is home to the headquarters of the Tibetan government in exile.

"We're working in the Tibetan Children's Village, which is also where we will be living, and we'll be doing different things like helping them with their English… computer skills. We'll be running day-to-day programs," Woods Baum said.

"There is also talk of helping to restore a Tibetan museum in Dharamsala. We're just going to see what's needed there and what we can help out with."

Before they head to Dharamsala, Woods Baum said, the group will fly into New Delhi, where they'll have the opportunity to tour the area.

She added that she wants to ensure the programming offers educational opportunities.

"While they are in Israel, they will meet with the Indian Ambassador to Israel… When we're in New Delhi, we're going to try to set up a meeting with the Israeli ambassador to India, so we can have that exchange, and we're going to see if we can meet up with Indian Jews living in Israel to have a cultural exchange."

The cost of the trip, $2,750, covers everything including the flights, food, which will be strictly vegetarian, accommodation and travelling in Israel and India.

"We were able to get some funding from the community, which was very much appreciated, to help subsidize it," she said.

Rebecca Woods Baum

With only five spots available, Woods Baum said she's looking for applications from mature students who have volunteer experience.

"We're going to a developing country. It will be taxing and it will be a culture shock."

One of the aspects of the program that Woods Baum said she is enthusiastic about is the opportunity to create lasting connections between Israelis and Canadians.

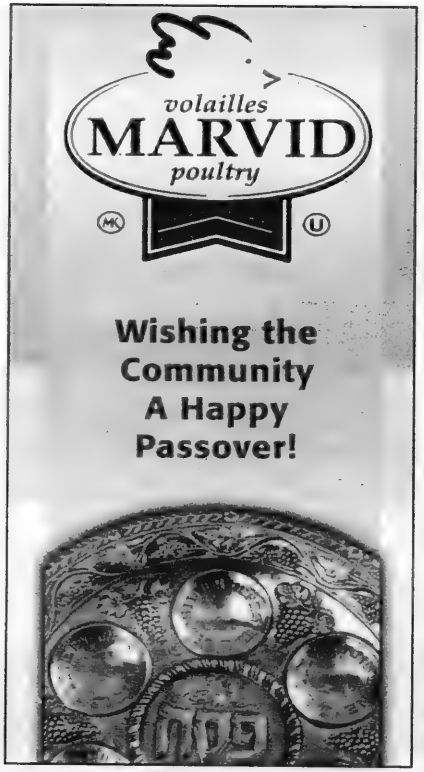
"Given everything that's been going on on campus, we're using this trip as an engagement tool – bringing students into Hillel who maybe wouldn't normally come in to Hillel, who might be scared away from all the Israel advocacy on campus," she said.

"To me, going to India is a great opportunity for most students. We find students today are looking to travel with meaning. They want to see the world, but they want to do something meaningful while they're there. I think they'll be able to do that in India, but also they'll be able to meet other Israelis and maybe have difficult conversations.

"To actually be able to talk to an Israeli about it and have a conversation with their peers is probably the best advocacy we can do as a community," Woods Baum said, adding that she hopes to organize followup programming when they return from India, to keep the students engaged.

"Next year, if the trip is successful, we can go to other places in the world, we can accept more students and maybe even involve other Hillels throughout the world."

Applications will be accepted until May 15. For more information, call 416-913-2424.



York University investigates student election

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The slate that lost last month's York Federation of Students' elections has now involved the school's administration in its appeal to have the results invalidated because of incidents it says "compromised the integrity" of the vote.

The slate York Forward ran against Students First, a rival slate that it accused of supporting the outgoing executive, which York Forward said focused too much on non-campus issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and supported York's recent 12-week strike by contract faculty and teaching assistants.

York Forward's 11-page appeal to the YFS elections committee – which detailed a number of "procedural irregularities" and "suspicious circumstances" during the campaign and the four days of voting – was sent to York's administration late last month in the hope that the school won't recognize the incoming leadership, said Carly Caruso, a York Forward campaign manager who co-wrote the appeal.

Robert Tiffin, York's vice-president of students, said he is reviewing the appeal and asking the YFS elections committee for "additional clarification."

"At this point, I want to see the process they go through… and I want to see a copy of the chief returning officer's report as well," Tiffin said.

CRO Casey Chu Cheong wasn't available to speak to The CJN, but York's campus newspaper, Excalibur, reported last week that she was still investigating and would present a report on the results to YFS council at a meeting this week. She will also make a recommendation on the appeal that will be voted on by council.

Tiffin said that the elections were closely monitored by the administration, because it collects fees for YFS from students and it has "a fiduciary responsibility overall to ensure that there is democratic renewal."

He said that whether or not the results will be invalidated is up to YFS, but the administration has the power to decide if it will recognize the new leadership.

"We'd have to see something very dramatic that indicates that the election was tampered with. There would have to be substantial evidence of that," Tiffin said.

The CJN offices will be closed April 9-10

On Campus

Mock to head Canadian Friends of Haifa U

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Karen Mock, who is regarded as one of Canada's foremost specialists in anti-racist education, was recently appointed the president of Canadian Friends of Haifa University to help promote and raise funds for Israel's most pluralistic university.

In February, Mock, who served 12 years as the national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, succeeded Peter Biro after he stepped down from his post a few months early.

A registered psychologist and educator, Mock has initiated several public education campaigns, including the Black/Jewish Dialogue, Women's Interfaith Dialogue and Muslim/Jewish Dialogue.

Karen Mock

"My experience comes into play on the domestic level because here in Canada, we want people… to know about Haifa University and the kind of model that it presents to the world of diversity and peaceful coexistence in action," Mock said.

With more than 17,000 students, the 36-year-old university has a diverse population made up of Jews, Arabs, Druze, and new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

The University of Haifa boasts the highest percentage of Arab students and Arab faculty members of any Israeli institution of higher learning.

Nearly 20 per cent of the student body is made up of Arab students, which is equivalent to the proportion of the Arab population in Israel.

"[Haifa] is a mixed city and there are programs that build on enhancing Arab-Jewish relations, supporting the State of Israel through research and programming through peaceful coexistence," said Mock, who is also on the international board of governors of the university.

"People here who are working in dialogue together – Jews, Muslims, Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs – who have benefited from Haifa University and other Israeli universities, can also have their voices empowered and not controlled by the extremists on campus."

She said that the people around the world who are working to get support for academic boycotts against Israeli academic institutions are extremists who are spreading propaganda.

"We need to get the message out that in Israel there are people living with a common ancestry and connection with the land who have to coexist. Those here in Canada who don't want to hear about that need to understand that mutual annihilation is not an option," she said.

"Here in this country, I hope to use my experience and my contacts in a wide range of communities to increase awareness of Haifa University and also to help students, especially in these challenging times on campuses, to understand the important contribution that Israel and Israeli professors have made to the world."

She hopes to work with other organizations to "promote the antithesis of what the boycotts are about," she added.

Mock said that while it is important in any democracy to have open discourse to ensure the rights of all minorities are valued and respected, it is important to defend Israel's right to exist and to self-determination.

"Are there ways that we can improve human rights? Yes, every democracy has to struggle with that and needs to, but most of the people who go along with those boycotts don't know the history, and have no idea of the amazing contribution that Israeli scientists, academics, and their universities have made both to Israelis and minorities in Israel, but also, of course, to the world."

Mock stressed Israel's contribution to the field of technology, medicine and science.

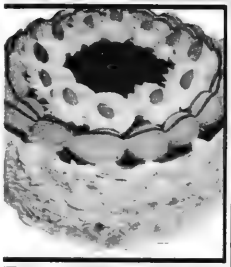
"That is what we need to promote."

She said she looks forward to spreading positive messages about Israel and the university, but needs the help of Canadian Jewish communities.

"The biggest challenge will be to raise awareness and therefore increase support for the university, and it will be an extra challenge during this economic climate to those of us who support the State of Israel," Mock said.

"But Toronto has one of the strongest and most committed Jewish communities in the world."

For more information about the Canadian Friends of Haifa University, visit www.cfhu.org.



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Health & Lifestyles

MS Society enters blogosphere

Compiled by CJN Staff

The movement to end multiple sclerosis has reached the blogosphere with the launch of EveryStepMatters.ca.

Focused on the April 19 MS Walk, a national fundraising event for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada with 160 walk sites across Canada, the new blog promises to enable the MS society to connect with people in a new and different way.

"This is a new approach to communication for non-profit organizations," says Ken Mayhew, chief development officer of the society. "Interactivity and participation are what make it special. [The blog] is the new frontier of communicating, and we do feel that we're ahead of the curve with this initiative."

Launched in February, EveryStepMatters.ca has already attracted hundreds of visitors. Bloggers and other contributors share thoughts and ideas related to their involvement in their local MS Walk – expectations, preparation, fundraising tips and stories of past participation. Every contribution matters, and ultimately, every step matters in the attempt to end multiple sclerosis.

"With EveryStepMatters.ca, the MS Society is sending messages in totally new ways and creating direct relationships with a broad network of people," Mayhew says. "What everyone has in common is the commitment to end MS."

Communicating through the fast-growing world of social media is also a direct way for the society to raise awareness of MS among a new audience while promoting its fundraising events and other activities. According to State of the Blogosphere research on Technorati.com, blogs have become integral to the media ecosystem. Seventy-seven per cent of active Internet users read blogs, and bloggers across the globe post messages a million times each day.

The MS Walk has also launched pages on social networking sites Facebook and Twitter, with more than 1,000 combined followers after only one month. Facebook members share stories, view photos and connect with others who want to help end MS, while Twitter users post and follow quick updates on all things related to the MS Walk.

To register for the MS Walk, go to www.mswalks.ca or call 1-888-822-8467. MS Walk social networking sites are at www.everystepmatters.ca, www.twitter.com/mswalk or http://www.facebook.com/pages/MS-Walk/62256087984?ref=mf.

PESACH PREP: Spencer Robins, left, Jennifer Ballon and Josh Blatt, along with fellow students at Leo Baeck Day School's Holy Blossom campus, took part in classroom seders to prepare for and learn about Pesach.

Positive thinking leads to happiness

Does it really?
Go to cjnews.com to read Judy Siblin-Librach's column exploring how happiness and a positive attitude are contagious.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov
The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov to our loving saba, Jack Springer, on his 80th birthday. Love, Josh, Jessica and Samantha Kline. Health and happiness until 120 years.

Ray Starr, mazel tov on the celebration of your 70th birthday. You look fantastic! Love, Janice, Julia and Elliott.

Charles Waltman presents his brother Elliot Micah born Feb. 7. A new son for Deborah & Brian and a grandson for Brenda & Ernie.

Mazel tov Rachel & Ben Schlesinger on your 50th wedding anniversary. With much love from your kids, Avi, Leo, Esther, Michael and families.

Happy third birthday Dylan Ivy on March 21. Daughter of Lauren & Adam Scher. Love, Bubbie Edie & Zaidie Jackie.

Mazel tov to Bradley Pines on his recent bar mitzvah. Much love from his family in Toronto, New York, Israel and London.

Ozzie, Stefanie and big brothers Noah and Jakob welcome Emily Sarenna to the Goldschmied family. Proud Bubbie & Zaidie are Marty & Marlene Rochwerg.

Russell & Christine Blumer of Toronto welcomed Ansley Marie in March.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!
Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

Say it with Trees
Happy & Healthy Passover
JEWISH NATIONAL FUND
416-638-7200

What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation

What's New deadlines: Monday, April 20, is the deadline for the April 30 issue and Monday, April 27, is the deadline for the May 7 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Wednesday, April 8

COMMUNITY SEDER

Chabad of Midtown, MNjcc and Jewish Family and Child host a community seder , 7:30-10:30 p.m. At MNjcc. Led by **Rabbi Nechemia Dietsch**. $60, $35 per child. Reserve, Chabad, 416-516-2005, Jewish Family and Child, 416-961-9344.

Saturday, April 11

THIRD SECULAR SEDER

The Winchevsky Centre hosts its secular community Passover third seder with Yiddish singer **Adrienne Cooper**, Saturday, April 11, 4:30 p.m. $45 for adults, $25 for children aged 3-6, $30 for children aged 7-12, $30 students/unwaged. Includes Haggadah reading, music, drama, Passover dinner. Reserve, www.winchevskycentre.org or 416-789-5502.

Sunday, April 12

CONCERT: WAR & PEACE

In celebration of Passover, **Adrienne Cooper** performs "Every Mother's Son: Jewish Songs of War and Peace," a multimedia concert that features songs in Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew and English, including original compositions spanning jazz, klezmer and 20th-century classical music. 8 p.m. Holy Blossom Temple. $25. Tickets, 416-789-3291, ext. 224, or www.holyblossom.org.

PASSOVER COMEDY NIGHT

Beth Radom Congregation presents **Robert Cait** in Kosher For Passover Comedy Night, 8 p.m. Tickets from $36, 416-636-3451, ext. 21 or 24. (Pls. note: Incorrect information about this event appeared in last week's What's New.)

Monday, April 13

HOLIDAY OF FREEDOM

Hana Werner speaks on "The Holiday of Freedom," tracing the transformation of Hebrew slaves into an empowered people. 7:30 p.m. at Beth David Congregation. 416-633-5500

LIBERATION SEDER

Join Beth Tzedec Congregation, the New Israel Fund of Canada and **Rabbi Lawrence Englander** at Beth Tzedec to celebrate Israel and to pay tribute to the accomplishments of individuals and organizations who dedicate themselves to meet the internal challenges of Israeli society in the 21st century. Hear **Yuvi Tashome**, who at five walked through the Sudan desert as part of Operation Moses in a modern-day Exodus. Upon completing her military service, she founded Friends by Nature, which helps Israeli Ethiopian youth at risk. 7:30 p.m. Reserve, $36, $18 for each additional ticket and for students. 416-781-4322 or seder09@nican.org

Other News

SOLEL: YOM HASHOAH

Join Solel Congregation of Mississauga for Shabbat services on Friday, April 17, 8 p.m. commemorating Yom Hashoah with **John Freund**, of the Azrieli series of Holocaust Survivor Memoirs, speaking on "Spring's End." Call 905-820-5915 for information.

SHABBAT IN 60 MINUTES

Join **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich** and **Cantor Eric Moses** for an interactive Shabbat service, learn how to follow the Shabbat morning service, sing Shabbat songs and gain insight into the weekly Torah portion. Family Shabbat lunch to follow, $10/adult, children free. Saturday, April 18, 10:30 a.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. RSVP,

Continued on page 35

Thorne Mill on Steeles is a leader in an exciting initiative to ensure that it is a place where older adults not only live well, but also age successfully. That initiative is called Masterpiece Living and we invite you to come and learn more at this event!

Your Life is a Masterpiece
Healthy Choices for your Mind, Body and Spirit
1 Afternoon - 3 Sessions
Wednesday, April 15th • 2:00pm - 4:00pm
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Happy Passover!

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The Shoah Scroll

A Community Commemorative Service at
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Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 7:30 pm

FEATURING CANTORS
• Aaron Bensoussan
• Ben Silverberg
• Marshall Loomer

Copies of Megillat Hashoah will be available during the programme and for sale following.

Photo credit: David Shankbone, Yad Vashem Hall of Names

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue
55 Yeomans Road, Toronto, Ontario M3H 3J7
416-633-5500

Continued from page 34

andrea@bethsholom.net or 416-783-6103.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Beth Sholom Synagogue music series offers an evening featuring members of the Beth Sholom professional choir accompanied by **Brahm Goldhamer**. Thursday, April 23, 8 p.m. $18. Tickets, 416-783-6103.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Temple Emanu-El Spring Lecture Series, Mondays 2-4 p.m. Except for April 20, when lecture takes place at 1:30 p.m.; April 20, "Are You Conscious" with **Jay Ingram**; April 27, "The Humanity of Mozart" with **Rick Phillips**; May 4, "**Maria Callas**, The Greatest of All Sopranos?" with **Iain Scott**; May 11, "The American Presidency After Bush" with **Hugh Innes**. $30 series or $10/lecture. Information and registration, 416-449-3880.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Barbara Frum Library offers "Tea and Books," Tuesdays, April 21, May 19 and June 16 at 2 p.m. Knitting group meets Tuesdays, April 28-June 9 (except May 19) at 2:30 p.m. Spring Wellness Series: "Managing Diabetes," Tuesday, April 28, 7 p.m. 416-395-5440

PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

Baycrest Centre is recruiting volunteers to become part of its Palliative Care team. Volunteers spend time with patients who are in their last stages of life and contribute an enormous amount of emotional support and guidance to patients and their families. All volunteers must first complete a general orientation. Training begins in April. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

YIDDISH WITH A TWIST

Friends of Yiddish offer classes to help improve your Yiddish using stories, interactive games and Yiddish songs. The only requirement for enrolment is a love of Yiddish. Classes runs Wednesday, May 6-June 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Winchevsky Centre. $50. To confirm program,10 participants are needed by April 20. Contact, **Sol Hermolin**, shermolin@yahoo.ca or **Ethel Cooper**, ecooper@ujafed.org.

NEW HADASSAH CHAPTER

Women 27 to 32 in the Toronto area are invited to join the new Hadassah-WIZO Yafah chapter, which meets monthly in the Bathurst and Lawrence area. Meetings include discussions of the chapter's fundraising efforts, including a Baby Bear Project, as well as a different activity at each meeting. To join, contact yafahchapter@hotmail.com.

SPRING CONFERENCE

The Women's League for Conservative Judaism, international northeastern branch, holds its annual spring conference May 3-4 at Beth David Synagogue. Highlights includes "Dead Sea Scrolls" with **Prof. Alex Gropper** and "Is Anti-Semitism the Same as Anti-Zionism" and "Violence on Campuses" with **Bernie Farber**. Register, bethdavidsisterhood@yahoo.ca.

VENDORS WANTED

Beth Sholom Synagogue, Beth Tzedec Congregation and **Holy Blossom Temple** host a Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration April 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Beth Tzedec. Vendors interested in participating contact **Andrea**, 416-783-6103, ext. 231, or andrea@bethsholom.net. $50/table.

BAYT Sisterhood is looking for vendors for its annual craft and gift sale on Sunday, May 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tables are $100/vendor. Call **Lynda** at 905-731-0351 or lyndahg@rogers.com.

Na'amat Canada is seeking vendors for its Craft and Gift Show and Sale, Sunday, June 7, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 14th annual Israel Day Festival at Mel Lastman Square. 416-636-5425 or naamat@bellnet.ca.

GIRLS THEATRE PROGRAM

Busting Out! is a free theatre program for girls aged 12 to 16 that strives to provide a forum for young women, through a series of theatre-based workshops, discussion, and collective creation working with professional playwrights, actors and directors. July 6-17. Deadline to apply is April 15. Applications, www.nightwoodtheatre.net. Info, anna@nightwoodtheatre.net or 416-944-1740, ext 6.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

MAZON Canada, A Jewish Response to Hunger needs volunteers for communications, fundraising and event planning committees. Contact **Daphne**, 416-783-7554.

Circle of Care needs volunteers to escort seniors to appointments and on shopping trips on a one-time and occasional basis. Call, 416-635-2860, ext. 462, or pedwards@circleofcare.com.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 38

When You're About to Separate – What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents about to separate, or in the early stages of separation, on how to best meet a child's needs. Tuesday, April 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Widow/Widower 65+ Bereavement: Six-session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Topics, coping with grief, living with loneliness, changing relationships, and new beginnings. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 1- 2:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Today's Woman: A six-session group for women who want to make a change in their lives. Discuss time and stress management, building self-esteem, assertiveness and improving communication skills. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 7-9 p.m. at Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Mah-jong players wanted. Casino Rama, Wednesday, April 22; Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, April 30. 416-395-7881.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Lecture, "Thou Shalt Not Murder? Contemporary Jewish Crime Writing" with **Cheryl Freedman**. Tuesday, April 14, 1-11:30 a.m. $3/class, non-members $6/class.

"Life Lessons in Parshah," Mondays 11:30-12:30 p.m. $3/class, non-members $6/class.

Book Club Short Stories with **Shirley Karbin**, Tuesdays through June 23. $3/week, non-members $6.

Creative writing classes with **Sylvia Warsh**, Fridays, April 17-June 19, 10 a.m. to noon. $54, non members $108.

Trips and travel: Join a trip to Spain from June 1-14, $3,200, non-members $3,300. Call ext. 123

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

The book club meets once a month to review a chosen title with facilitator **Marilyn Fine**. Members receive a copy of a book to read. Next meeting, Thursday, April 23, 1:30 p.m. Register, ext. 2267.

Closed Thursday, April 9, 10, 15 and 16.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. centrecamp@bjcc.ca or ext. 378.

The Jewish Discovery Museum offers Raising a Mindful Child, a workshop about using stories rather than discipline to teach your child important life lessons. April 17-May 8. Info, **Sarah Brodbar-Nemzer**, ext. 390.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Register for Hebrew and Yiddish classes April-June. Yiddish For Beginners, with **Jeannette Stein**; Modern Hebrew for Beginners Level A/Aleph; Modern Hebrew for Beginners, level B; Modern Hebrew: Intermediate Level; Modern Hebrew Conversation; So, What's New? Reading Israeli Newspapers; Hebrew Prepositions Workshop; Biblical and Siddur Hebrew. Information, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

NCSY CHARITY GAME-SHOW EVENING: Davida Ander, Sarah Teich and Zack Stern recently won the game The Q, at a National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY) charity game-show evening. Money was raised for Yad Ezra VeShulamit, an organization based in Jerusalem that provides assistance to Israelis, supplying more than 2,500 food packages each week and 10,000 at holiday seasons, with the help of more than 500 volunteers. From left are Esther Benayon, Ander, Teich, Michael Goldstein and Stern.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL — Steeles Memorial Chapel

Arie Tzur	Mar 19/09	80 Antibes Drive
Avi Goldstein	Mar 20/09	45 Artstan Drive
Pearl Maron	Mar 24/09	45 Brunswick Avenue
Chana Grynberg	Mar 25/09	1 Meadowbrook Road
Erich Seidler	Mar 24/09	7805 Bayview Avenue
Sarah Finn	Mar 24/09	111 Avenue Road
Jesse Goldhar	Mar 26/09	20 Burkebrook Place
Stella Ziff	Mar 26/09	4415 Britania Drive
Jack Antflek	Mar 26/09	100 Antibes Drive
Anne Schwartz	Mar 28/09	3560 Bathurst Street
Maria Radulescu	Mar 28/09	4207 Sunflower Dr.
Myrna Silverman	Mar 28/09	206 Acton Avenue

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Matviy Portnoy	Mar 23/09	625 Finch Ave. West
Howard Greenspan	Mar 26/09	9 Lisa Cres
Lori Levine	Mar 24/09	653 Major MacKenzie Dr.E.

Jakubowicz, Miriam	Mar 5/09	68 Codsell Ave
Salmon, Allan	Mar 7/09	77 Evanston Dr
Cohen, Ruth Colette	Mar 6/09	Private
Goldstein, Anna	Mar 6/09	741 Finch Ave. W
Cohan, Shirley Sadie	Mar 7/09	7440 Bathurst St
Adler, Jacob	Mar 8/09	24 Dunsmore Grnds
Gouslitser, Mark	Mar 8/09	5 Fisherville Rd
Klein Frisch, Susana	Mar 8/09	Private
Krybus, Rachela	Mar 9/09	3560 Bathurst St
Malet, Paula Heather	Mar 8/09	465 Worth Blvd
Lambert, Freda	Mar 8/09	16 Christine Ct
Rosenholtz, Ziskind	Mar 10/09	234 Thornhill Woods
Fichtenbaum, Solomon	Mar 10/09	86 Invermay Ave
Kaplan, Rabbi David	Mar 10/09	
Simai, Mikdos	Mar 10/09	850 Steeles Ave. W
Indik, Moshe	Mar 10/09	3560 Bathurst St
Woolf, Laurence Sinclair	Mar 10/09	Private
Aschaiek, Ytschak	Mar 11/09	95 Alameda Circle
Kamelmacher, Anna	Mar 20/09	96 Black Hawkway
Haydu, Joli	Mar 20/09	40 North Meadow Cr
Brant, Reuben	Mar 19/09	
Zober, Olga	Mar 20/09	3560 Bathurst St
Marks, Brian	Mar 20/09	225 St. George St
Brasch, Gertrude	Mar 21/09	Private
Rechtsman, Samuel	Mar 21/09	
Taraday, Tatiana	Mar 21/09	Private
Green, Harold Lewis	Mar 21/09	
Rose, Julius	Mar 21/09	333 Clark Ave. W.
Beube, Sidney	Mar 21/09	
Sliwowicz, Doba	Mar 22/09	172 Searle Ave
Shepherd, Reuben	Mar 24/09	Private
Schonberger, Armin	Mar 22/09	83 Millmount Ave
Letichever, Mikhail	Mar 25/09	4750 Bathurst St
Finson, Mary	Mar 26/09	3705 Bathurst St
Berenholtz, Marcos	Mar 26/09	Private

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late

DR. STEPHEN SPEISMAN ז"ל

loving husband, father, grandfather & brother

will take place

Sunday, April 19, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.

Pardes Shalom Cemetery

BAYT Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The family of the late

Azriel Karp ז"ל

wishes to thank everyone for their generous donations in his memory.

The family of the late

CHARLOTTE CHERLON ז"ל

would like to express their appreciation for the caring and for the many donations sent on her memory during our recent bereavement.

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Coast to Coast

DNA scientist to speak in Vancouver

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — If you've never heard of DNA methylation, you can learn about the subject when Prof. Howard Cedar comes to the city.

The man known worldwide as the father of DNA methylation – chemical changes in the DNA molecule – delivers a seminar titled Silence of the Genes at UBC Life Sciences Institute from 11 a.m. to noon on April 22.

Cedar is the guest of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU) this month when he comes into Vancouver to celebrate the pending opening of the new Institute of Medical Research Israel Canada (IMRIC) at Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

CFHU is hoping to raise some $50 million in the next few years to make the institute a reality. When its doors open, the IMRIC will consolidate a number of areas of bio-research at the Hebrew University Faculty of Medicine in Ein Kerem, Jerusalem, thereby facilitating multi-disciplinary collaboration. Those fields are infectious disease and immunology, cancer, genetics and developmental biology, nutrition and metabolism, cardiovascular disease, and the brain and the central nervous system.

Cedar will be one of the faculty members to relocate his office to the new institute, and though the move sounds organizational, it's much more than that, he says. "This change towards multidisciplinary collaboration between the biological and medical sciences is going on all over the world," he says.

"If you want to study a disease, the only way to do it is by bringing people from different disciplines together so they can have day-to-day contact and use common equipment and facilities."

Cedar should know. His research may have groundbreaking implications in the study and possible future remedy of cancer and has already received acclaim. He won the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in Israel – the Wolf Prize, last year, receiving $100,000 for his work.

The process of DNA methylation turns on and off the 40,000-odd genes in the body. While everyone inherits genetic information, it has to be used in a programmed manner, Cedar explains. "That programming is called epigenetics, and the older one gets, the more likely the programming mechanism is to make mistakes. Changes in epigenetics could predispose a person to cancer, and in only five per cent of cancer cases is methylation not involved."

Cedar is an observant father of six who was born in the United States. After medical school, he received his doctorate from New York University in 1970. He conducted research at the U.S. National Institutes of Health before making aliyah with his wife, Tzippi, and accepting a position at the Jerusalem medical school's department of cellular biochemistry and human genetics 36 years ago.

Thanks to his work on the fundamentals of DNA methylation since the early 1970s, the field has expanded.

"There are a number of diseases in which DNA methylation plays a very big role, and as a result new methodologies are now being used, which are enriching the field, as well as work being done on a drug that can inhibit DNA methylation," Cedar says.

But research is in its relatively early stages, he adds. "In mice, there are a number of different tumours that can be prevented by using agents that prevent DNA methylation, but it's a very big step to go from mice to people."

Cedar is a modest man who shies away from celebrity and describes curiosity as his main motivator. "No one starts off saying, I'm going to cure this, but the nice thing is that when you do your research, often you discover something that will be part of the big picture in the end," he says.

"That's as important as curing the disease, because it provides information and concepts for other scientists, to help them do their work. So I'll be very happy if my contribution helps by allowing someone else do something practical."

Summerhill LCBO sells entire stock of Israeli wine

Continued from page 3

to fight the boycott by purchasing Israeli wine.

The result was a successful counter-boycott that attracted about 600 supporters of Israel to the Summerhill LCBO, who bought out the store's entire stock of Israeli wine.

LCBO spokesperson Chris Layton said that a total of 1,455 bottles of Israeli kosher wine and spirits were sold at the Summerhill LCBO on Sunday.

Ami Cohen, who was also supporting Israel, said the boycotters left soon after the counter-demonstration began.

"They had about six people here. They came here and then they left."

Layton said that when the Summerhill location sold out, staff encouraged consumers to visit other LCBO locations that carry a large selection of Israeli kosher products.

A staff member at the LCBO at Bathurst and Centre streets in Thornhill said the store's entire stock of Israeli wine was sold out.

John Begley, general manager of the Summerhill LCBO, said about 500 people walked through the doors at the Summerhill LCBO to purchase Israeli wine.

"I can tell you that I had not only stock of Israeli kosher wine to meet our normal demand, based on historical data… but I also had some residual stock as well."

He said the store was completely sold out by around 2 p.m. Non-Israeli kosher wine also sold well, but the stock wasn't completely sold out.

With the sun shining and the temperature in the double digits, hundreds of people draped in Israeli flags and carrying signs that said, "Support Israel. Buy Israeli wine," and, "Israeli apartheid = Pure Balderdash," demonstrated on Yonge Street outside the store.

Jerry Klayman, a JDL member, said that although the boycott was called for 1 p.m., he showed up at 11 a.m. "to secure a spot."

"We have groups from UJA, the JDL, B'nai Brith, and it's a beautiful thing to see all the people come out and get behind Israel. That is the most important thing," Klayman said.

"The other side doesn't look like they have much representation… Now we're hoping to get the same [anti-Israel] group to protest against matzah, so maybe that will help them sell matzah. And then gefilte fish," he said with a laugh.

Pro-Israel demonstrators were joined by Yids on Wheels, a Jewish motorcycle club, and a Chabad cube van drove up and down Yonge Street blaring Hebrew songs.

Pro-Israel supporters waved Israeli flags as they danced and sang Hatikvah in front of the store.

Above: a man makes a purchase of Israeli wine at the Summerhill LCBO. Below: Israel supporters rally outside. [Sheri Shefa photos]

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Coast to Coast

Federations start to feel recession's bite

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The recent economic downturn has had an impact on Canadian Jewish federations, but the effect is less dramatic than in the United States, where three of the largest federations have announced significant layoffs over the past few weeks.

Linda Kislowicz, executive vice-president of UIA Federations Canada (UIAFC), told The CJN last week that the impact here varies from community to community.

Some Canadian UJA campaigns show slight decreases while others are "holding," she said. American federations have been hit harder, in part because their campaigns begin later in the year, she added.

Canadian campaigns typically start in August or September, Kislowicz said, and the full scope of the recession only became evident later. As well, she said, the American economy has been hit "way harder.

"We have concerns, certainly, about next year."

Kislowicz noted that there have been some reductions in budget allocations, both locally and nationally. They range from less than five per cent to between 12 and 15 per cent, she said.

The UIAFC budget has been cut almost 15 per cent, with a resulting 10 per cent cut in national allocations. As well, a total of five UIAFC positions have been cut in Toronto and Israel since the beginning of March. Four people are no longer working for the organization, and the other position was cut by reducing hours, Kislowicz said.

In Toronto, 10 full-time jobs were eliminated from the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz) in early March, but the move did not have to do with the economic downturn, federation spokesperson Howard English said at the time. The federation has announced an additional $500,000 for tuition subsidies, and "hopefully, enhanced funding for supplementary schools and special education."

Seymour Epstein, who was the federation's senior vice-president for Mercaz until April 8, was offered a senior position with the federation, but is no longer with the organization as of that date.

There was also one federation staff position eliminated outside the Mercaz, but English would not confirm whether it was a staff or contract position, citing confidentiality of personnel information. He said that there "are no cuts anticipated at this time."

Plans to demolish the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and replace it with a new facility called the Prosserman JCC are expected to proceed this fall. The BJCC will remain open until Sept. 27, English said.

The estimated cost of the building a year ago was $160 million, of which $85 million in cash donations had been raised at the time.

Toronto's campaign revenue for this year stands at $62.5 million and is expected to reach $65 million, just under last year's total of $66 million, said English. Totals for the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto are not yet being made public.

In Montreal, Federation CJA has had to cut programs and jobs because of the economic situation (see article on page 39).

Kislowicz said, "We need people to understand that we need everyone to participate and stretch even in times when it might be hard. In times like these, our focus is on protecting those who need our help."

There is a double whammy of "growing needs, and in some cases diminished capacity," she said.

* * *

Since the beginning of March, the Jewish federations in New York, Cleveland and Atlanta have laid off between 11 per cent and 25 per cent of their professional staffs. Each organization cited shrinking donations because of the economic downturn as the reason behind the moves.

Howard Rieger, the president and CEO of the federation system's national organization, the United Jewish Communities, expressed significant concern for the system and UJC's own well-being as an organization that relies on dues from increasingly cash-strapped federations.

His comments follow a run of layoffs at major federations, among them:

• On March 11, the country's largest federation, the UJA-Federation of New York, which raised some $153 million in its annual campaign last year, announced that it was cutting 52 employees – slightly more than 11 per cent of its staff. The federation is 10 per cent behind in its fundraising pledges compared to the previous year and 12 per cent behind on collections, and has seen its $675-million endowment shrink by 25 per cent.

• The same day, the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta laid off 14 employees in an effort to cut 19 per cent from its operating budget – the second round of layoffs that the federation has faced, according to UJC staff members.

• On March 5, the Jewish Federation of Greater Cleveland announced that it had laid off 25 staffers as part of a plan to trim $600,000 from its operating expenses in the face of a $3-million budget shortfall. Donations to the federation's annual campaign reportedly are down by about $5 million, and its endowment funds have decreased in value by 29 per cent.

Rieger is warning that the federations are dangerously close to putting their operations in jeopardy if they have to cut more.

It's a message that hits close to home for the UJC.

In May, the UJC cut 37 jobs in an effort to reduce its budget from $40.2 million to $37 million, and it's facing more cuts in the near future.

The organization is under intense pressure from the federations it serves to cut its budget even further.

Rieger has offered to slice the budget another 10 per cent and is waiting to see if that will be sufficient for the federations. The decision could be made over the next several weeks, as the UJC is set to hold budget meetings soon in Chicago.

With files from Jacob Berkman, JTA

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Correction

The article "Here comes the Blessing of the Sun" (CJN, April 2) contained some incorrect information. The correct date for the reciting of the Blessing of the Sun was the 14th of Nisan (April 8), the morning before Pesach. The CJN regrets the error.

חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

אני חייבת להודות, אני קצת מוטרדת מליל הסדר. בישראל אחזנו, מאיר ואני, בשמונה אחים במשותף. שמונה אחים למאיר, בת יחידה- אני. סעודות החגים היו משפחתיות, מגוונות ומרנינות (שמונה אחים על נשותיהם המרושעות וטפם ההיפראקטיבי-אצל הוריו של מאיר, ומשפחה לא מתפקדת, פלוס הורים גרושים-אצלי).

"אני מתגעגע למאכלים של אמא שלי." מיילל לי מאיר הנוגה. "אני רוצה קניידלעך..." הוא מתפנק, ולא עוזר שאני מזכירה לו שאמו, מוצאה ממצרים, ומעולם לא נמסר כדור קניידל טועה אחד אל שולחן הפסח המשפחתי שלו.

גם אני טיפה מתגעגעת. למשל לגיסתי נורית, שתמיד יש לה משהו נהדר להגיד לך בחגים ("אוי, נינוש, אני רואה שאת במגמת החזרה לטבע עם השיער. מי צריך ללכת למספרה, נכון! אה, זה אחרי המספרה! נו טוב...").

או למשל גיסי עומר השנורר ("אז נינה, את כבר מרוויחה משהו מהספרים שפרסמת! כי הבת שלי מעריצה אותך. אולי תיפגשו, ככה, לשופינג של אחרי החג! הרי את מרוויחה יופי, לא!").

בעיקר אני מתגעגעת לגיסתי שרון, שתמיד מחמיאה לי על המאכל היחיד שמאיר מרשה לי להביא לשולחן המשפחתי ("איזה מתוקה נינה. איך חשוב לה שלא נאכל הרבה ושנעשה דיאטה, אז היא מביאה לנו את המאכלים שלה..."). גם אל הגיס שלי, מיקי, נפשי כמהה. איך תמיד הוא יודע לספר כמה הילדים שלו מרוצים בפנימיה באנגליה (באמת!), וכמה עצוב שאני לא מצליחה לחנך את ילדי, כמו שצריך (מאיה שלי, שלא נדע, לא השתלטה על מיסתורי הצ'ופ סטיקס, ואוכלת אורז סיני עם כף. עם כף!!!).

כמו שאתם רואים, יש לי בהחלט למה להתגעגע. הבעייה החמורה יותר היא הילדים. הילדים הזכים והנאיבים שלי, שבולעים כל לוקש (כשר לפסח) עם האמירות נוטפות הרעל (כשר לפסח) שהמשפחה מורחת על האימא היחידה שלהם, ומוצאים לנכון לבכות לי ערב החג: "אמא. לאן לקחת אותנו! רוצים הביתה!".

אז החלטתי לספק להם את אותה החוויה, כמעט.

פתחתי אחר כבוד את ספר הטלפונים השחור שלי, והתחלתי לחייג. ראשונה זו שולה, זאת שבגללה לא התקבלתי לעבודה במוסד היהודי הנחשק, כי היא סיפרה לבוסית בפוטנציה, שאמרתי שאני מעדיפה בוסים גברים, ואיזה יופי שיש לה שפם...

שולה מופתעת מאוד שאני מזמינה אותה, על משפחתה, לליל הסדר. מובן שאין לה תוכניות (נו...) והיא מסכימה בהיסוס.

הלאה.

אני מתקשרת ליגאל, ידיד לשעבר של מאיר, שהבטיח לנו שהוא כבר ייסדר אותנו בקנדה (בעבודה, בחברה), ובאמת "סידר" אותנו כהוגן, ועד היום חייב לנו המון כסף.

יגאל מתפלא מאוד על ההזמנה, ורק כשאני נשבעת שאני לא רוצה בשום אופן את הכסף שלי בחזרה, ניאות לבוא אף הוא לארוחה.

הטלפון השלישי מגיע לאלקסנדרה, בחורה מקסימה, שנורא אוהבת אותנו. בעיקר את בעלי ("מאיר, מה בחור יפה וגבוה ומוכשר שכמוך, עושה עם אישה שלא מנקה, שלא עושה כביסה ושלא מבשלת!"). אני מבטיחה לאלקסנדרה שמאיר ואני רבים מאוד לאחרונה, והיא מסכימה להצטרף לארוחה בלי בעיות.

אחרון ברשימה הוא ג'ייק, ידיד בלתי נשכח שלי, בזכותו איבדתי שני זוגות חברים משותפים, שכן הוא שיכנע אותם שאני פרה סנובית שלא סובלת את הילדים הלא מוצלחים (לטענתו-לטענתי) שלהם. סיפרתי לג'ייק שאני שוקלת למסור את ילדי שלי לאימוץ, והוא הסכים להצטרף לליל הסדר באצילות.

אז אתם רואים! יש לי כבר ארבע משפחות לארח לחג. יש בעייה קטנטונת והיא, שמאיר לא ממש יודע על זה שהזמנתי אותם, וחושב שנבלה ערב משפחתי אינטימי (כלומר, אין לו מושג שהוא צריך לעמוד ולבשל לעשרים ואחד איש, ובמהירות). אבל, כמו שאמרה מי שאמרה בישראל, אני נשמה מתחשבת ולא רוצה שאף אחד ישמין אצלי...

חוץ מזה, האווירה תהיה, מן הסתם, מדהימה ובעיקר-משפחתית. אנחנו הרי תמיד נמשכים אל המוכר. ואם לא יתחשק לי להיות אחר כך בקשר עם האנשים האלה, אני לא דואגת. יש לי את שולה, שתעליב כבר מישהו, את יגאל, שיהיה כבר חייב כסף למישהו, את אלקסנדרה שתגנוב כבר איזה בעל למישהי, ולקינוח- את ג'ייק, שיסכסך כבר בין כולם. ממש כמו בבית!

חג שמח!

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Coast to Coast

Montreal federation makes cuts, balances budget

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Through cuts to programs and jobs and drawing on its savings, Federation CJA in Montreal has managed to balance its budget for 2009-2010, president Marc Gold said.

A few jobs within the federation and its agencies have been eliminated, others downsized and some vacant positions will not be filled. A system-wide salary freeze was also imposed.

The federation is allocating $32.5 million to local, national and international programs and services this year.

The impact of the economic downturn on the federation has been dramatic, Gold said, and he warned that more belt-tightening may be ahead.

However, he added, it's likely the average community member will not see a major impact on what the federation or its agencies offer.

The federation was left with a $3.6 million shortfall after revenues from the 2008 Combined Jewish Appeal were down, as was interest on the federation's capital. At the same time, demand for support from the community's neediest was up.

At its close in November, CJA announced that it expected that pledges would total $40.3 million, almost matching the 2007 campaign total.

In fact, Gold said pledges were down by $1.3 million, while interest on capital decreased by $850,000 and so-called shrinkage, primarily due to pledges not being honoured, reduced the funds available to spend by a further $1 million.

On top of that, more money is needed for tuition assistance for students at Jewish day schools whose parents can't pay and for basic support to the poorest.

Altogether, these costs, which have been deemed unavoidable, amount to an additional $500,000, Gold said.

After a lengthy process, Gold believes the federation has been able to minimize the impact on its core programs and services, and to redirect resources where there is the greatest need.

A balanced budget was achieved by reducing national and international allocations, as well as allocations to the federation itself and its agencies. The federation also dipped into money that it had set aside last year in anticipation of this year's difficulties, he said.

Wherever possible, costs were cut by reducing overhead, sharing back-office resources and reducing building hours.

"But, inevitably, programs had to be eliminated or reduced in scope, and that did have an impact on staffing at Federation CJA and at several agencies," Gold said.

Programs that have not been touched are those benefitting the most vulnerable, such as the Community Assistance Program, which provides direct financial assistance to those in need.

"As difficult as this was, I am proud to say that we collaborated fully with our agencies and national partners in setting communal priorities. Together, we made certain that the basic and essential services that we provide to our community remained firmly in place," Gold wrote in a letter to community leaders.

"Indeed, we did not reduce our allocations to the programs that address the needs of those most in need of our services. Moreover, we have taken a number of steps to meet the increasing needs of our community as a result of the tough economic times."

Of the $32.5 million in allocations, 68 per cent is local, 32 per cent to Israel, and the rest to national agencies and services. This does not include the $10 million in one-time gifts designated by the donors for projects in Israel collected during last year's CJA.

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CJC changes name in Quebec

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec Region, n'est plus.

The organization that speaks for the province's Jewish community is now officially called Congrès juif québécois, Section québécoise du Congrès juif canadien or, in English, Quebec Jewish Congress, the Quebec division of Canadian Jewish Congress.

The name change, which is effective immediately, was approved unanimously by the Quebec regional officers and, with the exception of one dissenting vote, by the national officers of CJC, said regional president Victor Goldbloom. He added that the national co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Montrealer Sylvain Abitbol have personally enthusiastically endorsed the change.

While there was some questioning from a few people when the matter was brought before the national body in March, only one person ultimately cast a negative ballot, and he is not from Quebec, Goldbloom said.

Goldbloom said the idea of giving the regional CJC a new name that makes Quebec more prominent has been discussed for a number of months internally.

"The feedback that we have been getting from the media and in public opinion in general, regardless of political affiliation, is that we should be more explicitly identified with Quebec, that such a move would be positively perceived," he said.

Jews have lived in Quebec for 249 years, he said, and are an integral part of this society and should be seen to be so.

The name change does not alter in any way the region's relationship with the national body or its mandate, Goldbloom emphasized, and that's why the official name continues to include "Canadian Jewish Congress."

"It's not that the Canadian in our name was a negative or is being rejected, it is that 'Quebec' is a positive," he said.

Goldbloom, who was a Quebec cabinet minister in the 1970s, has been on a speaking tour of the province over the past year, and his impression is that if he was introduced as the head of a clearly Quebec-identified organization, it would be welcome. On the couple of occasions that he floated the idea of the name Congrès juif québécois, he was applauded.

As for why the new name could not have been Congrès juif du Québec, rather than using the politically charged word "Québécois," Goldbloom said this was discussed and it was decided that because the name is Congrès juif canadien, it made the most sense to change that last word to its adjectival equivalent.

"I agree 'Québécois' can be politically charged, but the Jewish community has been an integral part of this society for 249 years. During the recent 'reasonable accommodation' debate and so on there was a tendency to put the Jewish community in the same category as other communities who have come here much more recently," he said. "It is important to be identified as an integral part of this society."

As has been the custom for decades, the French version of the name will predominate on any official correspondence or documentation. He said the CJC constitution does not appear to put up any obstacle to such a name change.

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Edited by: ALEK SILVER
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רעדאַגירט פון: אַלעק סילווער

מיין זיידנס אפיקומן
(מחשבות לכבוד פסח)
פון אַלעק סילווער

עס איז שוין לאַנג אַריין אין אונדזער געשיכטע, אז דאס יידישע פאלק שטעלט צו אייגענע סימבאָלן צו אירע תפילות, שטעלט איין נייע טראַדיציע און אַ סך מאל פירט עס איין נייע מצוות. גיט אַ קוק, אדרבה, אין אַלטע און נייע נסחאות פון הגדות אין פאַרשיידענע שטעט און לענדער אוך איר וועט וווּנדערן איבערצייגט.

אין מיין אַלטן געבורטס־שטעטל סטאַפּניץ איז עס געווען מיין זיידע, וועלכער האָט אינגעפירט זייַנע טראַדיציעס אַרום דעם יום־טוב פסח. ביי מיין זיידן ר' מרדכי־לייב סטאַליאר [זייפמאַן] ע"ה זייַנען געווען אַזעלכע טראַדיציעס ביז דאס שטעטל מיט אירע יידישע אינוווינער איז אָפגעווישט געוואָרן פון דער פּוילישער מאַפּע דורך די נאַצישע מערדערס.

מיין זיידע איז נישט געווען קיין גרויסער נגיד, אַבער מען קען נישט זאָגן, אז ער איז געווען אַן אַרעמער מאַן. ער מיט מיין באָבען פּעסל ע"ה האָבן גפּעירט אַ שיינע יידישע הים כדת משה וישׂראל. ערשט שפּעטער, ווען איך בין אַ ביסל אונטערגעוואַקסן, האָב איך געלערנט וועגן טראַדיציאָנעלע מעשים, וואָס מיין זיידע האָט זיך געהאַלטן ביי זיי.

אויף דער וואָגט אין מיין באָבעס קיך איז אויף אַ קליין נעגעלע אין דער וואָגט געהאָנגען אַ רונדיק שטיקל מצה. אדיב איז געדענקט נאָך זייַנען די מצות אין אַלטן שטעטל געמאכט געוואָרן מיט די העגט. זיי זייַנען געווען גרעבער ווי די היינטיקע און אויף זיי זייַנען געווען „טאַלן" און „בערגלען". ווען איינס איז אַ ביסל צוגעברענט געווארן, האָט עס אויסגעזען ווי אַ שוואַרץ אויף ווייס מאַלעריי. אַזוי האָט אויסגעזען צו מיר דאס שטיקל רונדיקע מצה, וואָס אויך האָב אין מיינע יונגע יאָרן נישט פאַרשטאַנען.

שפּעטער האָט מען מיר געגעבן צו פאַרשטיין, אז דער זיידע האָט „צוגעטשעפּעט" צו דעם — מען קען עס אַנרופן — דריי מכלומרשטע טראַדיציעס. עס איז געווען דער אפיקומן פון דער לעצטער סדר־נאַכט. דאָס האָט אים שטענדיק דערמאָנט, אז פּסח דערנענטערט זיך. די צוויייטע „טראַדיציע" האָט אים דערמאָנט, אז פונקט ווי דער אפיקומן איז געלט רונדיק און קען לייגן פון איינעם צום צווייטן. אין דער דיטער האָט ער שטענדיק געזען, אז אויך דאָס לעבן איז רונדיק. מען הייבט אָן אין איין זייט און עס גייט אַרום און אַרום ביז צום סוף. די באָבע פּעסל האָט עס געוויישט יעדע וואָך און דער זיידע פלעגט עס טיילן מאָל קושן ווי אַ מזוזה.

וואָס איז געוואָרן מיט דעם לעצטן אפיקומן? אין וויס נישט. אין דאַרטן שוין נישט געווען. אַבער, קענענדיק מיינע זיידע־באָבע, קען איך איין מער־וויניק איבערגעבן וואָס עס איז געשען אין די לעצטע מינוטן. די באָבע פּעסל האָט מיט גרויס בעווייַן אראפגענומען די „מאַלעריי" פון דער וואָגט און עס געגעבן דעם זיידן ר' מרדכי־לייב צו באַהאַלטן פרגעזן. דער זיידע האָט געזומען דעם לעצטן אפיקומן, אים געגעבן אַ קוש און אריינגעליגט אין דער זייטן־קעשענע פון דער מאַרינאַרקע, געגעבן אַ גלעזל די קעשענע, און געזאָגט: „פּעסל, עס איז שוין צייט צו גיין".

זיי האָבן געזומען די טלימאָלקעך און אַרויס אין דרויסן, ווּ עס האָט שוין אויף זיי געוואַרט דער גאַנצער ציבור איבערגעבליבענע יידן פון „קליינעם געטא". אונטער די קלעפּ פון נאַצישע גאַייקעס און זייערע ווילדע געשרייען זייַנען זיי אַוועק מיט זיי אין פאַרשוווּנדן צוזאַמען אויף אייביק.

Coverage of alleged Gaza abuses raises questions

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Last week, this column looked at how the Canadian and international media jumped on allegations that Israeli soldiers acted improperly during the war in Gaza. As it turned out, an investigation by Israeli military police into the charges found that they were based on rumours and hearsay rather than eyewitness reports, and so were factually groundless.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the dismissal of the reports received much less media attention than the initial allegations. For example, on March 20, the Toronto Star gave the supposed Israel Defence Forces misconduct front-page prominence. It covered the inquiry result in a brief, March 31 Associated Press story titled "Israel rules out charges in Gaza deaths."

AP reported: "Citing insufficient evidence and hearsay, the Israeli military yesterday closed an investigation into two cases of alleged killings of Gaza civilians that had caused an uproar in Israel and around the world."

Similarly, the Globe and Mail ran a very brief excerpt from a New York Times report ("Israeli military closes Gaza abuse probe," March 31) that noted: "The military police found that 'the crucial components of their descriptions were based on hearsay and not supported by specific personal knowledge,' the army said."

The original March 31 New York Times piece, "Israeli Army Ends Inquiry Into Soldiers' Accounts of Gaza Abuses," by Isabel Kershner, supplied many more details. Kershner wrote: "Specifically, a soldier's claim that orders had been given to fire at an elderly Palestinian woman who entered a no-go zone was found to be based on a rumour, according to the military. Another case, in which a soldier had supposedly been ordered to fire at a woman and two children, was also found not to have been witnessed by the soldier who gave the account."

Kershner noted that the allegations had arisen from the accounts of soldiers at a pre-military college, and that "the academy's director, Dany Zamir, told Army Radio on Monday that he accepted the... report. Still, he added, 'If soldiers will now feel that they cannot talk because of the outcome of this specific story, then this is very bad for us as a society and army.'

"On the other hand, he stated, it was not his intention to attract news media attention by making the contents of the soldiers' discussion public. He added that the news media's focus on the story 'truly complicated everything.'"

This entire episode raises some important questions. Should the media, both in Israel and internationally, have given so much prominence to a story based on rumours, especially with sensational coverage that made the allegations look like fact? Is it sufficient for many of the same news outlets to carry, many days later, very brief reports of an investigation that showed the allegations were false? Once the damage has been done, is this adequate repair?

As many Israeli analysts explained, no one is pretending that the IDF did not make mistakes in the heat of battle. Rather, the media have a responsibility to place Israel's actions in proper perspective, and to maintain a sense of proportionality in judging Israeli conduct.

The Israeli army was facing a new kind of enemy – not another army, but rather Hamas, a "non-state actor" that deliberately embeds itself among the civilian population. In such circumstances, mistakes – and even wrongful actions – are bound to occur, no matter how careful Israeli forces are in trying to avoid harming innocent civilians.

But when the world latches on to unsubstantiated allegations of isolated wrongdoing and ignores the army's greater commitment to moral conduct, Israelis feel alone, unfairly tarnished and, indeed, betrayed.

* * *

The Toronto Star's March 22 editorial, "Shun Sudan's leader," denounced the decision of the Arab League, which held its recent summit in Qatar, to embrace Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir in defiance of his recently being indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Darfur. Al-Bashir's "Arab-led regime in Khartoum" is responsible for killing 300,000 people in Darfur and driving three million from their homes. As to the Arab League, the Star wrote that "even a club of kings, strongmen and despots shames itself by breaking bread with a man accused of murder, transfer, torture and rape."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Is he dependent or not?

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 26 years

Question: My 19-year-old lives with his mother. He has been out of school since January and has been working part time. A few months ago, I stopped paying child support. She took me to court and was granted temporary support payment, which is still being enforced.

She knowingly misinformed the court, claiming that he had applied to college and was accepted. On the next court date, instead of presenting the facts to the court, she shows up with his exam results stating he is short 3-1/2 credits and is reapplying to attend grade 11.

The court asked her to present proof of this information. I understood that if a child is 18, not in school and mentally and physically stable, the access parent is not legally bound to support the child.

This kid is over 19 and has not been in school since January. Why is the court ordering me to pay child support for this kid?

Answer: It could be that the court felt that the child was a dependent. If his mother will not file documentary proof within a specified time, then the court will likely halt the support payments.

But so long as the child is reapplying to go back to grade 11, he is still a dependent. Also, if you are representing yourself, the court may not be as persuaded as you think it should be. Finally, if the child is truly lazy and refuses to sit in the classroom and is content working in a retail outlet rather than being in school, then you certainly do not have to support him. But if the child is failing in school or dropping out because of a learning disability, the court will be very sympathetic to that child and his mother.

On behalf of my family, and all of us at Garfin Zeidenberg, I wish you and your family a happy and healthy Passover.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Call (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Tories reversed government voting pattern at UN: Day

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — International Trade Minister Stockwell Day last week delivered an ardent defence of Israel, lauded Canada's relative good position in the world economic crisis, and pledged Prime Minister Stephen Harper's unwavering commitment to upholding human rights.

Several times, audience members at the Chevra Kadisha B'nai Jacob Synagogue stood to applaud the Tory member of Parliament for Okanagan–Coquihalla.

The synagogue's Rabbi Asher Jacobson and president Les Schiller praised Day before and after his April 2 talk.

Day delivered pre-Passover greetings and struck an informal tone in a 45-minute talk that covered a range of issues, from last week's G20 summit to Canada's role in Afghanistan and the war on terror.

Day got the most positive feedback when he talked about how the Conservative Party – both in opposition and in power – has not wavered in its support of Israel and when he spoke about the Tory stance against anti-Semitism, as well as for the government's United Nations voting record and its position on terrorism.

It was the Tories who pledged to reverse decades of Canadian voting at the United Nations that either supported or abstained from resolutions critical of Israel, Day said.

"We said then, 'If the government ever changes, that will, too,'" Day said.

The Conservatives under Harper have lived up to the promise by supporting Israel at the UN and refusing to attend "Durban II" (the followup to the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, at which Israel was singled out as racist), he said.

Day has visited Israel three times and described his first visit with his wife, Val, about five years ago as "one of the most memorable of our lives."

Unforgettable to him was his trip to the northern border, where on display just, on the other side, were billboards containing images of Israeli soldiers being tortured.

"You never see these things in the media," he said.

Day wondered aloud why Israel is held up to standards that no other country is.

When he speaks at campuses, he said, students seem unaware of basic information on Israel, such as Israel being "an island of democracy surrounded by a sea of dictatorships," or that Muslims in Israel enjoy full religious freedom and can even serve on its Supreme Court.

While in Israel, Day, a Pentecostal, wanted to go to church. The church's Muslim caretaker had a key to the building. A Jewish Israeli friend joined Day and the caretaker, and the three of them struggled to get into the building.

"Where else in the world would a Jew and a Muslim help a Christian 'break into' a church?" he asked to laughter.

On his second trip, Day visited Sderot, which was under barrage by Hamas. "Why is it when someone attacks Israel it's a 'rocket attack,' but when Israel responds, it's 'bombing,'" Day asked.

While the world has condemned Israel for responding, he said Harper has said that "every country has a right to defend itself."

Day remembered that as public safety minister, he was accompanied by Jewish community officials to a Muslim school in Montreal that had been vandalized.

He said that "so often it's members of the Jewish community who appeal on behalf of other religions because they know what it's like not to be protected."

It was while Day was public safety minister last year that he and Israeli Public Security Minister Avi Dichter co-signed a deal to cooperate on issues pertaining to border security, illegal immigration and organized crime.

He was incredulous that Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – who has pledged to destroy Israel – was received with applause at the UN.

"How could this happen, to applaud the leader of a state who wants the destruction of Israel?" Day asked.

Day reported that at the recent G20 summit Canada was lauded in the media for being "the best prepared for the economic crisis" and that coming out of it Canada would emerge "in best shape" because of its conservative and prudent banking system.

The current economic stimulus plan will "accelerate" to two years, instead of seven, $30 billion worth of infrastructure projects, he said.

Day said Canada is still pledged to end its military involvement in Afghanistan by 2011, but remains committed to helping the country in other ways.

Few are aware, he said, that million of Afghans have been inoculated against polio, or of Canada's work to educate Afghan children. But Day was highly critical of a law just passed by the Afghanistan government that "severely attacks the rights of women."

Day was asked whether he thought Israel was doing a poor job of advocacy in light of negative media coverage. He replied, to laughter, that if the Jewish people control the media, as some people think, "they're doing a very poor job."

Day quoted Mark Twain, who said, "A lie is halfway around the world even before the truth has its boots on."

Jewish golf club allies with once-restricted facility

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The irony of a strategic alliance between the largely Jewish Glendale Golf and Country Club and the prestigious 135-year-old Manitoba Club is not lost on George Gershman.

A former general manager of the Glendale Club, Gershman, 86, remembers when the Manitoba Club was off limits to Jews and women.

He recalled that Samuel Freedman, Manitoba's first Jewish chief justice, regularly refused invitations to dine at the Manitoba Club because it wouldn't accept Jewish members.

"I once attended a function at the Manitoba Club with my wife. The attendant at the door tried to insist that she enter through the women's entrance at the side. I insisted that she walk in with me and we went in together," Gershman said. "

Under terms of the alliance agreement – which aims in part to boost membership in both clubs – Manitoba Club members who also join the Glendale Golf Club will get a 30 per cent reduction in annual dues – currently $3,450 – and won't have to pay an initiation fee. Glendale members who want to also join the Manitoba Club – whose fees vary from $955 to $2,000, depending on age – will also get a 30 per cent reduction in annual dues and not have to pay the one-time entrance fee.

"There have been a number of inquiries already," said Michael Kay, Glendale's vice-president.

The Manitoba Club is the oldest private club in North America. The Glendale Club, which currently has 375 members, was founded in 1946 by local Jews specifically because they weren't allowed to join other private clubs or golf clubs in Winnipeg.

"Originally, Glendale was a country club, not a golf club," said Kay, whose grandfather, Hyman Kay, was one of the club's founders. "My grandfather never golfed. Glendale was a place to have parties and dinners.

"Younger members today are more interested in the golfing. They would rather spend time with their families on weekends than shmoozing in the clubhouse."

Kay said that while 70 per cent of Glendale's membership still is Jewish, "we can't be solely a Jewish club in this day and age.

"By our alliance, both Glendale and the Manitoba Club are demonstrating our doors are open to anyone who appreciates the benefits of private-club membership. We don't want to have to become a semi-private course. We want to continue to be a first-class facility."

He added that the Glendale is planning to tear down its current clubhouse and build a smaller one.

"We will host fewer and smaller tournaments, and tournament participants will be able to have dinner after the match at the Manitoba Club," he said. "We will no longer need a large dining facility."

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We should talk to Hamas about its covenant

By SHLOMO AVINERI
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Commentary

More and more voices have recently been heard saying that the only way to reach an Israeli-Palestinian accord is by talking to Hamas.

These voices are heard not only in Europe but also in the United States. New York Times columnist Roger Cohen, for example, and Brent Sowcroft, who was national security adviser to president George H.W. Bush, have said that without a dialogue with Hamas, there will be no peace between Israel and the Palestinians. And if Israel refuses to do so, the Europeans or the Americans should begin a dialogue with Hamas.

Similar statements can also be heard on the margins of Israeli politics.

I believe they are right, but not for the reasons they cite. The question is what to talk to Hamas about. It is clear we have to talk with them – and Israel does indeed speak with them indirectly – about freeing kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit and achieving calm.

I believe we must talk to Hamas about other things, too – for example, about what is written in their founding covenant. Most Israelis, as well as the Europeans and the Americans, know that Hamas espouses the destruction of Israel. What most of them do not know is that Hamas' founding document includes a much more comprehensive criticism, not merely of Israel and Zionism, but of the Jews.

The prologue to the covenant states that Hamas' aim is a war – not against Israel or Zionism, but against the Jewish People at large – since the Jews, and not merely Israel and Zionism, are the enemies of Islam.

And in order to remove any doubt, all of Chapter 22 is devoted to detailing the iniquities of the Jews.

According to Hamas, the Jews are responsible for all the ills of modern society – the French Revolution; the Communist revolution; the establishment of secret associations (Freemasons, Rotary and Lions clubs, B'nai Brith) designed to help them gain control of the world by secret means. They control the economy, press and television; they are responsible for the outbreak of World War I, which they initiated in order to destroy the Muslim caliphates (the Ottoman Empire), to get the Balfour Declaration and set up the League of Nations with the aim of establishing their state. They also initiated World War II in order to make a fortune from selling war materials; they use both capitalism and communism as their agents.

Sound familiar? Yes, some of it is taken directly from The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and some, particularly the parts dealing with the world wars, is original.

Don't tell me that these are merely words and Hamas must not be judged only on the basis of its covenant. Would anyone dare say that if a similar movement were to arise in Europe or America, and, in addition to making statements like these, it was busy killing Jews?

Compared with what is written in the Hamas covenant, Austria's Joerg Haider and Jean-Marie Le Pen in France are moderates.

It is clear that if a movement like this were to come out of Europe, no one would even imagine proposing that negotiations be held with it, or that it be asked to join a government. It would not merely be declared illegal but denounced by humankind. An abomination like that has no place in any political discourse.

But perhaps it is nevertheless worthwhile talking to Hamas – not about its contribution to peace, but rather about what is stated in its covenant. Perhaps those who espouse the view that we must talk with Hamas will first talk with it about these subjects? Who knows, perhaps it will change its principles. I do not expect this to happen exactly, but I am certainly curious to know what those who think Hamas is the key to peace in the Middle East will say about these things.

And perhaps they are actually correct. Perhaps Hamas is the key. If that's the case, it's difficult to expect that peace can be established in our region.

Shlomo Avineri teaches at the Hebrew University. He is a former director general of Israel's foreign affairs ministry.

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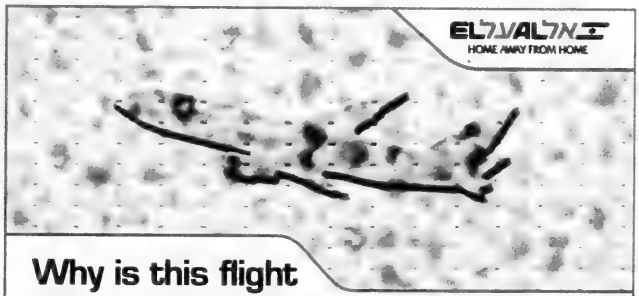

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Israel Briefs

Death for selling to Jews

Palestinians who sell their property to Jews are committing a crime punishable by the death penalty, the Palestinian Authority warned. The warning about the long-standing fatwa, or religious decree, against selling property to Jews was issued after reports that American Jewish businessmen had purchased several acres of land on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem from its Palestinian owners. The PA's chief Islamic judge, Sheik Tayseer Rajab Tamimi, issued the warning, saying it also applies to real estate agents and landlords who rent to Jews. The punishment also includes being ostracized by community and family. Tamimi reportedly said that the ban is in place to prevent Israeli officials from taking control of Arab land in Jerusalem.

Palestinian kills Israeli boy

An axe-wielding Palestinian worker killed an Israeli boy and injured another in Bat Ayin. The worker began attacking the boys, aged 13 and 7, as he ran with the axe through the community of Bat Ayin, located in the Etzion bloc south of Jerusalem last week. Shlomo Nativ, the teenager, died of his injuries. The younger victim was seriously injured. The assailant struggled with a passer-by and was shot by one of the community's security guards before fleeing, Ha'aretz reported. There is no security fence around the community, apparently for ideological reasons. Israeli security services were searching the area for the assailant and checking to see if he had any accomplices. Both Islamic Jihad and the Martyrs of Imad Muginyeh claimed responsibility for the attack. Hamas called the attack a "natural reaction" to the "occupation," a spokesperson said. Government spokesperson Mark Regev condemned the attack as a "senseless act of brutality against innocents."

S. African heads Gaza inquiry

Judge Richard Goldstone of South Africa, a trustee of Hebrew University, will head the commission appointed by the United Nation's Human Rights Council. Israel did not say whether it will co-operate. It has in the past ignored other UNHRC probes, noting the body's tendency to single out Israel for criticism while ignoring other major violators. Goldstone, who headed war crimes prosecutions in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, said he would investigate alleged war crimes by both sides. "It's in the interest of the victims," Goldstone said in Geneva, where the UNHRC is headquartered. He said his Jewishness and ties to Israel were added values. "I believe I can approach the daunting task that I have accepted in an evenhanded and impartial manner," he said. Joining him on the commission are Christine Chinkin, a British professor of international law; Pakistani lawyer Hina Jilani, and retired Irish Army Col. Desmond Travers.

Police question Lieberman

Israel's new foreign minister was interrogated last Thursday and Friday by police just two days after his swearing-in. The Yisrael Beiteinu leader was grilled over suspicions of bribery, money laundering, fraudulent receipt of goods and breach of public trust. "Lieberman answered all of the questions put to him, and will answer any future questions," Yaron Kostelich, the foreign minister's lawyer, told the Jerusalem Post. Police said the interrogation had been co-ordinated several days in advance, and that the questioning would resume at a future date.

– Files from JTA

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Creeping doubts about Olmert's ouster

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

Analysis

After finally leaving office last week, Ehud Olmert will have his hands full fighting the corruption charges against him.

There is little sympathy in Israel for the outgoing prime minister, who is widely viewed as a corrupt politician who failed to achieve the lofty goals he set for himself when he took office.

But there are some nagging doubts about the system that brought down Olmert: an elected prime minister has been forced out of office even though he has yet to be found guilty of any crime.

Three major investigations against Olmert – for allegedly tampering with terms for the sale of Bank Leumi to help a friend, and receiving substantial discounts in the rental and purchase of two Jerusalem apartments in return for favours – have been closed for lack of evidence.

It's possible that Olmert was forced out of office by muckraking political opponents without his having committed any crime, Olmert confidants say.

In a mid-February interview in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, Olmert's wife, Aliza, implied as much, saying politically motivated people had been out to get her husband. She declined to go into detail.

Amnon Dankner, a former chief editor of the daily Ma'ariv and a close friend of Olmert, was more forthcoming.

"From the moment he placed himself as the predominant leader of the peacemaking left," Dankner wrote of Olmert in Ma'ariv last August, "right-wing elements started digging through his affairs going back down the years to produce suspicious material for the authorities."

On the face of it, Dankner's allegations seem to have merit.

Yoav Yitzhak, the investigative journalist who produced the allegations on the two Jerusalem apartments, was instrumental in bringing down another peace-leaning politician, the late president Ezer Weizman. The official who came up with the Bank Leumi allegations was then-accountant general Yaron Zelekha, who is close to Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, a prime Olmert rival. And Moshe Talansky, the American Jewish businessman who allegedly gave Olmert envelopes stuffed with cash, and who then testified against the prime minister, has spoken of his disappointment in the once hawkish Olmert's transformation to a political dove.

The trouble with the picture of Olmert as victim, however, is that some of the allegations against him seem to carry merit: police have recommended that Olmert be indicted in three separate cases. If Olmert's political enemies found serious instances of fraud and breach of trust, what difference does it make if their initial muckraking motivation was political? Olmert's critics ask.

In two of the cases, Israel's attorney general has decided to indict Olmert pending a hearing: the Talansky affair, in which Olmert is alleged to have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash over a 13-year period, and the Rishon Tours affair, in which Olmert allegedly double-billed for trips and lectures he made abroad, using the excess money to finance travel by family members.

Ehud Olmert

[Israel Sun photo]

The fact that the attorney general has decided to indict is no small matter. It means that after going through all the material, he is convinced the state has enough evidence to convict.

Indictment by the attorney general is generally considered the signal in Israel for ministers under investigation to resign. In Olmert's case, the pressure on him to step down was so great that he tendered his formal resignation last September, even before the attorney general announced his intention to indict.

Two other Olmert investigations are ongoing: awarding contracts to his former law partner Uri Messer, and appointing cronies when Olmert was minister of trade and industry from 2003 to 2006.

The sheer weight of police probes and corruption scandals with Olmert's name on them may be about to catch up with a man who long has operated under a cloud of investigations.

In 1981, Olmert received a $50,000 loan via Yehoshua Halperin, CEO of the Bank of North America, which he was never pressed to pay back. Although the circumstances suggested a possible attempt to bribe a sitting Knesset member, Olmert was not prosecuted.

In 1997, Olmert was acquitted in court of responsibility for an election scam in which Likud officials provided fictitious receipts to donors in 1988, when Olmert was the party's co-treasurer. Olmert successfully pleaded ignorance, but three other Likud officials were convicted.

In 1999, as mayor of Jerusalem, Olmert was investigated for arranging a reception for the mayor of Athens as an alleged favour to an Israeli developer seeking to build an ambitious tourist facility on a Greek island. The developer had just promised to support Olmert in an upcoming race for Likud leader. The case was dropped.

The problem facing the Israeli legal system is finding a balance between fighting corruption in high places and not allowing political opponents of incumbent politicians to abuse the system to subvert the democratic process.

Hebrew University's Shlomo Avineri, one of Israel's top political scientists, says the main problem is the slow pace of investigation. In the case of public figures, drawn-out investigations are not only unfair to the politicians, they also hamper government functioning and can pervert democracy, Avineri says. Investigations should be expedited, he says.

Some have suggested adopting the French system, under which the country's leader cannot be investigated while in office. Another possibility would be something akin to the U.S. system of impeachment: no indictment unless and until a politician is impeached by a two-thirds majority in the Knesset.

As for Olmert, he's still hoping his name will cleared – and once it is, he will find a way back to the top sooner than most people think.

Is anti-Zionisim hate?

By JUDEA PEARL

In January, at a symposium at UCLA (choreographed by the Center for Near East Studies), four longtime Israel bashers were invited to analyze the human rights conditions in Gaza and used the stage to attack the legitimacy of Zionism and its vision of a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

They criminalized Israel's existence, distorted its motives and maligned its character, its birth, even its conception. At one point, the excited audience reportedly chanted "Zionism is Nazism" and worse.

Jewish leaders condemned this hatefest as a dangerous invitation to anti-Semitic hysteria, and pointed to the chilling effect it had on UCLA students and faculty on a campus known for its open and civil atmosphere. The organizers, some of them Jewish, took refuge in "academic freedom" and the argument that anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism.

I fully support this mantra, not because it exonerates anti-Zionists from charges of anti-Semitism but because the distinction helps us focus attention on the discriminatory, immoral and more dangerous character of anti-Zionism.

Anti-Zionism rejects the very notion that Jews are a nation – a collective bonded by a common history – and, accordingly, denies Jews the right to self-determination in their historical birthplace. It seeks the dismantling of the Jewish nation-state: Israel.

Anti-Zionism earns its discriminatory character by denying the Jewish people what it grants to other historically bonded collectives (e.g. French, Spanish, Palestinians), namely, the right to nationhood, self-determination and legitimate coexistence with other indigenous claimants.

Anti-Semitism rejects Jews as equal members of the human race; anti-Zionism rejects Israel as an equal member in the family of nations.

Are Jews a nation? Some philosophers would argue Jews are a nation first and religion second. Indeed, the narrative of Exodus and the vision of the impending journey to the land of Canaan were etched in the minds of the Jewish people before they received the Torah at Mount Sinai. But, philosophy aside, the unshaken conviction in their eventual repatriation to the birthplace of their history has been the engine behind Jewish endurance and hopes throughout their turbulent journey that started with the Roman expulsion in CE 70.

More important, shared history, not religion, is today the primary uniting force behind the secular, multi-ethnic society of Israel. The majority of its members do not practise religious laws and do not believe in divine supervision or the afterlife. The same applies to American Jewry, which is likewise largely secular. Identification with a common historical ethos, culminating in the re-establishment of the state of Israel, is the central bond of Jewish collectivity in America.

There are, of course, Jews who are non-Zionists and even anti-Zionists. The haredi cult of Neturei Karta and the leftist cult of Noam Chomsky are notable examples. The former rejects any earthly attempt to interfere with God's messianic plan, while the latter abhors all forms of nationalism, especially successful ones.

There are also Jews who find it difficult to defend their identity against the growing viciousness of anti-Israel propaganda, and eventually hide, disown or denounce their historical roots in favour of social acceptance and other expediencies.

But these are marginal minorities at best; the vital tissues of Jewish identity today feed on Jewish history and its natural derivatives – the state of Israel, its struggle for survival, its cultural and scientific achievements and its relentless drive for peace.

Given this understanding of Jewish nationhood, anti-Zionism is in many ways more dangerous than anti-Semitism.

First, anti-Zionism targets the most vulnerable part of the Jewish people, namely, the Jewish population of Israel, whose physical safety and personal dignity depend crucially on maintaining Israel's sovereignty. Put bluntly, the anti-Zionist plan to do away with Israel condemns 5-1/2 million human beings, mostly refugees or children of refugees, to eternal defenselessness in a region where genocidal designs are not uncommon.

Secondly, modern society has developed antibodies against anti-Semitism but not against anti-Zionism. Today, anti-Semitic stereotypes evoke revulsion in most people of conscience, while anti-Zionist rhetoric has become a mark of academic sophistication and social acceptance in certain extreme yet vocal circles of U.S. academia and media elite. Anti-Zionism disguises itself in the cloak of political debate, exempt from sensitivities and rules of civility that govern inter-religious discourse, to attack the most cherished symbol of Jewish identity.

Finally, anti-Zionist rhetoric is a stab in the back to the Israeli peace camp, which overwhelmingly stands for a two-state solution. It also gives credence to enemies of coexistence who claim that the eventual elimination of Israel is the hidden agenda of every Palestinian.

It is anti-Zionism, then, not anti-Semitism that poses a more dangerous threat to lives, historical justice and the prospects of peace in the Middle East.

Judea Pearl is a professor at UCLA and the president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation.

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CELEBRITAS

Study cites dramatic rise in anti-Semitic attacks in Europe

By ASSAF UNI
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JERUSALEM — The number of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe through the first three months of this year exceeds the total number of such occurrences in all of 2008, according to a report issued by the European Jewish Congress.

The findings were announced by EJC president Moshe Kantor during a special session of the European Parliament devoted to the subject of anti-Semitism on the continent.

The report cites the reaction to this past January's Israel Defence Forces operation in Gaza as one of the key triggers of anti-Semitic attacks against Jewish communities in Europe. In addition, the current financial crisis is giving rise to age-old anti-Semitic stereotypes suggesting "Jewish control of the global financial system."

EJC members from all over Europe who gathered in Brussels for the special session reported a significant rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. The head of official Jewry in Finland, Rony Smolar, said that the 25,000-strong Jewish community living in the Scandinavian countries is subject to repeated harassment due to its support for Israel.

"Public opinion links Israel with the local Jewish community, which turns us into enemies," Smolar said, adding that his country has seen "a dramatic rise" in the number and severity of anti-Semitic attacks.

Smolar said that Molotov cocktails have been thrown into synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in Sweden and Norway have been vandalized. He also cited a shooting incident in which two Israelis were wounded by a gunman in Denmark during Israel's Gaza operation.

"Cartoons likening the Star of David to the Nazi swastika have become commonplace in Scandinavia," Smolar said.

Richard Prasquier, head of the umbrella organization representing the Jewish community in France (CRIF), also pointed to a rise in anti-Semitic incidents.

"France is home to the largest Jewish community in Europe and the largest Muslim community in Europe," Prasquier said, hinting that the sizable immigrant community from North Africa is most responsible for instigating the anti-Jewish violence. European politicians have shied away from blaming Muslim immigrants for attacks against Jews.

The EU's human rights arm, the FRA, told the gathering that increases in anti-Semitism have been reported in Holland, Belgium, France, and Britain. An organization representative said the reasons for the phenomenon must be studied and examined.

Peter Feldmeier, head of the Jewish community in Hungary, said that anti-Semitism in his country still features historical overtones "as we knew them in the interwar years."

While noting that "there is barely a Muslim community in Hungary," Feldmeier brandished a copy of a widely circulated newspaper affiliated with a far-right party. The paper made waves after featuring on its cover a Hungarian politician bearing a fictitious yellow Star of David. The paper demanded that the politician admit to his Jewish roots.

Janet Rosenberg Jagan, ex-Guyana president, dies

JTA

MIAMI — Janet Rosenberg Jagan, Guyana's only female president and one of the few Jewish heads of state in Caribbean history, has died.

Janet Rosenberg Jagan

Rosenberg, a veteran politician and co-founder of Guyana's People's Progressive Party, died March 28 from an abdominal aneurysm. She was 88.

She was believed to be the only Jew living in Guyana, a nation of 740,000 dominated by Hindus and Muslims of East Indian descent, and Christians of African origin.

Her husband, Cheddi Jagan, was elected president in 1992, and she took over the job shortly after his death in 1997. She resigned after nearly two years in office because of a heart attack.

Jagan was given a state funeral March 31 in Georgetown, the capital city. President Bharrat Jagdeo cut short his official visit to the Middle East to attend.

Born into a middle-class Chicago Jewish family, Jagan was a product of the Great Depression. At age 22, while a nursing student at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, she fell in love with Cheddi Jagan, a dental student from British Guiana. Against the wishes of both families, the couple married and moved to Georgetown.

Their involvement in leftist politics landed both in jail, though in 1966 the Jagans helped win independence for Guyana, an English-speaking nation that is geographically in South America but considers itself culturally and politically part of the Caribbean.

"Cheddi and I always believed in socialism," Jagan told JTA in an exclusive interview three years ago. "To us that meant getting rid of oppression so the poor man could get out of poverty and enjoy the fruits of this country."

Despite her worsening diabetes and other ailments, however, Jagan continued to work at the party headquarters nearly up until the time of her death.

Jagan's daughter, Nadira Jagan-Brancier, is a jeweller in Milton, Ont.

U.S. seeks to join UN Human Rights Council

JTA

NEW YORK — The United States will seek to join the UN Human Rights Council.

This reverses its policy of shunning the group and has prompted concern among some Jewish organizations.

The Obama administration announced, on March 31, that it would participate in May elections for a seat on the 47-member council, "with the goal of working to make it a more effective body to promote and protect human rights." The Bush administration had withheld U.S. membership from the Geneva-based council for its failure to confront human rights abusers and its singling out of Israel for condemnation.

"The United States helped to found the United Nations and retains a vital stake in advancing that organization's genuine commitment to the human rights values that we share with other member nations," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a statement announcing the decision.

JTA has learned that top State Department officials briefed Jewish organizational leaders about the decision in a conference call on March 31.

Since its creation in 2006 to replace the widely discredited UN Commission on Human Rights, the council has passed 32 resolutions; 26 have been critical of Israel, according to UN Watch, a pro-Israel monitoring group based in Geneva. More than half of the council's members fall short of basic democracy standards, according to Freedom House, a democracy watchdog group. And in the past two years, the council has moved to eliminate its country-specific special experts investigating human rights abuses in Darfur, Congo, Cuba, Belarus and Liberia.

"Those who suffer from abuse and oppression around the world, as well as those who dedicate their lives to advancing human rights, need the council to be balanced and credible," said Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the UN. "The U.S. is seeking election to the council because we believe that working from within, we can make the council a more effective forum to promote and protect human rights. We hope to work in partnership with many countries to achieve a more effective council."

> ***'The Human Rights Council has deep systemic flaws'***

The Anti-Defamation League expressed concern about the Obama administration's decision.

"There is no question that the U.S. can play a decisive role in making UN institutions more effective, but the Human Rights Council has deep systemic flaws," said Abraham Foxman, the group's national director. "We remain concerned that the U.S. decision to join the council before meaningful reforms are put into motion may not achieve this desired goal."

Democratic congressman Howard Berman, the most senior Jewish lawmaker in the U.S. House of Representatives and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, supported the decision.

"The time is ripe to take a more positive and active role in challenging the council and in speaking out about genuine human rights atrocities," Berman said in a statement.

"In two years, the Human Rights Council faces a mandated five-year review. By participating in the process as a member of the council, the Obama administration can begin working to bring about a much-needed overhaul."

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) wondered whether the time was ripe for joining the council.

"There are so many players on the Human Rights Council that do not have our interests at heart that I think it will mobilize against the things that the United States is going to fight for," said WJC spokeswoman Betty Ehrenberg. "I'm not sure at this moment that the Human Rights Council is free enough of its past and present difficulties and complications to make this effort fruitful at this moment."

The executive director of UN Watch, Hillel Neuer, said he welcomes the U.S. decision, "but only if it's to vigorously push back against the world's worst abusers."

He added, "The council is worse than ever before, pathologically obsessed with scapegoating Israel while turning a blind eye to millions of human rights victims around the world."

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Happy & Healthy Passover

Books & Authors

A family history on the Jews of Kurdistan

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Walter Fischel, an American academic, visited the Jews of Kurdistan in the 1940s. "Such Jews," he exclaimed with a sense of wonder. "Men virile and wild-looking. Women wearing embroidered turbans, earrings, bracelets, even ring-noses, and with symbols tattooed into their faces…"

Roughly 25,000 Jews lived in Kurdistan back then, 18,000 in Iraq and the rest in Iran, Syria and Turkey.

Largely illiterate but famous as gifted storytellers and speaking the ancient language of Aramaic, Kurdish Jews were found in some 200 Muslim villages and towns throughout the Middle East on the eve of Israel's establishment.

Ariel Sabar, an American journalist, has more than a passing knowledge of this exotic Jewish community, most of whose members immigrated to Israel in the early 1950s.

Ariel Sabar

Sabar, in My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq (Algonquin Books), produces a family history and a portrait of Kurdish Jews in this richly documented volume.

As the title suggests, the book turns on his father, Yona, a linguist, researcher and professor of Hebrew at the University of California in Los Angeles.

Born in the northern Iraqi town of Zakho, in the heart of Iraq's Kurdish region, but raised in Israel, Yona Sabar has published more than 90 monographs and two books on Aramaic – a nearly extinct language today – and the folklore of Kurdish Jews.

Despite his father's international reputation as a scholar, Sabar did not appreciate his accomplishments and was even ashamed of him.

"I swore horribly in front of him, ridiculed him behind his back and took pains to avoid him, to be nothing like him," he readily admits.

Sabar, who was born in Los Angeles, wanted to be part of what he describes as "the California mainstream," and since his father rejected that ethos, father and son, like oil and water, did not mix.

"When we collided, it wasn't pretty," he writes in this frank and pungent memoir. "I threw tantrums and unleashed hailstorms of four-letter words. He stewed privately over how any son could behave that way toward his father, then consoled himself with the hypothesis that this was how children were in America."

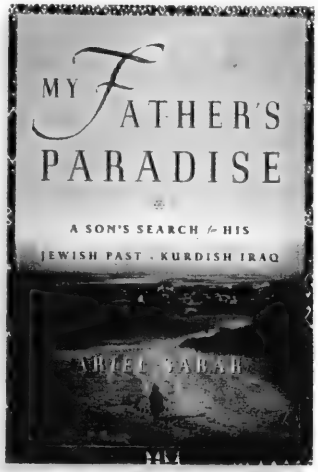
The cultural clash he alludes to forms but a segment of the core of My Father's Paradise. In the final pages, Sabar comes to terms with him as he reclaims his heritage and visits Zakho.

The Jews of Zakho lived among 26,000 Kurdish Muslims and were concentrated in the *mahala* Juheeya, the oldest district, on an island on the Habur River. "Their mud-brick houses lined narrow alleys that zigzagged down to the river," Sabar writes.

Since they were so isolated, they spoke Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Middle East until Arab armies from Arabia conquered Mesopotamia in the 17th century.

By all accounts, Jews and Kurds lived in harmony until Israel's creation in 1948. To the Jews of Zakho, Sabar observes, Zionism represented, among other things, hopes for a better life and unease over the breakdown of Jewish-Muslim relations.

The first Jews to make aliyah were the have-nots – the small peddlers, the porters, the beggars. "Most carried only the rags on their backs and perhaps a single clay bowl," says Sabar.



Once Sabar's family was ready to leave in 1951, the Iraqi government passed a law that cancelled the citizenship and froze all the assets and property of departing Jews.

Sabar's father was 13 years old when he and his parents and siblings left the country of their ancestors.

"The end arrived suddenly," Sabar writes. "A line of motor coaches rolled into town early one April morning, and word went out that the time had come. Under a sky still full of stars, Jewish families, anxious and bleary, dragged suitcases and children out front doors and into cramped alleys that led to the main street."

Hundreds of Kurds bid farewell to their Jewish neighbours, but the atmosphere was very different in Baghdad. "At the airport, angry mobs pressed against the barricades, hurling curses."

Life was hard for Sabar's family in Jerusalem, particularly for his grandmother: "Her relatives bought her a washing machine and stove, but the controls confounded her… She trudged off to night classes to learn Hebrew, but quit in frustration after two years, scarcely able to distinguish the letters of the alphabet. She had never learned to read or write her mother tongue. Why did people think she could master a second language?"

Sabar's father, Yona, was more adaptable. A good student, he graduated from the Hebrew University with a BA in Hebrew and Arabic. Nevertheless, he felt that Kurdish Jews were patronized by the Ashkenazi elite, and he wondered whether he could pursue a scholarly career in Israel.

He was thus only too pleased to accept a scholarship from Yale University, where he plumbed the depths of Aramaic and met his wife.

In 1972, a year before Sabar was born, he was offered a position at the University of California. And there he thrived.

"The Promised Land had been a disappointment," Sabar writes in a reference to Israel. "It had broken his father and his grandfather. It had humiliated and infantilized his mother. A generation of Kurdish Jews had been spit on by a society that should have known better."

Yona Sabar's success as an up-and-coming scholar did not spoil him, but his plain, unpretentious mien, his cheap clothes and his malapropisms in English alienated his insecure son.

"I didn't know it as a boy, but he was almost single-handedly turning the field of Neo-Aramaic from a marginal curiosity to one commanding serious and growing attention at major academic conferences," Sabar adds.

After Sabar himself became a father, he learned to value his father and his achievements and quit his job so that he could explore the lost world of Iraqi Kurdish Jews on a spiritual journey.

Having convinced his father to accompany him, the pair set off. They arrived in Zakho after Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein, was unseated by the United States and its allies.

To Sabar, the purpose of the trip was crystal clear: "We could repair our relationship over cups of cardamom tea at cafés by the Habur River. We could walk together through the streets of the old Jewish neighbourhood, summoning the spirits of our ancestors… He would at last see me for the better son I had become."

And so, as Sabar relates in this intriguing book, father and son finally bonded.

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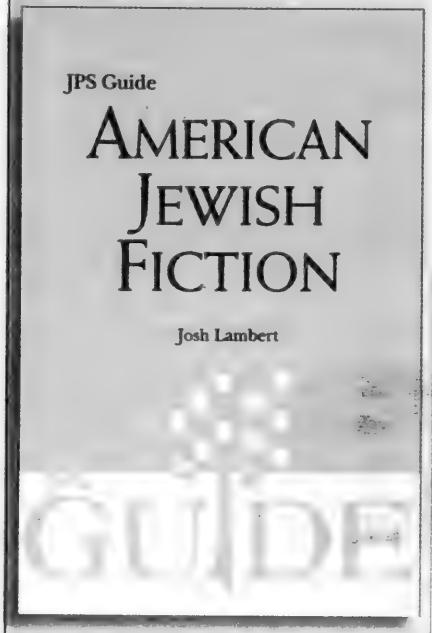


Toronto native's guide to American Jewish fiction includes classics and forgotten gems

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Toronto native Josh Lambert hopes his book, a collection of short synopses meant to introduce readers to 125 American Jewish fiction titles, will help people get a better "sense of the texture of Jewish life."

Lambert, who spent two years compiling a concise handbook on works written over a span of 140 years, likes to think of his book as a Zagat guide for American Jewish fiction.

"When I was in touch with the people of the Jewish Publication Society, and I decided I would do the book, what excited me about doing it was covering a wide range of American Jewish texts and giving readers a sense of how broad that tradition is and how widely it ranges through history and subject matter," said 29-year-old Lambert, a Harvard graduate who is finishing his PhD in Jewish literature from the University of Michigan.

The works – by authors including Franz Kafka, Norman Mailer, Judy Blume, Chaim Potok, John Updike, Michael Chabon and Jonathan Safran Foer – covered in American Jewish Fiction: A JPS Guide delve into issues including immigration, assimilation, intermarriage, politics, the Holocaust and Israel.

Lambert said he hates the idea of "best 100 novels of all time" lists in any tradition.

"To me, that seems so silly because people's tastes are so different and books don't appeal to everyone in the same way. I covered some books that I actually don't even like, but are meaningful and important within the Jewish tradition," said Lambert, who has worked as the editor of the online book review magazine, JBooks.com and contributes regularly to newspapers including the San Francisco Chronicle and the Globe and Mail.

He added that when he started working on the project in 2006, he put together a master list of about 350 books. From 350, Lambert slowly whittled the list down to 125 by eliminating books that overlapped on the themes of others.

"My real goal was to give a sense of the diversity and breadth of the field."

Lambert said it was important to him to author this guide because, having grown up in the Toronto Jewish community, and having come out of the Jewish day school system, he felt a strong connection to his heritage.

"It is something that I'm very connected to. I think what draws me to studying Jewish literature particularly is the way that literature both embraces the Jewish tradition of textual study, of scholarship, but also modern literature is open to innovation," he said.

"It's open, not just to the elite of the Jewish people, which is what you get with rabbinic texts, but you get the way that Jews of all kinds live in modern Jewish literature. You get a sense of the texture of Jewish life."

Lambert said that one issue he struggled with was whether he should include Canadian Jewish writers in his book.

"I feel bad... that I didn't include Canadian Jewish writers in my book, despite having grown up in Canada and loving Canadian Jewish writers," he said.

"I know Canadians hate when you have an American collection and there are just a few Canadians, so I hope no one is offended that I didn't include Canadians, but it's because I think the writers deserve an entire book of their own, which I may decide to write at some point."

Lambert said that writing this guide opened his eyes to new personal favourites.

"My all-time favourites are the works of Philip Roth, and he gets four entries in my book, which is more than anyone else, so I guess that's a sign of how much I like him," he said.

"But one of my advisers recommended that I include Steven Millhauser's Edwin Mullhouse, which I think is a tremendously good novel and a novel that few people think of as a Jewish book. [It's] fascinatingly subtle and intricate on the question of Jewishness, so I was really excited about that one."

Another one of Lambert's new favourites is Vera Caspary's Thicker Than Water, a novel about a Sephardi Jewish family in Chicago that covers 50 years of the family's history.

"I really made an effort to foreground those books that don't just tell the story about immigration, working in a sweatshop, succeeding, moving to a suburb and becoming a doctor or a lawyer," Lambert said.

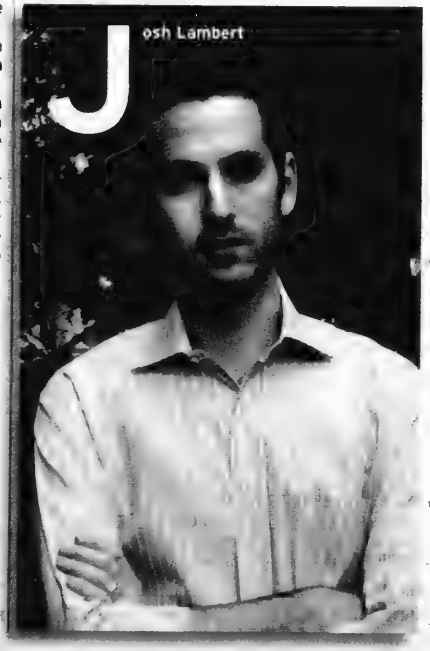
"Jewish Cowboy is about trying to make a living as an agricultural worker in the West. There are novels going back to the late '20s and '40s about Jewish gays and lesbians trying to make that identity work. There are stories about strong women, pushing against the strictures of a patriarchal culture."

He said that reading those stories not only gives readers a sense of the Jewish experience throughout history, but an opportunity to see ourselves in that history through our own struggles and experiences.

"There are so many new books coming out every year, and it can be easy to get wrapped up in what's happening now," he said.

"I think to connect with the classic books or with books that have been forgotten about can give a real rich sense, not just of what is happening now, but of recent Jewish history."

For more information about Lambert or his book, visit his website at www.epikores.com.



CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Children's book profiles Canadian heroes

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Children's author Rona Arato wants her most recent book to teach Canadian children about homegrown heroes they can look up to.

Courage and Compassion: Ten Canadians Who Made a Difference profiles ten Canadians whose commitment to human rights led them to work on ways of improving the country and the world.

"I wanted [to profile] people who had worked at a grassroots level... who saw a situation that needed to be handled and they got out and did the job," said Arato, a writer, editor and educator.

The 10 men, women and children featured in the book – Jeanne Mance, Josiah Henson, Nellie McClung, Lester B. Pearson, Roger Obata, June Callwood, Judy Feld Carr, Elijah Harper, Craig Kielburger and Hannah Taylor – represent a diversity of ages, ethnicities, backgrounds.

"I wanted to go through every period of Canadian history... I wanted to represent different groups that have lived in Canada. Asian, Jewish, black communities, as well as the Native community. I wanted different age groups, I wanted to show that there were children who have also been very influential," said Arato, who became interested in writing children's books about 10 years ago.

Arato, an American-native who taught in elementary schools before moving to Toronto in 1970, said she started her writing career with The CJN.

She went on to write for other publications and eventually dabbled in corporate writing.

When Arato was presented with the opportunity to be an interviewer for Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah project in 1994, she realized that promoting human rights was something she wanted to do with her life.

"I did interviews for about four years. I did about 120 interviews with Holocaust survivors. That was one of the things that fuelled my desire to write about human rights. After doing that, I wasn't happy doing just corporate work anymore. I really wanted to do something that had more meaning."

Rona Arato

In 2001, Arato worked on a project for B'nai Brith Canada called Taking Action Against Hate in 2001. This, she said, further pushed her to pursue a career as a children's author that promoted human rights.

Since then, Arato has authored seven books including Ice Cream Town, a junior fiction novel about a Jewish immigrant in New York City, and is currently working on Mrs. Kaputnik's Pool Hall and Matzo Ball Emporium, a story about a Russian Jewish family that comes to New York in 1890 with their pet dragon.

Although those titles do promote tolerance and diversity, Courage and Compassion takes a more direct approach to humanitarianism by focusing on people Canadian children can be proud of.

"I felt that Canadian children don't have heroes, don't have homegrown heroes to look up to. When they learn history, they don't learn about Canadians who have been influential or Canadians who have been active in human rights in the ways that we did when I was growing up in the States," Arato said.

The profiles in Courage and Compassion are in chronological order. Arato begins the book with Mance, a co-founder of Montreal who lived in the 17th century.

"She was a nurse and... she started the first hospital [in Montreal]. She believed that everyone deserved the right to health care, and she was active in ensuring that anyone who lived there would have the same rights," Arato said.

Henson, a black slave, fascinated her so much that she was inspired to write a separate book about him titled Working for Freedom: The Story of Josiah Henson.

"He not only came up through the Underground Railroad [to Canada] with his wife and children, but once he came here and began to do well, he wanted to help other blacks who were escaping," she said.

He established a group called the Dawn Community in Dresden, Ont., where he built a vocational school so that former slaves and their children could acquire skills and own land.

Arato also wanted to turn attention to a Canadian Jewish woman, Feld Carr, who rescued more than 3,000 Syrian Jews.

"She ran a clandestine network for 28 years that no one knew about, buying and smuggling and bringing Syrian Jews out and bringing them to Israel, the United States and Canada."

Arato added that she made a point of including younger humanitarians – Kielburger, the Thornhill native who started the humanitarian organization, Save the Children, when he was 12 years old and Hannah Taylor who started collecting money for the homeless when she was just five years old – to show children that they're not powerless to make positive changes.

"I hope they'll take away the message that if they see a situation that needs to be handled that they can make a difference," Arato said. "They can stand up for a classmate that is being bullied, they can help a new child who is an immigrant who doesn't speak the language, they can help a friend who is struggling with a subject."

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL OPENS APRIL 18 WITH ARGENTINE FILM CAMERA OBSCURA

One of the major events in the city's Jewish calendar, the 17th annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival opens Saturday, April 18, at 9:15 p.m. with a screening of Camera Obscura, an understated romance from Argentina about a Jewish immigrant born on the docks as her parents' ship arrives in Buenos Aires at the dawn of the 20th century.

Camera Obscura opens the 2009 Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

Made by director **Maria Victoria Menis**, Camera Obscura is one of 90 films from 23 countries – including Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Peru, Russia, Switzerland and United States – to be shown at this year's festival, demonstrating once again the vitality of Jewish cinematic creativity on a global scale.

The festival runs through April 26, when legendary novelist-screenwriter **Budd Schulberg**, now 95 years old, may be present at a screening of What Makes Sammy Run?, a recently restored 1959 television drama adapted from his 1947 novel about a ruthless Hollywood hustler. A lost treasure until a missing reel was discovered four years ago, prompting a full restoration, the teleplay stars **John Forsythe**, **Barbara Rush** and **Norman Fell**, and includes an interview with Schulberg.

Israeli director **Yariv Mozer** is scheduled to receive the second annual David A. Stein Memorial Award, worth $5,000, for his documentary My First War, a first-hand look at Israeli soldiers of the Second Lebanon War. The film is being shown at the Al Green Theatre on Sunday, April 19, at 3:30 p.m. and again Sunday, April 26, at 2 p.m.

Broadway and movie musicals come into sharp focus with Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance: Songwriters of the Musicals, a series of eight documentaries and seven classic musical features showcasing the work of **Richard Rodgers**, **Lorenz Hart**, **Alan Jay Lerner** and **Frederick Loewe**, **Betty Comden** and **Adolph Green**, **Stephen Sondheim**, **Harold Arlen** and **Frank Loesser**, among others.

The festival's "Toonie" Tuney Films offer the best of Broadway musicals at a very affordable price of $2. Tickets may be purchased in person on the day-of at any festival box office.

As expected, the cinematic offerings vary widely in theme, from the domestic to the political, sports to the sexual revolution. Subject matters include dance, family, bad guys, sex and baseball. Several films explore various aspects of Jewish identity in France, including Cycles, Father's Footsteps, Villa Jasmin and Being Jewish in France, the latter touted as "a monumental, engrossing doc poised to become the definitive work on the topic."

As always, the festival offers several free events. Films are screened at three venues, the Bloor Street Cinema, the Al Green Theatre of the Miles Nadal JCC, and the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Grande Cinemas at Yonge and Sheppard.

The Most Flexible Pass offers admission to 20 films, excluding opening night, and costs $140. The Weekday Special Pass, for daytime films Monday to Friday, is $60. The full schedule of films is available at the website, www.tjff.com. For further information, contact the box office at 416-967-1528.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Toronto singer-songwriter **Tamara Miller**'s song 60 Seconds aired recently in an episode of the hit television show, Degrassi: The Next Generation on CTV. Miller's songs continue to be played on CBC Radio across Canada. http://tamaramiller.coffeehouse.ca

• The Fern Lindzon Jazz Quartet performs a concert of standards and original compositions spiced up with music from Middle Eastern, klezmer and Yiddish traditions. Presented by CBC Canada

A scene from My First War. Director Yariv Mozer won the David A. Stein Memorial Award.

Live, the quartet consists of **Fern Lindzon** on piano, **Mike Murley** on saxophone, **George Koller** on bass and **Nick Fraser** on drums. La Belle Epoque, Academy of Spherical Arts, 1 Snooker St. (formerly 38 Hanna). $12, $10. April 16, 8:30 p.m. Doors open at 7. 416-532-2782, www.sphericalarts.com

• The Super Grand Gala, a fundraising event for the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, offers dinner with bar, a live band with recording artists, and singers and dancers from various cultures, including Toronto-based Israeli singer **Gitit Shovel**. The event also includes a silent auction, prize draws and a raffle with a Lexus as the prize. Tickets $150. Le Parc Conference and Banquet Centre, April 17, 6:30 p.m. 905-787-8811. For raffle tickets ($20), contact Nick Papa, 905-771-2510.

Correction

In the article "Film puts '80s heavy metal band back in the spotlight" (CJN, April 2), Steve (Lips) Kudlow's last name was incorrectly spelled. The CJN regrets the error.

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Toronto Jewish Film Festival offers an eclectic selection

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

This year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival runs from April 18 to 26 and is bigger and better than ever. Here is a sampler of its eclectic films. Visit www.tjff.com for more information.

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My First War (Sunday, April 19, 3:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre) focuses on the 2006 Second Lebanon War from the perspective of Yariv Mozer, a junior Israeli army officer who also happens to be the director.

When he was called up, Mozer packed a video camera into his knapsack, and the images and sounds he captures are searingly honest and cinéma vérité as its best. The soldiers in his regiment, who are stationed in a serene plum orchard opposite the volatile Lebanese border, reveal their innermost fears, concerns and critiques of the war. They speak of contradictory orders and disorganization and voice respect for the tough and disciplined Hezbollah fighters. A senior officer admits to being frustrated because Israel cannot stop the incessant rain of Hezbollah rockets.

My First War: War at its ugliest.

Mozer himself is is also critical. He describes the war as a "useless" one that leaves him with an "indisputable feeling" of defeat. He complains that his fellow soldiers are "sitting ducks." He thinks that the last 48 hours of the war, during which 33 troops were killed, were unnecessary. He claims that the generals hid their "incompetence" at the expense of "heroic" soldiers.

The images are stark: tanks open fire and missiles are launched. In addition, the camera pans on cars that have taken a direct hit and on an apartment building that has a gaping hole on its side.

This is war at its ugliest.

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Amos Oz (Sunday, April 19, 10 a.m. at the Al Green Theatre), by Greek filmmaker Stelios Charalampopoulos, is a sympathetic and empathetic profile of a major Israeli novelist.

Oz talks about an array of interlocking topics – his home in Arad, his themes, his writing methods, his family background, his parents' devotion to European culture, his mother's suicide, his father's intellectual bent and facility with languages, his former homes in Kibbutz Hulda and Jerusalem, his beloved wife, his engagement with politics, his revulsion of violence and his desire for peace with the Palestinians.

Visiting Greece in the company of the director, he waxes nostalgic about the Jewish community of Salonika, which was largely decimated by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Oz, in this documentary, emerges as an eloquent and reflective person.

***

Amos Oz is the subject of a sympathetic profile.

Po-Lin: The Slivers of Memory is a film to savour.

Po-Lin: The Slivers of Memory (Tuesday, April 21, 2:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre), by Polish director Jolanta Dylewska, lovingly preserves the shtetls of Poland through home movies shot in the 1920s and '30s. Composed of flickering images and sombre commentary, mixed in with revealing talking heads of aging Poles who lived with Jews, this is a film to savour.

The remarkable footage, taken from such towns as Gabin, Slonim, Kurow and Boryslaw, drips with nostalgia, bringing back venerable rabbis, smiling young couples, carefree children, blushing women, a crowded market, a water carrier straining under a load and a band in full throttle. A clip of a visiting American Jew is particularly interesting.

In a hushed tone, the narrator delivers a moving eulogy on Polish Jews and their institutions, synagogues, holidays and customs. Poles old enough to remember the past recall their Jewish friends and acquaintances. "Theirs was a different world," a woman says, distilling to the core of the matter.

On the whole, Dylewska strikes a positive tone. To her credit, she also deals with the dark underside of Polish-Jewish relations.

***

In Search of the Bene Israel (Tuesday, April 21, 5:30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema) turns on an ancient Jewish community in India, centred in Mumbai, that has been vastly depleted by emigration since Indian independence. The director, Sadia Shepard, has a personal stake in the story. Her grandmother, who married a Muslim and lived in Pakistan for some years, was a Bene Israel herself. Shepard, an inquisitive guide, relates the community's storied history and meets a few of its members, including an Israel-bound couple, a movie director exploring her roots and an oil presser, the last of his breed.

This is a vibrant film brimming with the bold, flamboyant colours of India.

***

The Fire Within: Jews of the Amazonian Rainforest (Tuesday, April 21, immediately after In Search of the Bene Israel), by Lorry Salcedo Mitrani, delves into the figurative heart of darkness, the trackless jungles of Brazil and Peru. From the late 19th century until 1912, a procession of young, adventurous Moroccan Jewish men went to South America, galvanized by the rubber boom and hoping to strike it rich.

When the market collapsed, most of these adventurers returned to their homes, but some stayed behind and married local Indian women. Their fourth- and fifth-generation descendants are the subject of this fascinating movie, which is set mainly in the ragged but exotic town of Iquitos, Peru.

The film explores two themes: the campaign they wage to be accepted as Jews by the hidebound Jewish community in Lima and their decision to settle in Israel as new immigrants.

***

King Lati the First (Friday, April 24, 10 a.m. at the Al Green Theatre) is odd and absorbing, a testament to naieveté and misplaced hope. Uri Bar-On's offbeat documentary revolves around a Senegalese Muslim worker in Israel, Aziz Diouf, and his eight-year-old son, Lati, whom he is grooming for greatness. Aziz, an earnest, well-intentioned man married to a half-Jewish blond Russian, fervently believes that Lati can lay claim to the throne of his tribe in Senegal. Irina, his wife, is skeptical, but Aziz pushes on.

In pursuit of this far-fetched goal, the family travels to Aziz's poor, decrepit village, but the path to the throne is littered with obstacles and cultural chasms. Bar-On's final scene, in Israel, is a triumph of irony.

***

Camera Obscura (Saturday, April 18, 9:15 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema) comes straight from Argentina. An inventive blend of live action, animation and still photography, Maria Menis' unusual feature film, which takes place primarily on an isolated farm on the pampas, is about immigration, family bonds, solitude, the perception of beauty and the transformational effects of photography.

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Visit the Mauricie for a different kind of holiday

By LAUREN KRAMER
CJN Pacific Correspondent

With its timber log construction, Hotel Sacacomie has become a favourite among European visitors, who view the lodge as quintessentially Canadian. [Enrique Escalona photo]

You can commute around the Mauricie by vehicle, but for speed, efficiency and views, there's no beating the seaplane as the best means of transportation. [Enrique Escalona photo]

If there are modern-day Québécois explorers, or coureurs du bois as they were termed in Canadian folklore, Raymond des Rosiers is one of them. For the 44-year-old guide at Auberge St. Alexis des Monts in Quebec, his favourite time of year is October, when, for two weeks, he douses himself in animal urine, lays salt blocks on the ground and wakes at 4 a.m. to race to his tree hideout deep in the forest. The reason? Moose.

"My hunting buddy and I have only caught two in the past 10 years," the former trapper says. But despite the highly uncertain odds of a kill and the $800 he's spent on permits over the last decade, des Rosiers keeps coming back for the thrill of the hunt. A bullet in a moose is testament to extreme patience and perseverance. Plus, it means great-tasting meat for a year, he says.

I'm in the terrain of trappers, the Quebec interior known as the Mauricie. It's a plane-shaped swath of land that stretches between Quebec City and Montreal. It's fair to say that most of the 71,000 Jews who live in Montreal – Canada's second-largest Jewish population – don't venture this way, where the landscape is heavily forested, its lush mass of trees broken only by the 17,500 lakes that dot the region.

Here, the forested Laurentian mountains rise and dip as they have for centuries, with no one but the black bears and elusive moose to pay them heed. Peppered with charming French villages, the land is a playground for hunters, fishers and outdoor enthusiasts who come to escape city life and embrace the wide open spaces.

Lac-à-l'Eau-Claire looks like a sheet of glass on the day I step on board a seaplane, and as we teeter into the sky, the vastness of the Mauricie is laid bare in minutes. From 2,000 feet, you can fully comprehend the rich vegetation that spreads with abandon across the land. Multiple beaver dams testify to hours of tireless work by Canada's furry national symbols, more than a million of which make their home in Quebec. And hundreds of clear, fresh lakes carve liquid shapes into the landscape, boggling the mind with the sheer quantity of pure water.

Within 15 minutes, we descend onto Lake Sacacomie, on the verge of which sits the rustic log timbers of the Hotel Sacacomie. The hotel offers a variety of recreational options, but its beaver and bear trips have become a firm favourite, giving guests a glimpse of the local wildlife.

That's how I find myself in the company of another modern-day explorer, Marian McMurray.

Formerly a trapper, the sun-wizened McMurray traded in his gun some years ago after watching the price of pelt drop consistently. Though he was once a voracious beaver hunter, in 2002 he befriended a pair of beavers at a nearby dam, affectionately naming them Charlie and Charlotte. Ironically, he now guides educational visits to their habitat, where he teaches wide-eyed visitors about the beavers' lives.

The beaver duo must be blissfully unaware of McMurray's past, for when he arrives brandishing their favourite treat – a few branches of Trembling Aspen – Charlie shows up immediately. Without a hint of fear, he swims across the dam toward the outstretched hand and gingerly snaps off the leafy end of the branch before making his way back across the water.

Not far from Hotel Sacacomie, visitors can watch black bears pawing corn and molasses from a rusty old drum, a daily offering from hotel staff to keep the bears coming back. The bears are fed for the entertainment and "wildlife experience" of daily carloads of delighted tourists.

Like a loyal dog, Charlie can be relied on to show up every night for this treat, a whiskered face with black eyes that implicitly trust the leathery ex-trapper. Twice he approaches the shore for his treat, and the third time, when an on-shore performance is required of him, he clambers up from the water's edge, grabs his branch and plunges back in.

A bear-viewing hut is our next stop, and on this summer night, instant gratification awaits, for both the bears and the guests. We arrive to see two of them mesmerized by the metal drum placed on a site 200 metres from the viewing hut and filled daily with a mixture of corn and molasses. By sticking their paw through a hole in the drum, the bears are able to extract the food they covet, and it keeps them occupied for hours.

As the cameras begin to click and the mosquitoes feast on exposed, sunburned skin, I'm wondering about the environmental friendliness of this scene. Yes, I reflect, it's better than seeing the animals in a zoo. But at what expense, I can't help but wonder.

If you go:

- Hotel Sacacomie (www.sacacomie.com) 888-265-4414
- Lac-à-l'Eau-Claire (www.lacaleauclaire.com) 819-265-3187
- You can reach the Mauricie region from Montreal or Quebec City, and the best way to go is by seaplane. For more information, contact Tourisme Mauricie at www.tourisme-mauricie.com or call 800-567-7603.

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Israel & the Jewish World

PA expels orchestra founder over concert for survivors

By YOAV STERN
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JERUSALEM — Wafa Younis, a musician from northern Israel who founded a youth orchestra in the Jenin refugee camp, was arrested there last week by Fatah militants and sent back to Israel from the West Bank. Last week the orchestra played for Holocaust survivors and elderly Arabs in Holon, news that ignited passions in Jenin.

Younis had been meeting with students' mothers when about four armed men in civilian clothing surrounded her. The militants were led by Zakariya Zubeidi, head of Fatah in the camp, who demanded that Younis go with him in his car to the camp's police station.

"The police chief, who is familiar with my activities, said he would prefer that I leave, because those are the instructions regarding anyone with an Israeli identification card," Younis told Ha'aretz last Thursday.

"Zubeidi offered a *hudna*, where we would suspend our activities for a time, and I agreed. I'll return to Jenin at the right moment, because the children are waiting for me, because the community is waiting for me. And if I can't teach them in their classroom, I'll teach them in the centre I founded in A'ara [where she lives]."

Younis' work in the camp has made her a household name there. After teaching more than a dozen schoolchildren to play the violin, oud, drums and other instruments, she arranged performances in Israel for the orchestra, Strings of Freedom.

A year ago, it played in A'ara for the families of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, Israeli soldiers who were seized in a cross-border raid and taken to Lebanon, and of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Later in the week, after the arrest, PA officials said they and Fatah were under heavy pressure from Hamas members in the camp as a result of the concerts.

"On the Internet, there are pictures of the children under photos of the Israeli prisoners, and they performed for Holocaust survivors," one Fatah official said. "Hamas accused us of normalization activities, of identifying with the enemy, so we were forced to expel Younis. The subject is now closed."

Younis, who was interviewed by Arab and foreign news outlets, told Ha'aretz that she would appeal directly to the office of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "I'll ask him to appoint a genuine commission of inquiry that will hear the children and their parents, too," she said. "I will wait until the issue is thrashed out, because I cannot continue my work with these interruptions."

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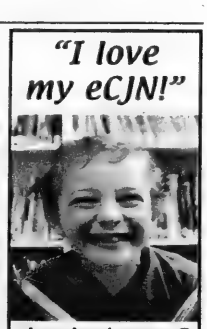

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Gala raises $250,000 for Maccabi athletes

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Some 450 young Canadian athletes and another 50 coaches and medical staff will be heading to the 18th Maccabiah Games in Israel this summer, thanks in part to funds raised at a gala dinner in Toronto last week.

An estimated $250,000 was raised at the dinner and through an online silent auction, which runs until April 16 (http://auction.maccabicanada.com). The funds will be used to subsidize the $7,500 cost of sending each athlete to the Games ($3.4 million for the team). Athletes and coaches raise a portion themselves.

The Maccabiah Games are held every four years in Israel and bring together Jewish athletes in what is considered the third-largest athletic event in the world. Over 8,000 athletes from more than 50 countries will be in Israel for the Games, which run from July 12 to 23.

About 280 people gathered at Toronto's Liberty Grand ballroom for the dinner, which included a performance by legendary funnyman Jackie Mason.

Canada will field the third-largest delegation, after Israel and the United States, said Allen Gerskup, president of Maccabi Canada. The games not only provide a venue for athletic achievement, but they also promote the Jewish identity of participants, create lifelong friendships and forge a strong bond with Israel. For most of the athletes, the 18th Games will mark their first trip to Israel, Gerskup said.

Gerskup has been to Israel at least 25 times since 1985, thanks to his association with the Maccabi movement. His proudest moment, he said, came in 2001, as the intifadah was raging. That year, the games came perilously close to being postponed.

Under the watchful eye of Israeli security, the international athletes marched into Teddy Kollek Stadium in Jerusalem as thousands of Israelis cheered. It was the only international event in Israel that was not cancelled due to the uprising, and Canadian Jews showed their solidarity "with boots on the ground."

The Games, he said, "unite us all."

Maccabi Canada vice-president Ned Goodman suggested the organization's funding model – raising money every four years prior to the Games – "has to change" so that money is collected more regularly.

He recalled his involvement with the Games four years ago, when he supported his friend Robert Lantos' efforts to put together a water polo team. He and his family attended the Games and "the feeling was unbelievable at the opening ceremonies."

Turning to the economy, Goodman, a portfolio manager and investment counsellor, said it is impossible to predict the stock market. But, in his more than 40 years in the business, he has learned success depends on optimism, patience and consistency.

Relying on a "gut feeling," Goodman said he believes the market bottomed on March 6. The market turns not when it looks blackest "but just a little less black than the day before. Today, it's a little less black than it was one month ago."

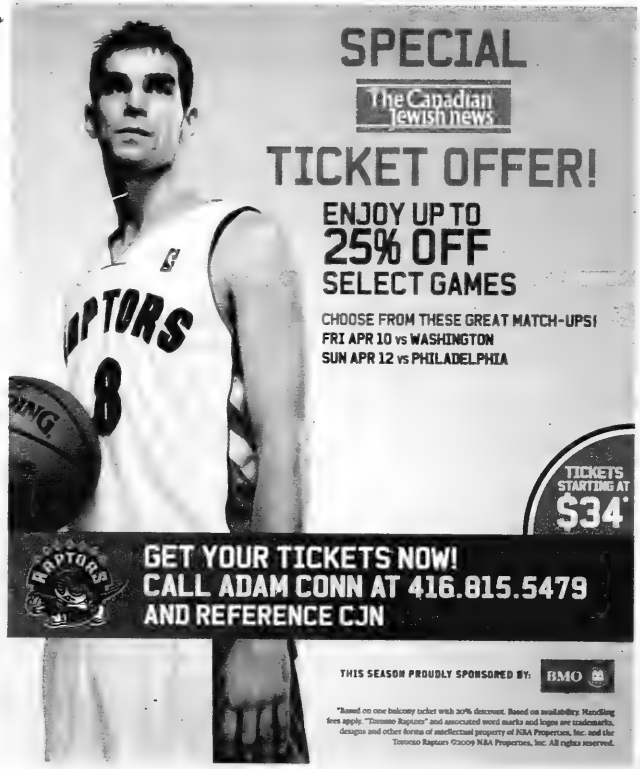
Adding a little free investment advice, Goodman suggested buying gold.

The evening's headliner, Mason, followed Goodman, and if he were an athlete, it could be said he had a lousy first half but came on strong.

The renowned borscht belt comedian focused his wit on U.S. President Barack Obama, but much of his shtick fell flat. Regrouping, he switched to his more familiar and effective observations, though in the stronger second half he seemed to forget where he was and joked about the lack of Jewish athletes.

Some of his observations: on cholesterol (every Jew is an expert on cholesterol. "I guarantee there is not one Jew here who doesn't have Lipitor in his pocket."), marriage (you can't please everyone. "My girlfriend is the most wonderful person to me. That's to me. But to my wife..."), shopping (wife to husband: "You think I enjoy shopping? I went there to save you money."), swimming pools ("Every Jew when they get rich and get a pool, the pool becomes another place to eat around"), the weather ("Is there one person in the world who wants to know the barometric pressure?").

CBC broadcaster Elliotte Friedman served as the evening's host and CHAT student Felicia Hershenhorn sang the Israeli and Canadian anthems.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Israel's World Cup hopes dashed by Greece

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CRETE — An ambitious campaign came to an early but expected demise last week on the island of Crete, as Israel's national soccer team lost to Greece, 2-1.

A blatant foul by Biram Kiyal in front of Israel's goal in the 67th minute allowed Georgios Samaras to score the winner on a penalty kick as goalie Dudu Awat helplessly dove in the wrong direction.

Just eight minutes earlier, Elyaniv Barda had put Israel back in the game with the equalizer.

Now mired in fourth place, Israel has virtually no chance of qualifying for the World Cup. The loss ended Israel's 18-game undefeated streak in World Cup qualifier matches, though Israel managed to score at least one goal for the 15th straight time in such games.

In the wake of drawing Greece and Switzerland last year for its qualifying group, Israel was optimistic about its chances of advancing to the World Cup.

In its excitement, the Israel Football Association, headed by chairman Avi Luzon, pushed aside facts that the current generation of players was inferior, that total reliance on Yossi Benayoun had not borne fruit in previous campaigns, and that Dror Kashtan is well past his prime.

At least this time the drama didn't get dragged out until the final moment as in previous campaigns. It only took a little more than five minutes for the Greeks to take the lead, and it would be ignoring reality to hang everything on Kiyal's unnecessary penalty.

The truth must be said. Switzerland, and especially Greece, may be far from the level of France, Spain or Croatia, but they are better than Israel – even if Israel is ranked 18th, while Greece is 19th and Switzerland is 22nd in the world.

Inside Back

When memory jolts the mind

By MICHAEL GORDON

As a geriatrician with many patients who experienced the Holocaust, I have met individuals who have had profound reactions to events that revive their terrible suppressed memories.

Some survivors can discuss their traumatic experiences, while others find it difficult. Children of Holocaust survivors often recount how little they knew about the experiences of their Holocaust-surviving parents – until late in their parents' lives.

The Senior Side of Life

I have known individuals who have had serious non-Holocaust traumatic experiences that they could not easily recount to their loved ones or to a physician. They may have experienced a trigger that resulted in a psychological reaction associated with the memory of the experience. The precipitant could have been a recent experience, a film, a book or some other media event. The national anthem of a beloved country from which they fled could be a trigger, and sobbing uncontrollably while it is being played is an example of a psychological reaction.

I recently had such an experience after seeing the prize-winning Israeli film Waltz with Bashir, an animated film about an Israeli soldier's recollection of the 1982 Lebanon-Israel war. Although I had a sense of unease about the subject, I reluctantly agreed to see the film with my wife and family members.

I felt a sense of dread as the film progressed, even as I was mesmerized by it. By the end, I was so emotionally distraught that I said to my wife and family members: "I cannot discuss this film now." For the rest of the evening, I didn't participate in family conversation about the film.

It took days before I felt I could express my feelings about the film. A column about the film by Bradley Burston, on the Ha'aretz newspaper website, captured my emotional experience. He wrote: "I went to see Waltz with Bashir this week, not suspecting for a moment that the story it told would have anything to do with me. That, it turns out, is precisely what the film is about. It has to do with everyone who has been in a war here in Israel."

He then described what I had experienced at the film: "What I did not know was that, scene by scene, the film was about to invade me, rumble over me and through me, corner me and take me over. I went to see Waltz with Bashir, but it wasn't really seeing that I did. It wasn't long before the film turned visceral. I saw armoured personnel carriers and knew how to operate and load and clean the machine guns at their turrets, and I began to feel a fist inside rise from my gut upward until it took my windpipe, still from the inside, and strangled the air out of me."

I served as a physician in the Israeli Air Force, and in my last reserve duty in 1973 was involved in the first Israeli initiative to build the Israel-Lebanon border-patrol road. I witnessed war and completed two helicopter evacuations under fire. Like Burston, I could "smell" the spent ammunition as the film progressed. I could feel the whirring and thumping of the helicopters, and I could hear the sound of gunfire from both directions. The scenes of the dead bodies at the end of the film resonated with me.

Waltz with Bashir has helped me to confront distant but deep feelings about my personal experience of war that surface from time to time, as they did during the film. For this, I am grateful, because I now feel a greater understanding of and empathy with the horrifying wartime experiences of my patients. They continue to suffer in their memories, much more than I do or can only imagine.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

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6 tblsp sweet butter
2 lg onions, peeled and diced
3 matzoh boards
6 lg eggs
1 1/2 c diced smoked salmon
1/4 c chopped fresh dill
Salt and pepper to taste

Submerge matzoh boards in warm water for 30 secs. Remove from water and set aside. Heat 4 tblsp butter in a large pan over medium-low heat. Add onions, cook slowly until golden brown, approx. 15-20 min. In large bowl, whisk eggs. Break matzoh into egg mixture, add onions, smoked salmon, salt, pepper. Heat 2 tblsp butter in large skillet over medium high heat. Add egg mixture; let cook until eggs are just set, about 2 to 3 min. Fold in dill and serve immediately.

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Pesach: the ultimate pedagogic tool

Epi on Education

Pesach is upon us once again, and no Jewish educator can deny that this holiday, more than any other in our calendar, is an educative instrument. The tradition started at the very beginning in Chapter 12 of the book of Exodus. At the very same time that we are told of our imminent liberation from the slavery of Egypt, we are instructed not to think of this great moment as a one-off. No, the historic significance of what is about to happen in the first month (Nisan) marks this date in the full moon of the month as special for all generations to come.

Seymour Epstein

As the paschal lamb is described, one can actually feel the need to ritualize this critical moment in our history. One can only imagine that slaves about to be freed might have other things on their minds, but these particular slaves are asked to participate in the future history of this momentous event. Further, they are told in Chapter 13 to instruct their children about how and why this mighty liberation took place.

Chaim Nachman Bialik, our national poet, would have claimed that this was legend becoming law, the very interaction between history and our people that has sustained us through the centuries and across the world.

The rabbis complemented the pedagogy of Exodus by instituting the seder of Pesach eve, whereby we reenact those first moments of liberation through all five senses: hearing, touch, smell, sight, and taste. And more than that, the Haggadah of Pesach forces us to confront both our slavery and our liberation by God in both thought and feeling. The midrashic text challenges our cognitive powers with its interpretive prowess, and it also moves the heart in its poetic language. Every aspect of the human body and soul is exposed to the notion that each one of us was liberated from Egypt, not just our ancestors.

I know of no educational model more effective.

Seymour Epstein (Epi) is a Jewish educator who lives in Toronto

Fighting anti-Semitism is pursuing freedom

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Happy Pesach. Be free.

Over the last two months, I have called for a community mobilization plan that would include every Jew, and many non-Jews, in a movement to strengthen the Jewish position in the world and fight anti-Semitism.

This entity needs to be both institutional and grassroots in nature, involving major Jewish organizations and smaller less-funded NGOs.

My idea is to create a local – and ultimately a worldwide entity – plan that would oversee a strategy to fight anti-Semitism and would increase positive interaction between Jews, Muslims, Christians and other peoples.

This second part is of utmost importance, as it highlights the core of undercutting Jew hating in our world. Many non-Jews appreciate what Judaism is all about – a peaceful intelligence with a focus on civility, Godliness and activism. Organizations in town involved in educating non-Jews about our people will tell you that given the chance, many gentiles will break bread with us, as they are curious about our ways and our preponderance for learning. This would marginalize the card-carrying anti-Semites.

Is that always the case? No. But for those who subscribe to the rabbinic belief that Esau hates Yaakov – that anti-Semitism will always exist and cannot be modified or adjusted, I think the reality is otherwise. Read Rescue in Denmark, by Harold Flender, a book about the population of Denmark's spontaneous organization into a resistance group that rescued almost all of that country's Jewish community during World War II. Non-Jews will fight for us, especially if we encourage their friendship.

I received a number of e-mails from people who read my articles here and on Haaretz.com. The messages varied from: "Doesn't this already exist" (there is no overall plan to involve every Jew) to "how do I get involved?" Israeli Ami Isseroff said that aliyah is the answer, but "we cannot walk the little, old lady across the street if she does not want to go."

Some rabbis have met with their members about such a plan. This is positive.

I have heard from organizations involved in fighting anti-Semitism, some of whom insisted I was undermining their activities. One Jewish community worker told me I was denigrating his organization. Nonsense.

You are doing good work, but defending the Jewish people cannot be in the hands of a few Jewish community professionals, the government of Israel and Israel Defence Forces. It must be spread around, as numbers are required to make massive "on the ground" changes, so you and I can breathe a breath of control into our future. We are a small, malleable people who can organize effectively.

I have created an e-mail list of people who want to attend an initial meeting. Let me know if you would like an invitation.

We have survived for thousands of years because of our unbridled independence, our refusal to lie down, our decentralized communities and because of a promise from God.

Along the road, however, we have lost many of our members because of anti-Semitism. It is our obligation to do what we can, in their memory and, for the sake of our Jewishness, to slow down the oldest hatred and maybe even stop it.

Pesach is a holiday when we remember our slavery and celebrate our freedom. Anti-Semitism attempts to enslave us. Fighting it, with everything we got, is pursuing freedom. Let's be free. We are all hungry for this, so we must all come and eat. Chag Samayach. Happy Pesach.

Avrum's blog is at http://avrum.net.

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Section B

The possibility of prose and poetry

Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we once again publish our annual Passover literary supplement. The CJN is delighted to provide this possibility to our readers. Fewer and fewer are the opportunities these days – in a world that increasingly views print and paper as an ancien régime – for non-professional writers to find a page or a space of ink and vellum for their own poetry and prose.

As is the case each year, we receive far more submissions that we can accommodate. Choosing what to publish is necessarily subjective and unavoidably disappointing to the individuals whose works are not chosen. We apologize for any undue disappointment our choices may cause. We do, however, assure everyone who submitted material that the choices were not easy to make.

To the varied and eclectic literary selections from our readers, we have added two items of special content to the supplement.

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late illustrious Canadian poet, essayist and writer A.M. Klein, we have included an essay by the renowned Canadian Yiddishist Simcha Simchovitch on the subject of Klein's celebrated novel, The Second Scroll.

The supplement also includes a selection of archival photos of Operation Solomon.

Jews from Ethiopia boarding the plane that would take them to Israel.
[IGPO photo]

In a secret, clandestine operation fraught with danger, the government of Israel over the course of a fateful 36 hours, rescued some 14,000 Ethiopian Jews and brought them to their Promised Land, the State of Israel.

In the next few weeks, as the actual May anniversary date of the rescue approaches, we hope to provide more coverage of Operation Solomon. It was one of the most significant acts of bravery, selflessness and humanitarian greatness in the latter half of the last century.

We decided, however, to begin our commemoration of the anniversary early in partial response to the obscene "apartheid" slander that Israel's enemies triumphantly hurl at the Jewish state.

One need spend only a few moments on any street, in any coffee house, in any school, playground or workplace, on any beach or in any army base in Israel to see the day-to-day, living refutation of the "apartheid" calumny.

Operation Solomon was only one among countless official and unofficial acts of kindness and rescue by the people and the government of Israel reaching out to receive, shelter and otherwise assist many of the world's oppressed.

We hope our readers will find enjoyment and perhaps even inspiration in the pages of the supplement.

To all who submitted works of prose and poetry, we thank you.

To all who will now read what we have published, we also say thank you and enjoy.

Ḥag Pesaḥ Samayaḥ.

Wishing good health and happiness to all our friends and clients during this season of celebration and reflection.

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'FOR EVERYTHING THERE'S A REASON'

By ROSE ROMBERG

This past week of violent weather
I remain in my apartment for comfort.

A collection of books of 40 years plus,
Crowding my shelves, constant
dust collectors.
Empty cartons have been lying
in wait to be filled

For everything there's a reason.
A time for reading, a time for storing
A time for dispensing, a time for goodbye.
A time for praying

I remove book by book.
Reluctant to part with, for they
have given substance to my life.
Two days work, not a labour of love.
Shakespeare's Romeo was not thinking
of books when he romanced Juliet:
"Parting is such sweet sorrow."

I scan a page or two like a last
goodbye to an old friend.
Longfellow, A.A. Milne, Stephen Birmingham,
Jean Euel, Elie Wiesel, Grisham,
Chaim Potok, Sholom Aleichem
and the list goes on…

As habit permits, I read a passage
from the Tanach, eyes grow tired.
I fall asleep from physical and emotional
Exhaustion…I dream a nightmare.

I'm sitting on a colossal rock.
A huge serpent-bird circles high above.
His crest of flaming quills in frantic motion.
His long feet with only three claws
Clutching a package in helicon grip.
He is descending in missile speed,
dropped a huge book into my lap with explosive force.

I awaken with silent scream!
Drenched in perspiration.
My hand groping in the dark.
I turn on the bed light, eyes searching, searching.
I see the Tanach on the floor.

A 'Bissel' Yiddish

By SAMHARA A. ZATZMAN

I want to learn a "bissel" Yiddish.
Just a bissel –
Enough to say: I made an effort to look into my past…
But not too much… because, who speaks Yiddish anymore anyway? Right?
So, Just a bissel –
To say to my ancestors, pictures staring at me from the wall: "I tried"!
I didn't completely forget about you!
A bissel Yiddish for all you've suffered;
the countries you escaped from; learning English from a newspaper; your efforts to be Jewish and proud of it!
Just a bissel Yiddish please, so I can understand my Bubbie and Sabba when they converse in private!
Maybe a bissel Yiddish to make up for all the questions I want to ask and never do?
A bissel Yiddish to wish I spent more time with my grandparents, yet never do.
A bissel Yiddish to meld past and present generations?
A bissel Yiddish to placate my heart;
to pretend it is enough.
A bissel Yiddish is not enough:
I can't converse; can only understand one line of a song my Sabba used to sing.
A bissel Yiddish is not enough –
But it's a start.

Happy Passover!

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A Surprise

By APRIL LAUFER

Sammy eyed his mom a little warily. He watched as she closed the cupboards and put tape on them so nobody would open them accidentally.

It was almost Pesach. Mom had been cleaning for weeks. All of the foods that Sammy liked to eat were inside those cupboards.

"Mommy," he asked, watching her take out the last of the bread and bagels from the freezer.

"Mmmm," she answered as she started to wipe out the now-empty freezer.

"I'm hungry."

"So eat something."

"No," said Sammy, "I mean I'm hungry on Pesach. On Pesach, I'm always hungry. I miss my cereal and my peanut butter and jam sandwiches, and all that other good stuff."

"When Pesach is over, I'll get you lots of cereal."

"When?" he asked.

"In a week," she answered as she continued wiping the sides of the freezer.

"But what will I do for a whole week?" Sammy asked plaintively.

"You'll just have to eat matzah."

"I don't like that burnt stuff that Uncle Mordechai brings."

"That's just for the seder night. You like the regular matzah."

A whole week, thought Sammy. He frowned. Oh-oh, here comes my sad face, he thought.

A tear streaked down Sammy's face as he played with the bread that was starting to defrost on the table.

"Sammy, what's wrong?"

"I don't like Pesach," he complained.

"You know," said his mom, bending down in front of him and wiping away his tear, "that's not quite true."

"Yes, it is."

"Well," said his mom, "I remember you had a really nice time with all your cousins last year." She played with his hair, running her fingers through it. "And I remember that you were pretty happy about finding the afikoman."

Sammy looked up.

"And you really do like chicken soup and matzah balls and Bubbie's gefilte fish and..."

But Sammy wasn't listening any more; he was thinking about last year. Every year Zaide promised that the person who found the afikoman would get a big surprise. Last year, it had been Sammy's turn.

While everyone had been busy eating he had kept his eye on his zaide. Every time Zaide adjusted the pillow on his chair, Sammy stretched his neck to see if his zaide was trying to hide the afikoman. He almost forgot to eat his chicken soup because he was so busy watching his zaide. But it had been worth it.

He had seen his zaide look over at his abba. He could tell something was up when he saw his abba nod his head and raise his eyebrows in Zaide's direction. Zaide had smiled back. Then he noticed his zaide lean toward his uncle and whisper something in his ear as he passed something to him. Sammy ducked his head under the table and, yes, they were passing the afikoman from one lap to the next. He watched until it reached his father, who kept it. Then he saw his abba stretch and reach back. Bingo. That was it. Abba had hidden the afikoman behind his pillow. Easy as pie.

> ***'You were pretty happy about finding the afikoman'***

A minute later, Sammy had very casually walked over to his abba and given him a hug and stolen the afikoman! He was so excited. His cousins started protesting that it wasn't fair, because it wasn't time to find the afikoman yet. But Sammy didn't care.

"I found it," he told everyone. "I stole it from Abba." The adults clapped, and his cousins groaned. Some of the younger cousins wanted him to hide it so they could try to find it, but he held on to it for dear life until his zaide said it was time for dessert.

And as soon as the holiday was over, Zaide had taken him to buy his very first bike. It was a two-wheeler. They couldn't quite decide if he needed training wheels, too, but in the end Zaide said that maybe, just in case, they should put them on. The bike was perfect. It had shiny silver spokes, and it was blue with a yellow stripe that looked like a bolt of lightning. And Zaide had attached the training wheels. Just in case.

Continued on page B5

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'Did you practise the ma nishtana?'

Continued from page B4

Before he got to ride his bike, his zaide said that he would try it out just to be sure that everything was in working order. The bike was way too small for his zaide, but he lifted his leg over the seat of the bike and walked down the driveway with the bike between his knees.

When his zaide pronounced that the bike seemed to be in working order, Sammy couldn't contain his excitement. "Zaide, I love you," Sammy said as he let his grandfather adjust his helmet.

"Love you, too," Zaide said as he patted the helmet. "Snug?" he asked.

"Perfect," Sammy said. And off he went down the driveway all by himself.

"Careful," Zaide called. "You're a new driver." Sammy laughed.

It would be so fantastic if Sammy could find the afikoman this year, too! He would have to watch really carefully, because for sure his cousins were going to try to find the afikoman before he could. That made him a little nervous. He wondered where his zaide might hide it. If he could just think of some really good hiding places, he could tell his zaide. Zaide always said he appreciated how smart Sammy was.

"You know what?" said his mom interrupting his reverie. "Why don't you put out the bread for Abba to find? I'll get you some napkins to wrap up the pieces, so we don't make any extra crumbs."

She gave him a hug.

"I wonder where I put last year's candle and feather. I better go look for it while I remember."

Then frowning, she pointed her finger at Sammy, "Don't hide the pieces like you did last year." Last year, Sammy had done a really good job hiding the bread around the kitchen and refused to say where he had put the pieces until his mom and dad begged him.

If only he could think of a really good place to hide the afikoman.

When Sammy's mom came back into the kitchen with the candle and feather, Sammy was smiling.

"What's up?" she asked. "You look happy."

"Oh, I was just thinking... I could help Zaide find a really good hiding spot for the afikoman. Then he wouldn't have to worry about leading the seder and where to hide it."

"Oh," said his mom. "Well, maybe we could both come up with some really good hiding places. We don't want the cousins to be mad because Zaide took your ideas. And," she continued, "since you found it last year, maybe one of the cousins needs a chance this year."

This was a little worrying for Sammy.

"Well," said Sammy, "I could steal it first and then I could hide it, too. Then the cousins could try to find out where I hid it. Do you think that's a good idea?"

"I do," said his mom.

"I just have to steal it first. Where do you think Zaide will hide it this year?" Sammy asked.

"I don't have any idea."

"Me, too," said Sammy.

"Why don't we put out the bread now," said his mom. "Abba will be home soon."

"Okay," said Sammy, jumping up from his chair.

Sammy was smiling to himself as he started to take the bread and wrap each of the pieces; he was thinking about hiding places for the afikoman. His zaide could hide it and then he could hide it. Then everyone would get a chance to find the afikoman, even if he found it first. He wondered for a moment if finding it first meant that he would get the surprise or if he would have to share the surprise with one of his cousins. That was OK he decided. They could share. Maybe he could discuss some ideas with Zaide about where they might hide the afikoman.

The phone rang. Sammy was concentrating on wrapping up the last pieces of bread as he heard his mom say hello.

"Zaide wants to speak to you," she told him. Perfect, thought Sammy as he ran to take the phone.

"Hi, Zaide," he said.

"Hi, Sammy, hope you're ready for tomorrow night." Sammy could tell his zaide was smiling. Funny, how you hear a smile, thought Sammy.

"Did you practise the *ma nishtana*?"

"We did it at school aaaallll week."

"That's good"

"Zaide, you know what?"

"What, Motek?"

"Zaide, I have an idea."

"Ideas are good," said his zaide, sounding interested.

"Well, you know, this year I was thinking about where to hide the afikoman." Sammy heard his zaide give a little chuckle but before Sammy could finish there was a crash in the background.

Continued on page B6

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'Finish putting out the bread'

Continued from page B5

"Oh my," said his zaide. "I'll have to call you back. It looks like Bubbie needs my help." And Zaide hung up just like that, before Sammy got to tell him his good idea.

Sammy put the phone back.

"What's up?" said his mom who was scouring the sink.

"Nothing. Zaide had to go help Bubbie."

When the phone rang a minute later, he picked it up, hoping it was Zaide calling back.

"Hi, sweetie, how are you?"

"Fine, Bubbie," Sammy exhaled. "Is Zaide there?"

"No, sweetheart. I had to send him out to buy some more horseradish, because I dropped the jar."

"Oh," said Sammy.

"Can I speak to Mom for a minute? I want to ask her something."

"Mommy, Bubbie wants to talk to you."

Sammy was a little worried.

"Finish putting out the bread," his mom said with a gesture of her arm that indicated the area of the kitchen.

His mom started talking on the phone and Sammy went to the table.

"What should I do with this," Sammy said, indicating the bagel that was also on the table.

His mom was still talking on the phone, but she put her hand over the receiver to say, "You can wrap that up, too. Don't forget you have to hide all 10 pieces." Before she started talking to Bubbie again she reminded Sammy, "I don't mean hide – I mean just put them out. OK?"

His mom was listening to his bubbie on the phone, and Sammy was trying really hard to think of hiding places for the afikoman.

He heard his mom say, "Oh, it's in the other room. Hold on a minute, I'll go get it for you."

Then turning to Sammy, she said, "Bubbie needs me to check something. I'll be right back."

'He knew exactly how to make this year's seder even better'

She put the phone on the counter. She eyed the pieces of bread that still needed to be wrapped and with a wink at Sammy she said, "You finish up and I won't see where you put the rest of the bread."

When his mom left the room, Sammy looked at the bread in his hand. He had already put out seven pieces and had three to go. Where should they go?

"Hang up the phone," his mom yelled. "I'll be down in a minute."

Sammy picked up the phone from the counter and could hear his bubbie and mom talking about the desserts for the seder meal. Very quietly he put the phone back in the cradle. He wished he had had a chance to discuss with his zaide about some good hiding places.

Sammy continued putting out the bread for his abba to find. Looking at the bagel that he hadn't wrapped yet, he suddenly had a really funny idea. He knew exactly how to make this year's seder even better than last year's. He took the bagel and squished it into his pocket. Tomorrow night after he stole the afikoman he would hide it – inside the bagel. When the cousins couldn't find it, he would tell everyone that he had a big surprise.

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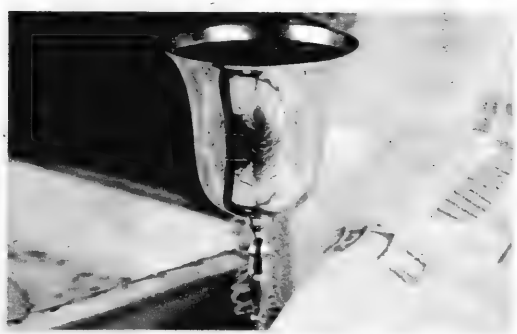

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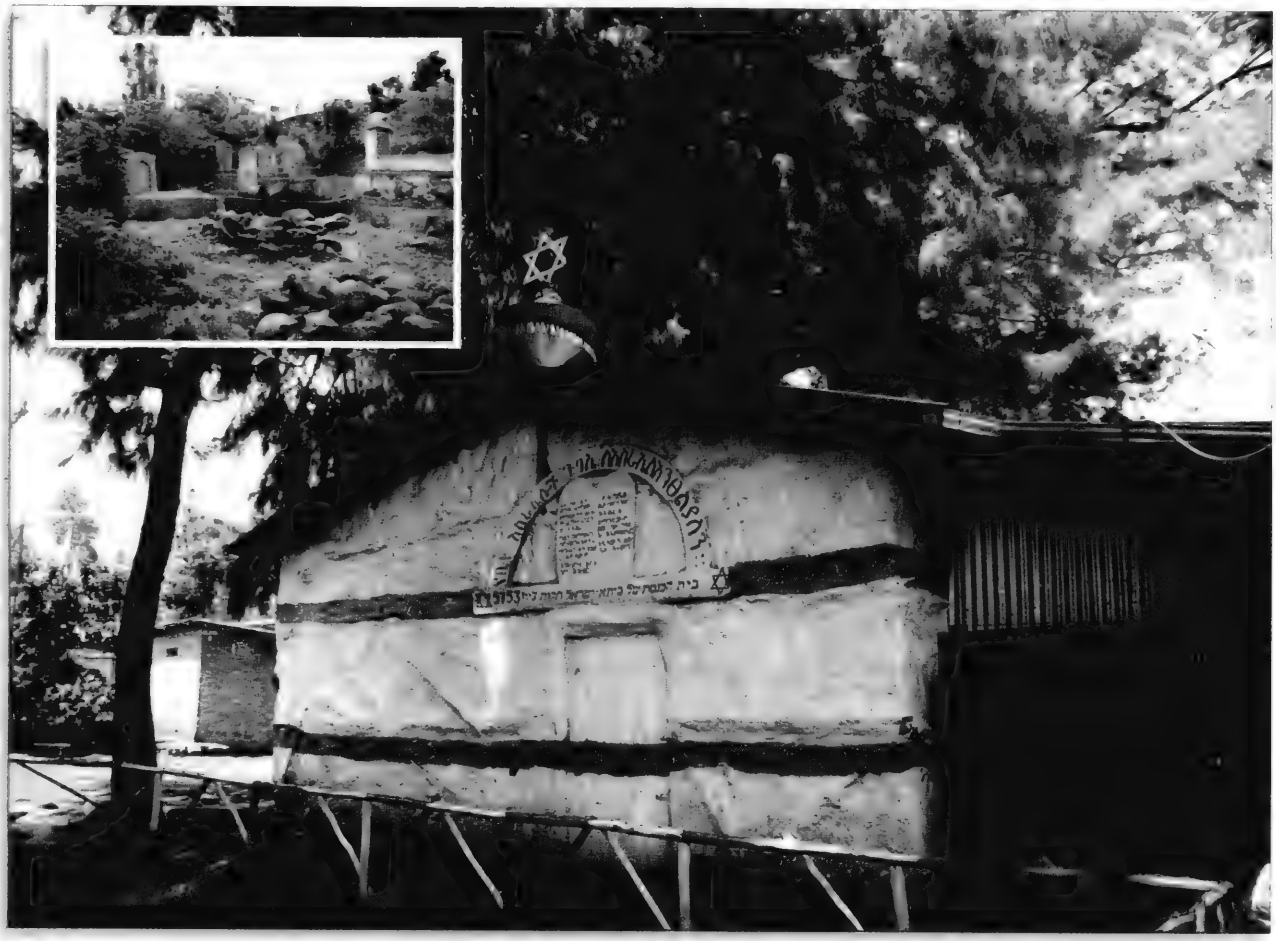

HOLY PLACES THE JEWS LEFT BEHIND IN ETHIOPIA

A synagogue of Beta Israel in Gondar and a final resting place nearby. [RGB photos]

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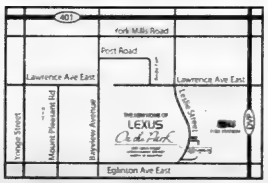

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Passover Greetings

God Is Yelling at the Children of Israel

By DAN YASHINSKY

Tuesday afternoon in a Toronto gym
And God is yelling – again –
At the children of Israel –
God – a grade one teacher
Here at the Jewish Community Centre –
Has reached His limit –
"Isaiah! You can sit out
UNTIL you learn to share the ball!" –
Isaiah stomps over to the corner
And the game goes on
By rules I can't discern
From the running track above –
Squeals of six-year-old glee
Ricocheting off the high roof
As the people of the book
Become the people of the game –
Young Sarahs, Jacobs, Leahs, and Isaacs
Chase the ball in a rush
Of confused competition, high spirits, uncertain rules –
Isaiah returns to the fray
Temporarily contrite
Promising God not to boss around his playmates –
"I LOVE this game!" shouts one,
"I HATE this game!" cries another
refusing to play –
Such imperfect followers-of-rules,
Such exuberant improvisers!
So exasperating! So beautiful!
You can tell why Isaiah became so bossy
And God, now withdrawn to the side of the gym,
Looks discouraged, puzzled, or just exhausted
With His rambunctious kids
As if he'd rather be reading a Russian novel
Or doing Sudoku –
Luckily another adult voice is heard –
A woman with an Israeli accent,
Another teacher perhaps,
Who marshals the scattered group
Lays down the rules
(apparently there are some)
Shouts them through the game
Then marches the giggling, arguing, protesting
Mini-tribe back
To the young man on the sidelines who,
Godlike, has again grounded
The diminutive Isaiah
For the second or tenth time that day –
He "leads" them
(no real line-ups for this
unruly and opinionated
crowd of grade ones)
To the gym door and back to class –
I'm on the track above
Jogging like an aging angel with sore knees
Who, lacking Isaiah's fire,
God's resignation,
And the Israeli's command
Chooses to float in circles above the clamour
Revelling in the early, bright and irresistible voices
Of my people.

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I Am Jerusalem!

By BRANDON MARLON

I am the tireless subject
Fluttering ten thousand tongues
I am the picture painted
By master artists in each generation
I am the muscular mounts
The voluptuous valleys
The cobblestone remnants
Beneath pilgrims' precious feet
The underground tunnels
Propping up millennial layers
I am beloved by prophets
By high priests and saints
I am the markets and accents
Colouring public squares
I am the city of David
May his name ever reign
I am the cave and the crypt
The name inked in script
I am the blood spilt in crevices
The sweat on the brows of my defenders
I am the symbol and the thought
Not extinguished with the Temple's fire
I am the blaze in the hearts
Of my loyal rememberers
I am rolling hills and high walls
That loftily arise
In the sparkling pupils of admiring eyes
I am the golden crown and its diamond gem
Eternally, I am Jerusalem!

Never Again

By COURTNEY FIRESTONE
Grade 10 student

The year is 1948.
Israel is founded – celebrate!
The Shoah has seen too many Jews slain,
The entire world swears, "Never again."

The year is 1949.
Life in Yemen is increasingly not fine.
"On eagles' wings they'll arrive," Israel does proclaim,
Always remembering, "Never again."

The year is 1989.
Many exit visas Russia finally does sign.
Israel welcomes the Soviet Jews to its domain,
Repeating the mantra, "Never again."

The year is 1991.
Rebellion and instability in Ethiopia have begun.
Operation Solomon achieves Israel's aim,
Fulfilling the promise, "Never again."

The year is 2005.
The Intifadah sees French anti-Semitism thrive.
Israel is a refuge from many Jews' bane,
Our country announces, "Never again."

The year is 2009.
Missile after missile hits Israel by design.
Yet in Sderot and the Negev, Jews still must remain,
What ever happened to, "Never again"?

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Mother

By CARLA J. SILVER

I sat in the room with mother for a long time. It was quiet and she was quiet. In the hall I could hear other noises, but they seemed distant, far away from both of us. It seemed to last forever, and there, in the quiet, I thought about things I hadn't recalled in years.

I remembered how, when I was young, mother would tell me history for bedtime stories. When other children were learning about Jack and Jill, I was learning that Jack was King James II of England, Jill was his wife, Mary of Modena, and fetching a pail of water was really a metaphor for being baptized in the Catholic faith. We never played Ring around the Rosy. We dramatized the great plague and created posies, with wild flowers, or sometimes even with garlic cloves, to wear around our necks.

I recalled her introducing me to the piano, on the beautiful, burnished walnut, French provincial, grand piano her mother had given her. In the summer of 1929, before the great crash, when mother was three years old, her mother saw that piano at Eaton's. Mr. Forbes, the piano salesman, became friendly with my grandmother, because she stopped to visit that piano so often, but the cost was prohibitive, $2,500. "I have a very gifted daughter," she told Mr. Forbes. "She's only three years old, but already she shows a gift for music."

In November of 1929, after the great crash, the phone rang at my grandmother's house. "You know that piano?" Mr. Forbes asked. "Now, if you want it, it's being sold for $500." My grandmother took that piano. And mother introduced me to playing on it. We would sit for hours playing childlike duets, like rainstorms. I would sit on the big, needle-pointed bench, tinkling away at the highest notes, being the rain. And mother would sit at the bottom, playing ominous-sounding diminished seventh chords, being the thunder. I would make her switch sides time and time again. For music, I could sit still, even as a toddler.

In the car, we would sing, almost all the time. I would bounce in the back singing songs by the Weavers or labour union songs from the 1930s. "We shall not be, we shall not be moved… Just like the trees that stand beside the river side, we shall not be moved."

Most of the time, however, I could be a most annoying child. I couldn't focus long enough to complete even the simplest task. Mother would send me upstairs to get a meat dishtowel. *Fleishig* and *milchig* were separate in our house, and *fleishig* was always red and *milchig* was always blue. I would get to the top of the stairs, open the linen closet door and stare inside. "I can't find any," I would yell petulantly downstairs.

"They're right in front of you," mother would call back, patiently at first.

"There aren't any," I'd answer. Then I'd hear my mother's footsteps trudging resentfully up the stair, interrupting whatever task she had been at in the kitchen. "*Shick nach hamelech hamoivis*," she would mutter at me in Yiddish, under her breath. "We'll send you to find the angel of death." Of course, the meat towel was always right in front of my eyes, and she would yank it off the shelf, turn around and trudge back down the stairs, still muttering.

Epithets, secrets and complaints in Yiddish were the norm in our house. In Yiddish, I learned that "*Sie dreyt sich vie a fortz im rossel*," my head spun like passing gas in a thick pea soup. All very scatalogical. I had my father's sense of humour.

Mother was fanatical about two things, music and reading. She could read everything. She had an insatiable curiosity and read mysteries and history with equal fervour. People would say she was the most wonderful conversationalist they had ever met, but she once told me the secret. In fact, those people were usually the ones who had done all the talking. Mother said that if you read enough to have a wide general knowledge, whenever you met someone, you just had to know enough to ask one good question. Anyone who loves what they do will happily talk about it for hours. Reading was her greatest gift to me. I learned to disappear in my room for hours at a stretch, devouring whole pocket books in one sitting.

The noises in the hall were growing louder, and after a few hours, someone came to get my mother. I looked at her, one last time, lying there on the bed.

"Mother," I thought, "you should have sent me to find the angel of death."

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Passover Greetings

Fallen Angel

By DAVID MIADOVNIK

With her back pressing against a boulder and her feet dipped in the water, Ahava, a beautiful shepherdess, sits at the edge of a pond watching her flock. Heavy eyelids and a depressed frown mark her face.

She wiggles her foot in the water with boredom and sighs. Ahava continually adjusts her focus as she monitors the sheep. Cautiously, she glances behind the boulder at the makeshift tent to confirm her hopes that her husband is still slumbering within.

Ahava shifts her attention to the heavens and gazes at the moon. She takes a deep, meditative breath and begins to speak.

"My Father, my King, in the beginning You created the heaven and the earth. You said, 'Let there be light,' and there was, and You saw it was good. The light was divided from the darkness. You called the light day and the darkness night. There was evening and morning, one day."

Ahava pauses momentarily. She wipes a single tear and sniffles before resuming her address.

"There was another thing You created, my lord, me. But I was born in the clouds, not on the earth. You entrusted me with the duty of spreading the word of peace to the peoples, and you blessed me with wings so the message might travel that much faster."

She grits her teeth and tightly closes her eyes for an instant, attempting to control her almost overwhelming emotions. Tears slide down Ahava's cheeks as she scrapes the ground with tensed hands to alleviate stress. She unties her robes, removes the torso portion of her garments and reveals her bare upper body.

On Ahava's back are two large and grotesque scabs. The scabs are a hardened cocktail of blood, pus and a few feathers.

"Why? Why did You take my wings Lord? Was I unworthy of Your tasks? Was I unworthy of being an angel, or was I just unworthy of being close to You?"

Ahava curls herself up, covers her face with her hands and weeps for what she feels is an eternity.

"My Father, my King, You assigned each angel a mission. Yet You neglected to provide me with such. You told me to travel to this desert's outskirts and await instructions, as I did. But I found no mission awaiting me. All I found was a shepherd who was beaten and stoned by radicals for his views of you."

Ahava rests her head on her knees; she suppresses painful emotion with a mask of impassiveness. However, all efforts to conceal feelings are in vain as tears drip down her face.

"You would have been proud of me. I nursed the shepherd back to health. I tended to his wounds, I fed him, I provided him with water and I cared for his flock. Yet, I made a critical error in my conduct. I fell in love. I am aware that protocol opposes angels associating with mortals in such a manner, but over the months as I treated his injuries and got to truly know him, we developed feeling toward each other."

Though her disposition is melancholy, Ahava's own talking calms her. She stretches her legs, leans against the boulder and wraps her arms across her chest.

"Once his health returned, he proposed to me. I remember he came into the tent as I prepared supper. He held my hand and said, 'In all my life, I have never met anyone like you. I have never seen such warm-heartedness. You cared for me when I was close to death. That is why I can't stand the thought of you leaving.' He got down on one knee, presented a ring and asked me to marry him. At first I hesitated, but then I experienced a rush of happiness and saying no became impossible."

Ahava descends into silence. Her breathing quickens and becomes heavy, and her body twitches with agitation. She stands, and glares sorrowfully at the heavens.

"One day, I returned from the marketplace and found my home in shambles. I saw the radicals holding a knife to my husband's throat; they had heard rumours of a shepherd who married an angel. I begged them to spare him, but one said, 'God's messengers don't bestow affection on disgusting dogs.'

"I told them that I would give anything to save my husband.

"They said, 'If you love this worthless shepherd, then you don't love God. So relinquish the wings that link you to the Almighty!' They handed me a sabre, and without thinking, I cut my wings off. The radicals freed my husband and left, taking my wings as a memento. My question to you, Lord, is why did this happen? Why did I have to choose between my wings and my love?"

A sandstorm suddenly envelops Ahava. The air collects Ahava's removed garments and dresses her again.

"Ahava my child," whispers the wind.

"My Lord, you answered," replies Ahava with shock.

"I have never left your side."

"Lord, I apologize for my outbursts."

"Your apology is unnecessary. You have proven yourself worthy of a new undertaking."

"Forgive me, but I fail to understand."

"When I moulded you, I blessed you with a loving spirit. That's why I named you Ahava. All that you experienced and endured was a test of that spirit."

"What does that mean?"

"Angels spread My message across the Earth from the clouds. However, humankind cannot hear lessons of peace if their teachers dwell in the Heavens. When I saw you sever your wings to protect your husband, I felt your love, and chose you to be the messenger of loving. Your work will be challenging and span great lengths of time, but with an angel who walks upon the Earth, humanity will finally learn."

The sandstorm dissipates. Ahava stands alone by the water with an expression of pride. She walks to the tent, opens the flaps and before entering, she looks out at the stars.

"I won't fail you."

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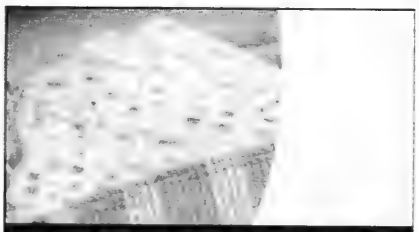

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Passover Greetings

Would You Still See Me

By DEBORA RESNICK

I see your hijab when you walk into our office,
but I also see your round, brown face and smiling eyes.
You ask our secretary a question, she answers.
You ask another question and I answer.
We chat a little, I make a small joke, you smile and you leave.
Another student with a hijab walks into our office.
She has a serious expression, but when I answer her questions she relaxes and smiles too.
After you are both gone I go into my office and wonder,
are you infected,
if you knew that my people wore hats and wigs
would you still smile,
would you still see me?

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Kosher North York On Your Fork

By BRUCE JACOBS

By whom is the definition
Of a kosher North York kitchen
Which diners one habituates
Reflect the stage you integrate

Perhaps in being neither *frum*
Nor adhering to a sole dictum
You dabble Orthodox, Reform
Masorti, non-kosher, no norm

The litmus test of one's *kashrut*
Is to count the number of *kippot*
Lined up at the order table
For your favourite sable or bagel

Wait for a Tov-Li falafel
Delicious in every mouthful
No Reuben from Pickle Barrel
It's *fleishig* and *milchlig*; not viable

Or drifting just north of Steeles
For wide choices in Israeli meals
A shish kebab at Me Va Mi
Hamantash by Goldstein's Bakery

Eating Jewishly by *chukim*
Statutes beyond man's understanding
Split-hooved species that chew the cud
A chef must be shomer Shabbat

Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed
Can leave some of our brethren vexed
There's kosher-style, it's kosher not
And pareve's neutral, which helps a lot

Today find kosher Chinese, Thai
Indian, Mexican, low salt rye
Country Style Coffee at York U
Throughout Toronto, Starbucks too

Fress the ACC and Skydome
Umami Fusion, Colonel Wong
Jerusalem One, Omni 2
Are there for the discerning Jew

For a *schochet*-slaughtered chicken
For cheese that's lacking rennin
Dairy only and your sweet tooth?
Line up for a United Bakery booth

Whatever your chosen menu
The ambience of that venue
Each to his own definition
Of a North York Jewish kitchen

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A REFLECTIVE MOMENT

A soldier in the navy walks past the memorial at Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem, dedicated to the memory of the 4,000 Ethiopian Jews who perished on the journey to Israel. [Flash90 photo]

זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו

Jewish Community Organizations, Synagogues and Schools join our brothers and sisters in Israel in celebrating a Happy and Kosher Pesach. We pray for peace with security and honour.

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Jewish National Fund of Toronto
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Reena, Reena Foundation and Batay Reena
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Shaarei Tefillah Congregation
Shomrai Shabbos Chevra Mishnayos
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Passover Greetings

THE WALLS OF THE GHETTO

By PEARL ADLER SABAN

The walls of the ghetto encircled you.
The walls of the ghetto enclosed you.
The walls of the ghetto framed you.
Framed your life and the lives of your loved ones.
You, with your tattered yellow star marking you
Jew. *Schweinhund*. Part of a damned nation.
It is fear that fed you when the cupboards were bare.
It is bravery that sustained you when that fear was spent.

You fought to the bitter end –
The rat-tat-tat of machine gun artillery
echoing off the barren walls of that wasteland.
The raining of bombs all around you.
The smell of death hovering… Always hovering.

With hands up in the air, with this gesture of surrender,
of final supplication
You the boy, already a man, left your legacy.

And we remember. We always remember…

MY FRIDAY NIGHT PRAYER

By MARY COLA (LEFELL-FROST — 1908-2002)

I don a cap of pure white lace,
Three Shabbos candles I then face.
I light these candles Friday night,
Before sunset, while still light.

I then homage to the Lord above,
With greatest fervour and full of love.
To thank Him for each day of grace,
For giving this world such a beautiful face.

I pray for my children, their families and friends,
Neighbours and enemies, I will pray to my end.
To thank Him for watching and protecting us all,
So that we may always stand firm and tall.

My thanks at last are for my husband and myself,
Praying He will grant us good blessings and good health.

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In tribute to a 'psalmist among poets'

In honour of 100 years of the birth of A.M. Klein

By SIMCHA SIMCHOVITCH

The Second Scroll, by A.M. Klein is a book of unique structure, style and content. To pattern a work of fiction after the Pentateuch and to add to it "Glosses" such as the exegetical commentaries to the Written Law is indeed a very risky undertaking for a modern writer.

Only a master in the craft, as Klein was, only a man so deeply grounded in Judaic learning as well as in the poetic lore of the English language, could have produced such a rich, subtle and many-levelled book.

The Second Scroll was A.M. Klein's only book of prose. It was written at the height of his career as a poet and it summarized, in a way, his poetical essence, his lifelong vision of a rebuilt Zion and of a humanity at last humane, as Desmond Pacey says in Ten Canadian Poets.

According to American critic and novelist Ludwig Lewisohn, Klein was "the most Jewish poet who has ever used the English tongue."

Pacey sees Klein as "psalmist among poets" and his poetry as a lyrical expression of jubilation, despair and hope. This intense inner struggle, from which the poet emerges renewed in strength and in faith, is especially recognizable in "The psalter of Abraham Haktani," which forms the main part of his collection titled Poems (Philadelphia, JPS, 1944).

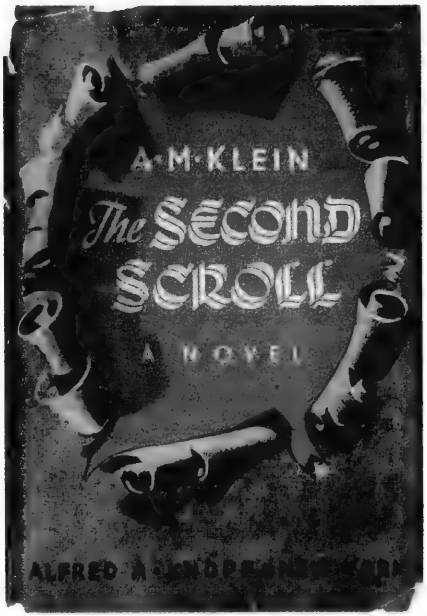
In Psalm XXXVI, the last of the series, Klein summarizes his intense and complete identification with the fate, history and tradition of his people, in both the spiritual and physical realms of his existence: "Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:/ For to the fathers that begat me, this/ Body is residence..."

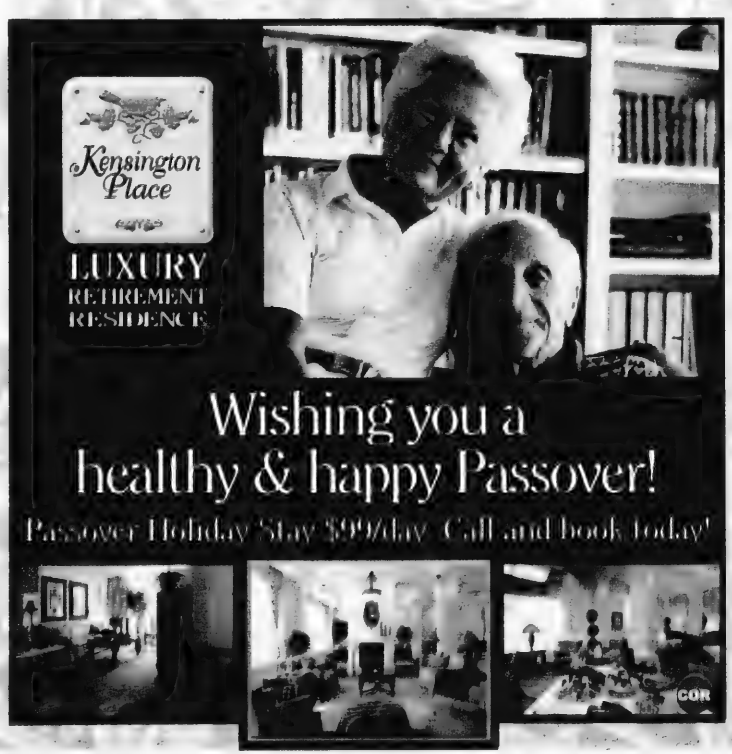
Along with Klein's identification with the Jewish People, we find in his poetry a strong social consciousness and sensitivity to the life of the workers, the poor – the common people. This is seen mainly in his poems of the '30s, but also in a more refined form in The Rocking Chair (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948). This moral passion for social justices and his deep attachment to the Jewish People, are nurtured from the same source – the pathos of the prophets of Israel and the teachings of the sages of the Talmud.

All these motifs and themes are found in The Second Scroll.

Here Klein attempted to summarize the Jewish experience between the two world wars – a fateful and apocalyptic era for the Jews of Europe especially, and the Jewish People at large. The main figure in the book, in addition to the author-narrator, is the mysterious Uncle Melech, the revered prodigy of Ratno, Ukraine, who, after a pogrom, turns into a Bolshevik, a zealot of the Society of Godlessness, and later into a Marxist authority in European literature.

Continued on page B16





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The transformation of Melech Davidson

Continued from page B15

The sudden transformation of Melech Davidson from yeshiva scholar into radical intellectual is quite common and understandable. It has been a road taken, under pressure of external and internal circumstances, by many young, educated Jews since the beginning of the Haskalah movement (the Enlightenment) in the latter part of the 18th century.

However, the second transformation of Melech from the secular revolutionary to the religious mystic and Messiah-figure is more unusual and complex. Already in 1939, when the Soviets have concluded their pact with Germany, Melech, shocked and deeply disappointed by events, begins to realize that his attachment to communism was "a saying of grace before poison," as literary critic M.W. Steinberg described it.

Then the Nazi occupation begins.

The Jewish community of Kamenets, where Melech finds himself, is slaughtered. He is the sole survivor, bewildered and burdened by the guilt of remaining alive. These traumatic experiences bring Melech back to his people.

After the war, he follows the stream of Jewish survivors out of Poland and the Soviet Union into the refugee camps of western Europe.

While the writer is preparing to visit the newly established State of Israel, he receives the first letter from his uncle in the refugee camp of Bari, Italy. He decides to visit his strange relative on the way to Israel. When he arrives at Bari, however, he learns that his uncle has gone to Rome, where he has befriended a priest, Monsignor Piersant, who works in the Vatican Library.

After meeting Monsignor Piersant, the writer learns about his uncle's inner struggles regarding his faith and the validity of Judaism after the Holocaust. The reader learns however, that as a result of his conflicts, Melech emerged more strengthened in his faith and in his attachment to Judaism. Before settling finally in Israel, he lives among the poverty-stricken Sephardi Jews in the *mellah* – the Jewish ghetto of Casablanca.

Continued on page B17

The search of the modern Jew for lost identity

Continued from page B16

The narrator comes close to meeting his mysterious uncle when he visits the old synagogue of Rabbi Isaac Lurie, the famous 16th-century Kabbalist, in Safed. It is here, we learn, that among the pietistic mystics, Uncle Melech completed his spiritual odyssey and found himself anew. But alas, on one of his routine visits to a religious community on Israel's border, he is murdered by an Arab terrorist.

Thus, the nephew from abroad is privileged to "meet" his uncle only at his uncle's funeral.

The search for and ultimate "meeting" with Uncle Melech form the backbone of the meagre plot in The Second Scroll. It allows the author to chronicle the soul-searching and transformation of Melech as well as his Canadian kin.

In the eyes of A.M. Klein, Uncle Melech rises to become a symbolic figure – a representative of the Jewish People, its fate, its destiny and its creative spirit.

Not by chance is the writer's name Melech Davidson (King, son of David). He becomes the Messiah-figure, sufferer and redeemer, who proclaims his Jewish rebirth and authenticates it with his life and his death. His descent into the "Valley of Tears" of the Casablanca *mellah* is in accordance with Jewish legends of a suffering messiah living among the stricken and the poor. At the same time, Melech retains his former radical zeal for social justice: he is shaken by the inhuman conditions he finds there and attempts to organize the people and to arouse public conscience in their favour.

Melech's searching and spiritual adventures are characteristic of the search of the modern, emancipated Jew for his lost identity. He frees himself finally from the shackles of the assimilationist, materialistic approach of Marxism and from his very brief flirtation with Catholicism.

He finds his place among the mystics and pietists of Safed. But here, too, he is an activist and lends a helping hand to the builders and defenders of Israel.

Uncle Melech also symbolizes the new unity of his people. He lives among his Sephardi brethren in Casablanca, who in turn join thousands and tens of thousands of their east European brethren, the survivors of the death camps, in building the State of Israel. Melech's funeral is thus envisioned by Klein "as if the tribes of Israel had come to life again and were travelling as in the olden times, each with its devices and gems."

The life and death of Melech Davidson, in Klein's view, are proof of the miraculousness of the Jewish existence. Melech's survival in Europe and return to the Land of Israel, as well as his tragic death, point to this miracle of rebirth, of life emerging from death and destruction.

Only thus can the writer grasp the natural miracle in the everyday existence of the Jewish People in their land. He finds inspiration not so much in the secular modern Hebrew poetry, but in the efforts of the ordinary people to express themselves and organize their lives in the newly acquired, still flowering Hebrew tongue.

As a result of his search and eventual discovery of his uncle, the narrator's views on Jewish history are also altered. The Arch of Titus that stands in Rome, itself a reminder of the destruction of the Second Temple, thus becomes "an irony directed against itself; the candelabrum, set against the new light that had been kindled across the Great Sea, had turned into satire; the trumpets, symbolic now of jubilee, really taunted Titus!"

Continued fon page B18

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Passover Greetings

Klein observes and chronicles the travails of new immigrants to Israel starting a new life in a new land.

[IGPO photo]

Seeing religion in founding of state

Continued from page B17

Klein is repulsed by the shallow attitude of some Israeli intellectuals who negate the Diaspora Jew, "a conviction that Jewry abroad was doomed... if not immediately, eventually..." Klein sees this approach by the new Israelis as a sign of their disbelief in the spiritual potential of the people and as a neurotic, secular urge to cut themselves off from the distinctly Jewish past and present outside Israel and begin everything anew in their fledgling society.

The author does not accept the view either of the Diaspora Zionist or of the assimilationist that with the emergence of the State of Israel, the Jewish People has returned to active, living history and time. He cannot express his reasons during a discussion in an airplane with a Zionist. But when he meets a young boy studying his talmudic portion beside an old Kabbalist in a Safed synagogue, it is then that he realizes "Israel had not only returned back into Time; it still belonged to eternity."

One can argue with Klein, as author Miriam Waddington does, from a secularist's point of view. One can question Klein's passive acceptance of Jewish fate or his attempt to see in an event of such demonic proportions as the Holocaust, the "suffering pangs" of the birth of the State of Israel. But all these arguments are futile because Klein accepts from the beginning a deeply religious approach to the founding of the state, and this is the premise on which he builds his entire literary structure. As John Milton and Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev both understood, one can argue and plead with God, but in the end, one has no choice but to accept Him and acknowledge His higher infinite wisdom.

In the discussion with the Zionist in the airplane, Klein asks: "And what role... does Providence play in your scheme? You have forgotten, in your thesis, to place God."

Continued on page B19

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A work of rich, particularist and universal content

Continued from page B18

The answer to this question is given at the end of the book, when Uncle Melech's nephew recites the Mourner's Kaddish, which makes no mention of death but exalts the name of the Almighty.

The Glosses which comprise the second half of the book, in my opinion, strengthen the content and the ideas of the book. Gloss Aleph is autobiographical. In it, the poet reveals the source of his Jewish consciousness: the joyful experiences of his childhood and youth in the Yiddish-speaking section of Montreal. This joy of living Jewishly and of Judaism's traditions and lore led Klein toward the mature and rich poetic vision expressed at the end the Gloss: "It is a fabled city that I seek:/ It stands in Space's vapours and Time's haze."

CJC President Monroe Abbey, left, with Saul Hayes and A.M. Klein in 1951 after the publication of The Second Scroll. [CJC Archives photo]

Gloss Beth consists of a lamentation over the death of the six million martyrs. It culminates in an emotional outbreak of hatred and curses upon the heads of the murderers.

Gloss Gimel is a poetic interpretation of Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel in Rome that were mentioned in the story. A parallel is drawn between the Jewish idea of the divinity of man in which killing even one man is akin to deicide, and the Nazi notion of divinity, which aspired to be godlike in death and in destruction.

Gloss Dalet, a dramatic poem, is a representation of the plea of the Jewish People for acceptance, recognition among the nations and reconciliation with their Semitic brethren, the Arabs.

Finally, Gloss Hay concludes with a series of beautiful but simple individual and collective prayers ending with the 13th Psalm of David.

To summarize, A.M. Klein succeeded with The Second Scroll in creating a work of literature that has beauty of form and structure and rich, particularist and universal content.

Desmond Pacey's statement about Klein's capacity through poetry to control the flow of his rhetoric to write in a brief, epigrammatic manner can be applied to the prose in The Second Scroll as well. Here, even more than in his poetry, "humour and pathos, admiration and sarcasm are blended in a most piquant and often poignant amalgam."

Klein was surely intoxicated with words. His rich vocabulary is drawn from Yiddish and Hebrew idioms combined with Elizabethan or Joycean rhetoric. These, however, do not cloud the content or impair the force of his ability to express. They only add to the beauty of this original literary masterpiece.

Simcha Simchovitch is a poet and essayist and one of Canada's most renowned Yiddish writers. His most recent collection of poetry is The Fiery Mountain – Collected Poems.

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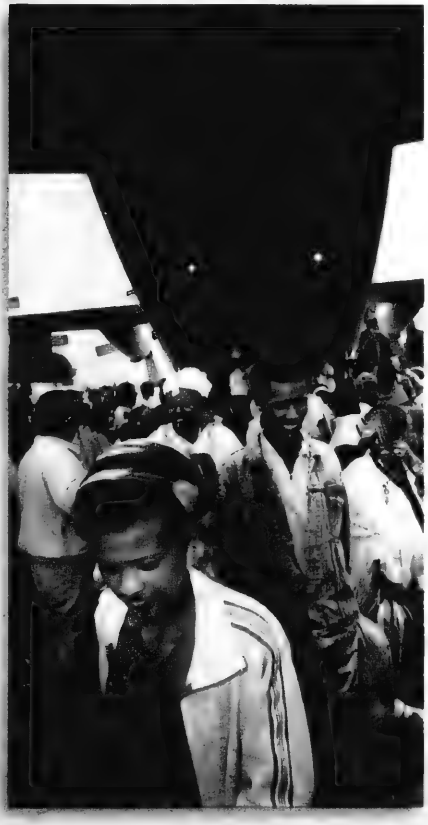
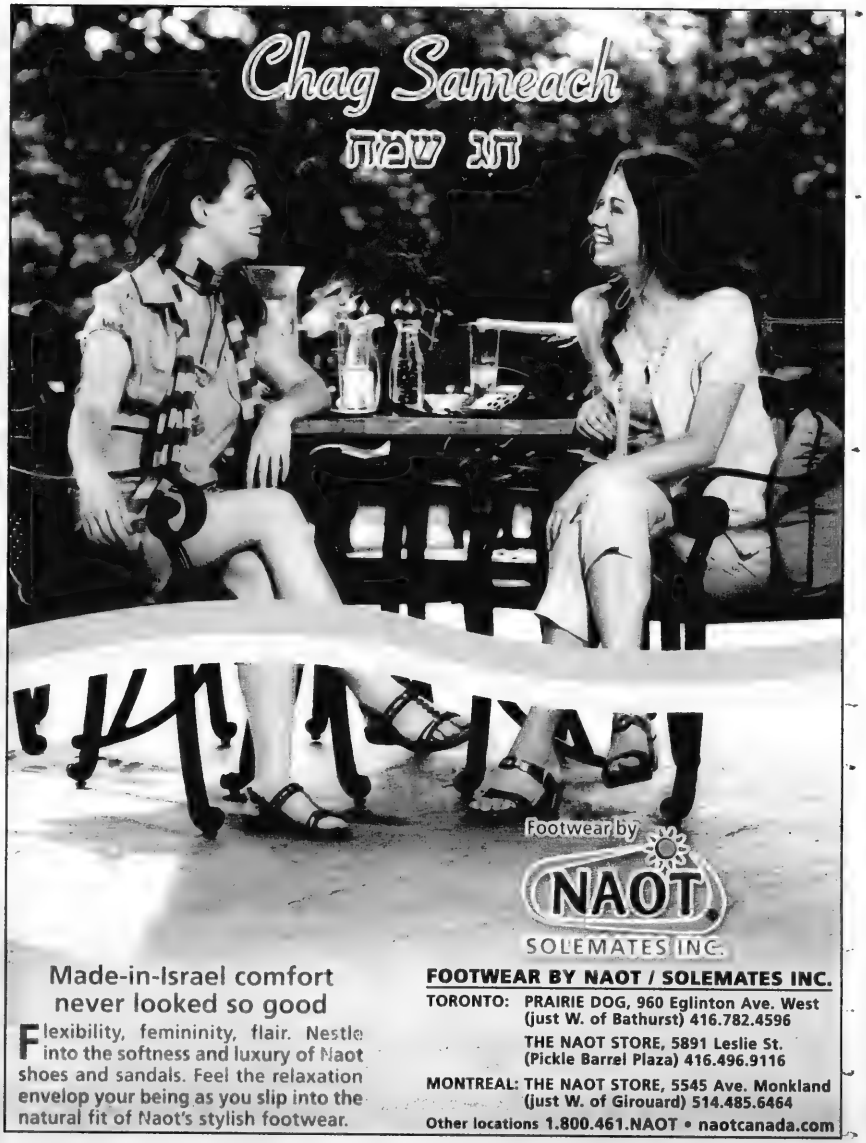


This page and the page opposite show some of the poignant moments of the clandestine 36-hour operation that brought some 14,000 Jews from Ethiopia to Israel in May, 1991.
[Archival photos from the IGPO]



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Passover Greetings

United in Joy

By ORITTE RUDSKI

Round and round we dance together

United in Joy

So many kinds of Jews

So many kind of joy,

Why do we need them all?

The young Yeshiva *bachurim* twirl around

United in their Torah Joy.

They love the Torah,
the challenge of its study
and the love exchanged between them and their creator
As they embrace his holy words.

Oh, how they dance!
They love to lock arms and twirl around
Carrying the young ones tenderly on their shoulders
And the Torah proudly in their arms.

Like the Esrog of Succos
Full of flavor and sweet aroma

They are proud to be Torah Jews!

But what is a royal Esrog without a Lulov, surrounded by Haddasim and Arravos?
A lonely citron unable to Serve its creator properly!!

So round and round the Bimah dance the elderly Chassidim.

They love the Torah and its creator dearly,

But this one has a heart condition,

That one has an aching back,

And his friend has a sore leg!
Never mind, today we serve our Lord by dancing

And so they dance
With strength they do not have!

The body may be weak
But the soul is strong
So the dance goes on in Joy!!

And then there are those
Whose love of Torah is hidden
In shame, in rebellion, in moral pain.

They have come to dance and to drink,
Because that is what they know and love.

Round and round they go
L'chaim they drink

Continued on page B23

Passover Greetings

United in Joy

Continued from page B22

They laugh, they join hands
Embracing their fellow Jews
And their holy Torah.

Tonight there is no need for study,

No need for holy thoughts and words.

We can serve our Lord

With the soles of our feet

That dance round and round,

With the palms of our hands

That hold on to our brothers.

Every Jew has a role to play tonight!

And just as the perfect Esrog can complete its holy mission
By uniting with the other Kinds

All Jews dance together
With Torah scholars

And we become one.

Just as the Lord is one
We serve as one.

Just as we shake the lulov
Up down and all around
And make it dance
To the tune of the time of our happiness,

We are the Lulov and and Esrog of Hashem.

As we circle the bimah with his Torah,
Round and round.
United in Joy.

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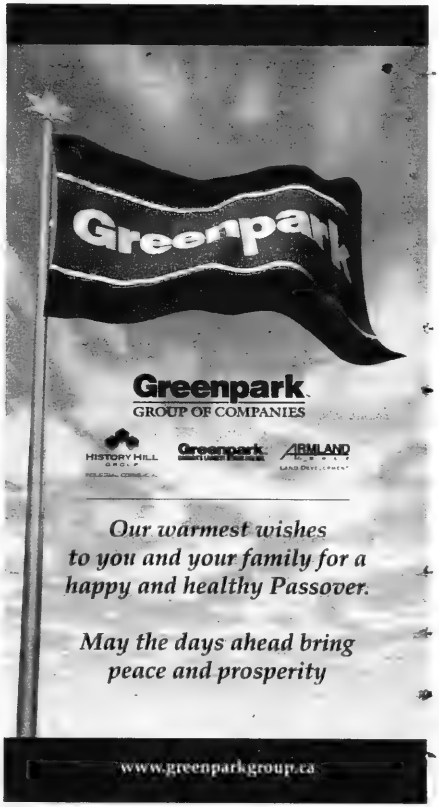

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Flies and Hedgehogs

By IDDO GEFEN

For Jonathan

Since you joined the army, I am trying to catch the time. Simply to hold on to it. I extend my hands into space, waiting for the minutes to pass through the fingers, and then I close them as quickly as I can, trying to gather as many of them as possible. At first, I could not catch anything, because catching the time is complicated. Even catching flies, which are much clumsier, I could not manage to learn from you.

And I remember you. How you used to come home on Fridays, after standing guard for three days, hardly able to move. We would sit by the table, and Mom and Dad would not touch their food until you finished at least two servings. And after dinner, we would sit in the living room and you told us about how Itay talks on the phone the whole time, and about Weisman, the commander, and how you and Uri play tricks on him. And you kept telling us how safe it was at the base, even safer than here up north. And then, only after they were sure that this is in fact their child, and not some impostor or some fantasy, they would look at each other, just for a second, and you could even imagine them smiling. Their child has lived through another week.

'You would run around the house, with me following you like a shadow'

And in the evening you would run around the house, with me following you like a shadow. You are shaving to go out with the gang, but specially for Meital. She does not like that you are thorny like a hedgehog. And when you hear the light switch in their room going off, you come up to me and whisper that now you can tell me that this week a terrorist almost made it into the base, while Itay was on guard, and only by pure chance Weisman caught him. And that maybe in two weeks, you will be sent for a mission. You make me promise not to tell them, because Mom is under enough pressure, and it is bad for Dad's blood pressure, but that I should know. Because in a few years I will also be there, and I should not think that the service is so innocent, and be shocked when they shove an M-16 into my hands.

And I try to learn it all. Every advice, every warning, and every word in this new military language of yours. Even the tricks you played on Weisman I remember. Then, when you are ready to go out, you ask me what about this girl I told you about. I tell you I have been busy. You ask me what was I so busy with, and I stand there, embarrassed, almost stuttering, and tell you I have been trying to catch the time. "The last thing an eight-year-old kid needs is time," you tell me. "And besides, what will you do with it?"

And I did not really know what to say, so you ask me how I tried to do that. I show you, and you measure the distance between my hands, the speed of the movement and the strength of the grip. "Well, no wonder you cannot do it – you have no patience at all." And then you show me with your big hands how to wait patiently until enough time sinks in between the hands, even though you are already half an hour late. "Don't worry, with all these guard duties I have plenty of time – I will save some for you."

'And then there was this day, when Mom was glued to the news and Dad was just silent'

And then there was this day, when Mom was glued to the news and Dad was just silent, smoking in spite of the blood pressure. And I was a bit bored, so I played with the time. And suddenly I felt it. A piece slipped though my fingers. It was small, almost invisible, but for a moment I knew I had held on to a slice of time. Dad, who did not understand what I was doing, yelled at me that I should grow up and stop behaving like a small child, and went back to his cigarette. Mom came to me later, and told me he did not mean it, but I knew he did.

From that moment I did not stop catching the time. Tearing small pieces from it, but larger and larger each time. And the time, it did not like my taking pieces. I tried to explain that it was infinite and I only needed a few small pieces, but time does not make concessions to anyone and fought with me for every single moment. I only tried to put some pieces into a plastic bottle. Sometimes some of the pieces managed to escape, and even those which stayed tried to get out the whole night. Because time never gives up.

All through the shivah I was busy filling up bottles. All your friends came. Even Weisman came, and even he cried. Meital did not come yet, but do not worry. I am sure she will come, because in spite of what you think she loves you, even though you feel like a hedgehog.

Continued on page B25

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'I looked at all the pictures again and again'

Continued from page B24

They all come to comfort us, and in their faces a mix of embarrassment and pity. I try to look as mature and serious, but I never even listened to them. I was just busy trying to catch time with my hands. It made Dad angry, but he did not tell me anything. Only after the guests would leave and the house became empty, I would hear them fight. I am not that special anymore, because they fight now about anything at all and scream at each other so hard that the neighbours hear it, but they pretend they do not. And then at some point they become silent – they do not even have the strength to fight.

And at the moment when I put the last piece of time in the bottle, I went to your room, where for a whole month no one had been. I looked at your guitar, at your Beatles records piled up, at the Catcher in the Rye by your bed with its bookmark almost at the end, just in case you had time to read. And then, finally, I looked at your pictures-board. The one Mom prepared for your birthday. I looked at all the pictures again and again, a thousand times. I touched and felt each one, comparing them all, looking for the right one. I finally chose the one we took at the beach on your birthday, with everyone in it. Mom and Dad in the middle, and you holding Meital with one hand and giving me a slap on the back with the other. And then I slowly took the picture from the wall, laid it on the bed and opened the bottle. I quickly poured all the time that was left on the picture and for three seconds went back to that moment. I did not really remember how hard that slap was...

And now I have improved my technique, and I manage to fill three bottles a day (flies I can catch now even with one hand, but I let them go so that their parents will not fight). I am working on a new plan now. It does interfere with school, and I don't have so much time for friends, and everyone thinks it is nonsense messing with all these boxes and bottles that fill up my room. If they had the strength to tell me off, they would. But they don't. Still, I know that if you only came to see it, you would understand my plan at once. To fill this house with time, so much time to last a whole lifetime. Not just for me, but for Dad, whose blood pressure is not good, and for Mom, who cries too much. And with all the time we will be able to spend with you, maybe we will be able to live, and not stay forever in one moment that does not move.

Translated from Hebrew.

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Passover Greetings

A Sabbath State of Mind

By JENNIFER (JINKS) HOFFMANN

In a Sabbath state state of mind
I walk to Shul.
It is a fierce and blustery day.
The Breath of Life, *Ruach Ha-Olam*
is not always gentle.
I am thinking of *Mitzrayim*
my heart choked by the ill-health
of the economy, and of someone I love.
My consciousness is indeed constricted.
In Torah study, we examine *Ki Tisa*, the parshah
where Moses receives and then shatters
the first set of tablets,
the initial decalogue.
The Rabbi offers
a teaching I sorely need:
the *Mishkan*, the Holy Ark,
contains both the whole set of tablets,
and shards of the broken stones.
Thus is it with us:
we offer to God, we bring to the *Breath of Life*
both our wholeness and our brokenness.

We move to the sanctuary
for Shabbat worship,
in a Sabbath state of mind.
I listen hungrily for God in the liturgy.

Aliyot are assigned.
I pray silently that I will be called
to the *Bimah*.
I am not.
The Torah reading begins.
One after another the worshipers
walk slowly to the front of the Shul
and begin to chant their blessings:
Boruch Atoy Adonoy…
Hebrew with Polish or Russian undertones.
And all at once I see my father,
my Father's Father, and his Father,
blessings upon the Torah,
reaching back through generation upon generation,
from Johannesburg in South Africa,
from Toronto in Canada,
backwards, backwards, backwards
to a shtetl in Poland or in Russia.
Boruch Atoy Adonoy…
And I weep.
Our God and God of our fathers…
I pull *Ruach Ha Olam* closer
and whisper thank You.
In my heart
I have been called to the Torah.

APOLOGY TO DANIEL

By ROBERTA SWETLOW

I heard those four
words, hidden in the
Hair Care aisles, when
old-man voices grumbled

about prices of supplements.
"Costs too much," then
the reply, accusing stinginess
in a question meant,

I'm sure, to be
innocent banter between friends
laughing, the accusation denied,
the conversation continued as

I gasped quietly and
knew it wouldn't matter
if they saw me.

They used those words

as a common expression,
nothing offensive, not hostile
as when terrorists asked
Daniel Pearl that question

and he answered, as
I would/should have
answered from the aisle,
"I am a Jew"

but even if I had
overcome my disbelief, grown
strong in righteous anger
they still would not

think they had erred
except, perhaps, in failing
to see, protruding above
the shelf, my horns.

THE METZERITZER AND THE PRISONER

By GEORGE BERNSTEIN

The Metzeritzer Rebbe used humour
As one would use a nutcracker —
To break open the shells in which
Men encase themselves:
As his listeners came apart in laughter
The Metzeritzer penetrated
To their secret hearts
Bathing them in holiness.

Thus the Great Maggid: "Our sages teach:
'When man forgets his virtues
God remembers them,
When man remembers his virtues
God forgets them,
When man forgets his sins
God remembers them,
When man remembers his sins
God forgets them!'

"To what may this be compared?
To the king of a great land
So concerned for his subjects
That he visited a prison in his realm
To speak with those incarcerated there
Hoping to turn them from their sinful ways.
Of the hundreds there entombed
Each protested he was innocent.
One alone admitted guilt,
Accepting punishment
As part of his atonement.

"The king called the jailer to him and said:
'Release this man from custody forthwith!
We dare not permit him to remain
Among all these innocent men
Lest he corrupt them!"

FOR THE LOVE OF ISRAEL

By ESTHER GESSER

When I returned,
You rejoiced with water
For my bread
And for my wine;
And for the jasmine
That I planted everywhere
For your delight;
Now the wind brings
Into my open window
The smell of jasmine
With the morning light.

THE SEA OF GALILEE AT NIGHT

By ESTHER GESSER

Suddenly the mist was gone.
There was no moon nor stars,
Yet it was light;
I could see into the valley—
There was the Sea;
And I was there
Like light that could not be,
And yet was there.

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The Kindness Backpack

By SANDRA JACK-MALIK

Once upon a time, there was a short, white-haired man. He was the father of five children, the grandfather of many and great-grandfather of a few. He was a powerfully built, compact man who worked constructing roads. Each day at 5 p.m., his steps lightened as he left his office and walked the short distance home to his family.

This man was born in Romania during a time when all things sane, including himself, had been thrust inside a bottle, tightly corked and shaken violently. He lived through war, Hitler, concentration camps, sickness and skin-ripping loss, all the while sloshing inside the blood-stained liquid.

In the end, with the bottle shattered to ragged fragments, he willed himself in the direction of Israel, for he was a Jew. As he moved from country to country across a wounded and weeping Europe, he carried only those things that fit inside a small canvas backpack that had been given to him by a Red Cross nurse in a camp.

When he finally reached Israel, he settled in the north along the border with Lebanon, and there he met and married Tal, a beautiful Israeli woman. She tended to his ragged, broken bits, and over time, he emerged as a man capable of love and devotion to a single entity, his family.

A few days before his first child, Rachelle was 13, the man drove the short distance into a neighbouring town and purchased the most magnificent backpack money could buy. He brought it home, and in the quiet, loving comfort of his home, he presented it to his eldest child. She sat perfectly still next to her father as he told her the story of his journey across Europe to Israel.

"Rachelle," he said, "when the war was over, I was very lucky because one day, I met a kind and generous woman who gave me a brown backpack for my journey. In it I put everything I needed to discover new places, meet new friends and learn new things."

"Abba," Rachelle whispered, "what was inside?"

"Warm clothes, two books and many, many hopes and dreams," Abba whispered.

"What kind of hopes and dreams, Abba?"

"Rachelle, I dreamed about the things we had forgotten."

"What kinds of things, Abba?"

"Mostly I dreamt of kindness."

"What will I put in my backpack, Abba?"

"That is for you to think about and decide."

On the night before the child was to begin her first day of high school, her father asked if she had decided what she would put in her backpack.

"Yes, Abba, it's all ready," she chirped happily.

"May I have a look?" he asked, smiling.

"Of course, Abba," and she ran into her small room to retrieve it.

When she came into the living room, she gently laid the backpack down on the table. Her father was silently pleased to see how she handled it with care. She reached inside and tenderly took out a small, silver picture frame. She held it in her hands with the glass facing down. Her father wondered what picture she had chosen to fill her frame. When she turned it over, he was stunned to silence, for there in the picture frame was a bright red swastika, the hated symbol of Nazi Germany.

The man felt his legs spring into action as he instinctively moved to snatch the frame from his child's hands. In a second of clarity, he froze and stiffly settled down into the chair. In a voice unlike anything Rachelle had ever heard, he quietly barked, "Rachelle! Why have you chosen that?"

The child walked around the table and laid her perfect hand on her Abba's shoulder and whispered, "Abba, I never want to forget to be kind."

Hearing those words, he took his daughter into his arms and consumed her, breathing in her goodness and in so doing, healing one more of his ragged bits. Rachelle carried her backpack for all of her high school years, her army posting and then as she began her university studies. Over the years, she received new bags, but they were always graciously accepted and then in time donated to charity. Rachelle had exactly the backpack she needed, and inside it, in the small pocket on the left side, there was an image of hatred that reminded her of her Abba and their joint desire for kindness.

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An old woman, newly arrived in Israel in Operation Solomon, receives help at the airport. [IGPO photo]

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My Wedding Dress

By RACHEL PIUTI

Uncle Fishel had bought tickets for Die Fledermaus at the Stuttgart Opera House. He insisted that we should all be dressed properly for the occasion. Thus, Uncle Fishel, my sister Sala and I went on an expedition to procure suitable dress-fabric – not an easy feat in postwar Germany – and find a good dressmaker.

Uncle Fishel was doing some small trading and was earning a bit of money to supplement the rations that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was giving us. Thanks to his trading contacts, he got the address of a Mr. Bauer who was selling fabrics at his apartment.

'I remembered the taste of the sweet Passover wine from home'

The three of us went there and were dazzled by the display of silks, cottons and woollens, all bursting with colours in floral and geometric patterns. It was truly a difficult choice to make. Sala and I finally settled on more subdued fabrics; Sala picked a sky blue wool georgette, and I too opted for the georgette, but in a royal blue shade. We were very pleased as we carried the materials home.

Next day, we went to a dressmaker recommended by a friend of Uncle's. She lived in a second-floor apartment of a four-storey building on a quiet tree-lined street. We were shown into a spacious room. On a small round table, in the middle of the room, were a couple of magazines, their open pages showing the latest styles in dresses. A subtle aroma of fabrics and perfumes lingered in the air. It brought back memories from before the war, of going with my mother to the dressmaker, of choosing a pattern, and the excitement of getting a new dress. But it was better not to think about that. We were here to have dresses made for the opera.

The dressmaker was a slim, middle-aged lady; she was helpful and seemed competent. We spent about an hour turning pages and looking at all the beautiful dresses. When we finally settled on styles and she took our measurements, we departed feeling that our dresses were in good professional hands.

We went for a try-on a week later. Even though the fabric was still in pieces: skirt, top and sleeves separate – the dressmaker pinned them together on me while I was standing in front of the mirror – it already felt luxurious.

The dresses were ready a few days after that, and Uncle Fishel came with us to pick them up. We tried them on at the dressmaker's salon and called him in to the fitting room so he could see us in our dresses. His face beamed with pride, and I felt like a princess. My dress had a shawl collar that came down to the waist and a flared skirt. The royal blue colour intensified my blue eyes.The fabric was so finely woven that it felt as soft as silk.

We were all there on the night of the opera: Uncle Fishel with his sons, Mike and Ben, and Sala and I. We all lived together in a two-bedroom apartment. Uncle Fishel was our mother's cousin and he considered himself our guardian, since our parents did not survive the war. The two families had always been very close.

Die Fledermaus was beautiful and funny; it was my first operetta. The atmosphere in the opera house was exalted. The audience, all in evening attire, looked festive and distinguished. I felt comfortable in my lovely dress. No hand-me-downs from the UNRWA tonight, I thought.

It was January 1946 when I got my new dress. Later, I wore it to the Saturday night dances in our Displaced Persons' camp. An orchestra played and most of us attended – the young and the not so young.

Sala and I left Stuttgart at the beginning of April. We were on our way to Palestine with the Aliya Beth. But we were delayed in Italy for a whole year. The people of the underground organization who were charged with getting us to Palestine kept moving us from place to place. Whether intentional or not, we got to see a big chunk of Italy. We made many lasting friendships, and many of us fell in love and married. I was one of those.

Paul and I met shortly after our arrival in Italy. Our Stuttgart group had been in the village of Aqua Santa only a couple of days when a group from Zeilzheim arrived. Among them were Meir and Mila, a couple we knew from Germany. They introduced us to their friends, and we became one big family. Paul was one of those new friends. We started going for long walks in the hilly countryside; we went to the tavern in the village and drank local wine. It was dry, and I didn't like it at first. I remembered the taste of the sweet Passover wine from home. But it was cheap, and the people were friendly. They talked, they sang, and Paul sang with them – he had a beautiful voice.

Continued on page B31

'We opened the door and an amazing sight met my eyes'

Continued from page B30

From then on we travelled as a group from place to place as the need arose.

We spent the summer months in Rome. We explored the sights and we even had an audience with Pope Pius XII. The meeting had been arranged through the Joint Distribution Committee. About 20 of us went to the Vatican, we were shown into a reception room and the pope blessed us in Hebrew.

We lived on Via Latina, in a lovely but neglected villa that stood in a luscious garden with a fountain, in which we washed our clothes. The rooms were unfurnished, but we were given folding cots and straw mattresses. Eight girls shared one room. On very hot nights, we took the mattresses to the roof and slept there.

Paul and I saw magnificent performances of Carmen and Aida in the open-air Opera Caracala, located in the ruins of the ancient Roman Baths. The sight inspired us with awe. Our group spent two weeks in Ostia, the beach resort of Rome, sleeping on a hotel roof, awaiting our departure to Palestine on a ship that never came. Yet, we had a wonderful time, swimming and sailing in the blue sea during the day, chatting and singing on the roof at night.

The rabbi would not marry us without my going to the mikvah

We lived for a time in a medieval castle in the town of Tradate, a half hour's ride by train from Milan. Many young Jewish people were waiting there for their turn to go illegally to Palestine. Most belonged to political movements ranging from the left to the right. Our group of about 50 consisted of people of various political persuasions who came from Germany to Italy. We went under the name of "Partisans," because some former partisans were among us.

The castle stood in a park-like setting with a profusion of flowers and shrubbery amid winding paths. On the main floor were reception rooms and a ballroom with marble floors and gilded mirrors on the walls. The bedrooms were on the second and third floors. It was romantic in the late summer and early fall, with the windows looking out on the park, but by October the castle was as cold as a dungeon.

One afternoon while the two of us were enjoying the warm sun on a bench in the garden, Paul asked me: "Will you marry me?"

I pretended to think for a few minutes, then said, "Yes, I will."

Next day, Paul got in touch with a rabbi in Milan, and a date was set for our wedding. We were to meet the rabbi in his study on the third of December.

There was also the not-so-minor problem of going to a mikvah. I did not expect this! I did not believe in it! I considered myself a modern, emancipated young woman! But there was no help for it. The rabbi would not marry us without me having dunked myself in the mikvah.

Someone had to come with me to make sure that I immersed myself totally. Not even a hair could remain out of the water. Mrs. Silkowski, a devout little woman who knew Paul from Lodz and who kept telling me how lucky I was to be getting such a fine man from such a respectable family for a husband, took on the task of escorting me to the mikvah and of making sure that everything was kosher. Sure enough, after I surfaced, gasping for air, I had to immerse myself again, because a couple of hairs were sticking out of the water.

With this ordeal over, I began thinking: what would I wear to my wedding? I opened my backpack and pulled out the royal blue dress. I hadn't worn it for a long time. I went down to the laundry room and ironed the dress carefully. It still looked very attractive.

We went to the rabbi's study in the early afternoon. It was a cold and rainy day. My sister Sala and her husband Icchak (they had been married a few months earlier), and our friends Meir and Mila, were our witnesses. Four young men in kippot held up the chupah. We following the rabbi's instructions: Paul stood under the chupah while Sala and Mila led me around Paul three times. Then came the vows, the breaking of the glass, and the rabbi read the ketubah. The rabbi's wife served wine and cake.

We came back to Tradate at dusk. The two couples suggested that we peek into the ballroom to see if anything was happening there. We opened the door and an amazing sight met my eyes. On tables covered in white cloth stood candles, bottles of wine, platters of food and baskets of fruit. Our friends, our family for almost a year, greeted us with cheers. An orchestra on the podium began to play dance music, and soon everybody was whirling around the ballroom. I was dancing in the royal blue dress which, that night, had become my wedding dress

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Light

By CLAUDIA GOLDMAN

Light creeps in between the wooden slats of the blinds.

"The Israel Defense Forces started bombing at 11:30 this morning, their time," my husband mutters.

It's Shabbat, they've gone for surprise.

I slide out of warm sheets. Looking out at the snow, the list of family and friends that could be involved scrolls down behind my eyes. No one is doing active military service now. They're between children; the older ones are finished and the younger ones are too young.

"Ground troops?" I ask.

"Not yet."

"Why now?"

"Latest graduating class of Hamas recruits were out in the open."

I contemplate the mounds of snow in the backyard and then look up at the grey sky. I imagine a spark of light hanging in the air. It moves toward me, coming straight for the window. There is a shrieking whistling and then splintering glass as the Qassam rocket pierces my body, landing on the bed behind me.

Thoughts of fear float in the air like snowflakes, drifting downwards, gathering at my feet.

The day crawls past, accompanied by the murmuring of BBC in the background.

Sunday dawns and drags until nightfall. Chanukah begins; the Jewish historical holiday that marks the celebration of religious freedom.

We gather for the lighting of the first of eight days of Chanukah candles. The flame brings a shaft of light into the darkness of Vancouver winter.

"What's the weather like?" I ask.

"Cloudy. We still haven't had any rain yet this year, but they say we're getting some today," my Israeli cousin answers from her cellphone.

CNN pours updates from our TV: 6500 reservists have been called up. They and their tanks are lined up along the border.

We have family members in elite units of the Reserves. I do another head count and begin to turn the worry wheel.

Hamas flies their Grad rocket 40 kilometres to Be'er Sheva, demolishing an eight storey apartment building. Their net is widening.

Screams shriek in my head.

Israel flattens the Gaza police station, the television station and Hamas headquarters.

Hamas spits more rockets into the Israeli town of Ashdod.

Israel demolishes Hamas government buildings that were built with money from abroad.

Lighting all eight candles on the final night of Chanukah, I stare through the light, out the window and into our front yard. Snowflakes flip and flap in the cold darkness.

The wind whistles, slamming a rocket into my forehead. The pain splits my skull.

Chanukah has come and gone, and the darkness settles over us.

"They got him," my husband says.

"Who?"

"Nizar Qayyan. He's a major political and military leader in Hamas."

The CTV television announcer talks while the camera slowly turns in a circle. The building where Qayyan lived is a smoking pile of concrete and metal. The surrounding area is intact, but the windows of the buildings have been blown out and you can see the blackened signs of smoke.

I read in the Vancouver Sun newspaper, "Thirteen other members of Qayyan's family, including his four wives, died in the strike." According to his teenaged son, Baraa, "Two more children are missing and presumed dead." Baraa adds, "We are patient, and we are committed to the resistance." According to the article, "Nizar Qayyan advocated suicide bombings, and sent his own 22-year-old son to his death in an attack on an Israeli settlement."

My husband asks, "Did you see? They didn't just drop leaflets this time warning civilians to get away from Hamas buildings?"

"What do you mean?"

"They accessed cellphones in the Gaza Strip and left voice mails warning people to evacuate."

"Hmm," I answer. "That's pretty high tech."

Snow continues throughout the week. Vancouver breaks all records for snowfall. Frustration is mounting, as people feel trapped by the weather.

This morning CBC announces Day Eight of the Israeli operation. The eight days of Operation Cast Lead.

Staring into the late afternoon darkness I feel the weight of the absence of light.

Another generation of Arab and Jewish children will grow in the darkness of hatred. I ask myself, how can we strike the match that will light a new candle of hope?

How can we light the ninth candle of Chanukah?

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SWALLOWS

By CAROL KATZ

The cave was dark
and too cold
for 38 Ukrainian Jews

who never saw
light
or birds

for 344 days

they hid from the Nazis
in a cave
named Priests' Grotto.

They dreamed
of swallows,
proud, free.

They dreamed
of wings
to fly.

But each day
they woke
to dampness, night.

When they were
freed
by the Russians

they shielded
their eyes
from the brightness.

Later they saw
a colony of swallows
travelling together,

and knew
it was possible
to be free

without wings.

A last friend

By ERIC SHORE,
Grade 8 Student at the Toronto Heschel School

Unnoticed,
he walks up behind them,
and watches the scene:

A father dressed in black as if he knows someone is about to die.
On the altar beside him,
Lies a boy,
tied tight as a pair of tfillin.
staring up at his dad,
his eyes are full of wonder and hope…

the dad raises his knife.
tears slide d
o
w
n his cheek like rain on a gloomy day.
The boy's eyes grow large with terror.

SUDDENLY!!

The ram knows what he must do,
to stop a tragedy before all is lost…

He steps from the thicket,
– his friend saying a last farewell –

into the stillness
of an everlasting sleep .

His final thought:

"Peace…
peace at last."

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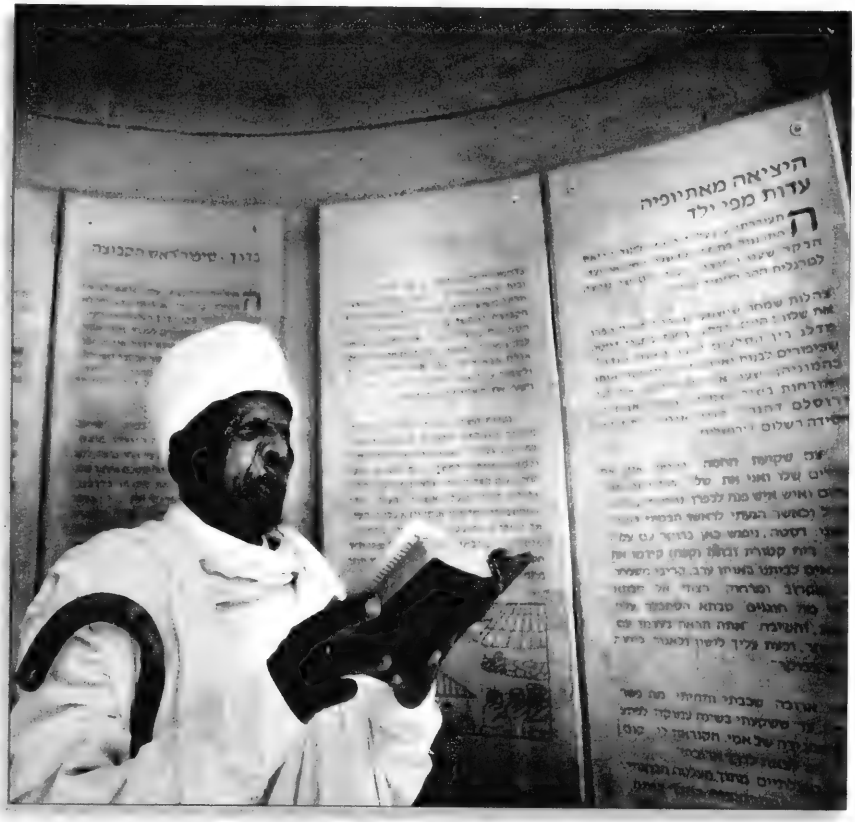

MEMORIAL PRAYERS

Beru Kalkai, 91, immigrated to Israel eight years ago. He is praying to the memory of family and friends who were among the 4,000 Jews who perished on their journey to Israel. **[Flash90 photo]**

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Figgy Pudding

By ELLIE CLAVIER

There can be little doubt that of all the 28 children in Mrs. Glickman's Grade 3 class, not one of us knew what figgy pudding was. Indeed we weren't quite sure if Mrs. Glickman knew herself.

Yet every Christmas, there we were, eager disciples of Van Horne School, gem of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, joyously proclaiming our love for this mysterious yuletide treat. We would raise our innocent voices in joyful chorus, belting out, as only primary school children can, a hearty rendition of the Victorian Christmas carol We Wish You a Merry Christmas. Partygoers, mentioned in the lyrics, won't go until they get some, so we knew that figgy pudding was something very special.

> ***We knew it was something very special***

Then again, our whole holiday repertoire was filled with special mysteries. What did wassail taste like? What exactly were you supposed to do with the holly and the ivy? Who on earth was good King Wenceslas and when did he last look out? These were questions never asked and so never answered because we all had a sense that we were being treated to something that wasn't exactly for us.

To be sure we were given hymn books and taught the Lord's Prayer, which we were required to recite fervently each and every morning, with hands clasped behind our backs and heads bowed. We all knew our father who art in heaven, Harold be thy name, just as surely as we knew that God must shave our gracious queen and that we must pledge allegiance to this flag and to the commonwealth for which it stands.

We gloria'd this and dominun'd that, praised the Christ child and sang about three kings of Orient are that tried to smoke a rubber cigar. We marched onward with Christian soldiers and even climbed Jacob's bladder, but somewhere in the back of our eight-year-old minds was the ever-present knowledge that the majority of the 28 children in Mrs. Glickman's Grade 3 class were Jewish. As were a good part of the rest of the school and many of the teachers.

> ***'Basking in our country's great diversity and freedom'***

To our minds, the decorating of the shiny tree in the back of the classroom with colourful crystal ornaments, the paper angels we so lovingly designed, the exchange of velvet and sparkly Christmas stickers, and yes, the singing of those cryptic Christmas carols, were all gifts that were shared with us, and as such, they were treasured. Just as we treasured our own holidays at home replete with colourful candles on sparkling chanukiyahs, crispy potato latkes, spinning dreidels and Chanukah gelt.

We didn't worry that we were English speaking in a French province or that we were Jewish in a Protestant school. We didn't worry about language police or reasonable accommodation. We were learning to speak French, we were learning what it meant to have a different religion and different holidays. We were basking (if we'd only known it at the time) in our country's great diversity and freedom. We raised our voices in song, celebrating our great luck to have the best of all worlds.

And yes, we gleefully sang the praises of figgy pudding. Yet to learn that figgy pudding is a rare treat made up of a large number of exotic, foreign ingredients, carefully mixed with rich local ingredients, which takes an unusually long time to bake, steamed in a gentle bath over a bright flame. Yet to discover that figgy pudding is known and loved for retaining the taste of all its individual components. Yet to know that in Charles Dickens' story of Scrooge, figgy pudding is the star of the yuletide table over which Tiny Tim proclaims: "And God bless us, everyone!"

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Toronto District School Board

Passover Greetings

AT SIXTY

By PEARL ADLER SABAN

At sixty, one is not quite old, neither young… but somewhere in the middle.

With life lines to show,
fine wrinkles here and there,
greying hair or balding patches,
hinting age spots
and a book of photographs depicting a life.

At sixty, Israel is not quite old, neither young… but somewhere in the middle.

But in truth she is ancient – Israel is a "she," you know – and was reborn in May 1948.

Not everyone has the chance to be reborn. But Israel… she fought to be reborn.
She fought hard. Her supporters fought harder.

From desert sands and barren fields, she brought forth life.

From stark greyness, she brought forth greens and blues.

From a handful of devotees, she yielded multitudes of lovers.
Lovers of her country.
Lovers of her language.
Lovers of her culture.
Lovers of the blue and white of her draping flag.

Lovers of "Hatikvah."
Hope. Forever sustaining Israel.
Forever sustaining…

ALEYNU

By MURRAY CITRON

It is our joy in all our days
The Master of all things to praise;
To tell the greatness of the One
By Whose design all was begun;
For not like the nations are we made,
Or like the tribes of earth arrayed.
Our lot is not as theirs assigned,
Our fate is of a different kind;
For eager in the truth are we,
And proud of our Lord, we bow the knee.
Our hearts are bowed, and worshipping,
We thank and bless our perfect King
Who governs kings, Whose Holiness
It is our choice and gift to bless,
Who spreads forth galaxies and skies,
For Whom the worlds' foundation rise,
Whose Presence over us we feel,
Glorious, majestic, real.
This is our God, our Lord, our pride,
Our King of truth, there is none beside.
For the Torah tells, and all shall know,
In heaven above, on earth below,
And in each heart, the Torah tells,
There is one God, there is none else.

We therefore look, our Lord, to Thee,
That soon Thy Splendour we may see,
False gods destroyed, and from this earth,
Abominations driven forth,
A perfect, happy world again,
Under the Almighty's reign,
When all mankind Thy Name will call
And turn from wickedness, and all
Will see and know and realize
Each knee must bend, all voices rise,
To hail thy glorious governance,
Free of the whims of time and chance.
To all the nations see it spread,
As it is written, it is said:
When all hateful things are gone,
The Lord is One, His Name is One.

Dear Lord

By STANLEY HERBERT WEISBERG

Dear Lord as I breathe my last
I have been dying to ask.

Were there only these seven gates to heaven?
Where the Jews became Your Chosen?

Were you there at Sobibor when they
Slammed shut the gas chamber doors?

Perhaps you were busy at Belzec with those
Gasping for air that was not there?

Or did you go to the
Shvitz with the doomed at Auschwitz?

Or were You a tourist at Treblinka
To witness German law for the Jews of Warsaw?

Or were You with the chained at Chelmo
With the unlucky lads from Lodz?

Or did you see the Stormtroopers at Stutthof
And with your eyes see Your children die?

Or were you there with the murdered at Majdanek?
Did You hear did You feel their pain?

Dear Lord be honest with me.
I must know. If You were not there.

Where were You?

PASSOVER MEMORIES

By DOROTHY GOLDWATER

At the tender age of four I welcomed Elijah at our door.
That act had a magic appeal making it appear very real.
When I reached the age of nine, I drank four cups of wine,
Which made me fall asleep. The seder became too deep.
In my teens I knew that Passover really means
More than tasty victuals and strictly followed rituals.

Freedom is a birthright, won through a Nation's might
Wholly dedicated to one God, symbolized by Moses' rod
Unity and freedom achieved by a Nation, not aggrieved
By disunity or disbelief, but, a strong caring community.

Our truly miraculous rebirth fills us with joyful mirth.
A nation in our homeland is an achievement so grand
Yet, there is an ominous cloud and thunder so loud,
Blocking the bright sunshine, threatening our land so fine.
Again we must defend our name and survive the enemy's game
Of hatred and suppression and constant libelous denigration!

The words repeated each year recall suffering and fear
When the Egyptians were our foes and caused us woes,
But God came to our relief, giving us constant belief.
This must ring loudly in our ears, quelling all our fears.

With faith in our history and trust in its mystery,
Yearly, in all corners of the Earth, Jews sing with mirth.
No matter how many seders we attend, magic does descend
On all the guests who, in the spirit of freedom, do attend.

On behalf of the **Ontario Liberal Caucus** *best wishes to the community on the*

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May your Pesach be filled with health, happiness and peace.

May your cup overflow with health and happiness. HAPPY PASSOVER

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Passover Greetings

Destined to happen

By SAUL ZAJDEL

He had heard the whole thing. He was behind the general's office quarters. A German officer came bursting in.

"Mein General, the Americans are coming! They are almost at the gates! What shall we do with the prisoners?"

"Shoot them," the general had said. "Shoot them." A few moments later, bursts of machine-gun fire could be heard. Thousands of prisoners fell to their death, all because of the two words that the general had uttered.

There was no reason for this cruel massacre. Berlin had fallen. Hitler was dead. Why had the general done this?

In time, the Americans succeeded in breaking into the camp. They thought they had come as saviours. As it turned out, they came as gravediggers. The stench of rotting corpses could already be smelled. Thousands upon thousands of bodies lay strewn across the prison grounds.

Alexander Dubkov was the sole survivor. He had been hiding behind the general's quarters.

The Americans now had to start arresting all the prison guards and prison officers. Dubkov was there when they arrested the general, who, during the whole commotion, had remained in his quarters.

Dubkov never forgot the face of the general when the Americans led him away; it showed fear, cringing fear, almost terror. Dubkov understood quite clearly the face of the general. When the general was in control of things, when he wielded power, he was brave, fearless, but when the tables were turned, he was as meek as a lamb.

The war was now finally over. Millions of people had died. But at least the Allies won. Now came the task of trying those who had committed such heinous crimes – crimes that even the German people could not believe happened. But they had happened.

Among those on trial was the general of the prison camp where Dubkov had been interned. Alexander Dubkov wanted only to see the general die. Alexander Dubkov was living only in order to see the general die.

The trial began. Everyone was tried. And so, the general, whose crime was considered to be a small one, had to wait his turn. Alexander Dubkov also waited his turn.

Finally, it came time for the general to face the judge. The prosecution's sole evidence was that of one Alexander Dubkov, who had heard with his own ears the general clearly say, without any hesitation, "Shoot them."

The defence argued that the general never said this. The defence said that another officer had made the order, that since Dubkov was behind the building, he could not see the person who gave the order. "Perhaps it was another general that gave the order," argued the defence.

What it boiled down to was the word of some prisoner, who wanted to see the general executed no matter what might happen to himself, against the word of a "respected" general who said he never made the order.

The judge had no choice but to declare the general innocent of this crime. All they found him guilty of were some small, petty crimes. For these, the judge imposed a two-year sentence. If he behaved, he would be able to go free in eight months.

Alexander Dubkov had heard and seen all of this. To the casual observer, Dubkov still seemed relaxed, even calm. Outwardly no signs of distress could be seen. But inside, Alexander Dubkov was raging. He had been practically accused of lying. But that was not why Dubkov was agitated. It was because the general, who, without any thought, mercilessly ordered the slaughter of thousands of human beings – many of them his family and close friends – had been found innocent. That such a killer would soon be allowed total freedom to go and live where he wanted, when he wanted. His heart cried out to the injustice of it all. Alexander Dubkov could not rest until this murderer was brought to justice. A hatred burned inside him that could not be silenced until the general himself was silenced.

And so, Dubkov would do nothing with himself. All he could think of was the general and what he would do to him when he was released. There was sometimes a conflict within himself between two voices. One voice would say, "What are you trying to do to yourself? Hasn't there been bloodshed? Hasn't there been enough killing? What's done is done. You can't change the past. It indeed was a horrible thing, but why waste your life. Give thanks to the Almighty that he spared you, and start living."

But the other voice would always say, "Are you going to let that murderer get away with it? You can't! You have an obligation to all those who died to take revenge for them. You can't let that demon remain alive." And the second voice would always win.

And so, Alexander Dubkov, sole survivor of one of the Nazi prison camps, undoubtedly saved by some Divine force, didn't live. He just existed. He didn't even try to marry. He never got a job. Night after night he would walk the streets aimlessly, going wherever his tired feet would lead him. He didn't care where he went. He was just walking. Just waiting. Day after day. Month after month. Walking, waiting.

About a year after the sentence had been imposed, the word came around to him that the general would be released in the very near future, a free man. Alexander Dubkov started making plans. Nothing fancy, just find him on the street, get him into a dark, dead-end alley and give him his just punishment.

He also decided to wait until the general had settled down, gotten married, maybe had a child or two. Wait until he had a good job, no worries. Then, punish him. So big was the hate Alexander Dubkov had for the general. He wanted to hurt not only the general himself, but his family, too. Everything that was connected with the general. Of course,

Continued on page B39

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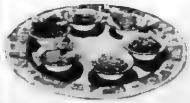

Erin Shapero
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'All the anguished memories came back to him'

Continued from page B38

he wouldn't kill the general's wife and children. But, just by killing the general himself, his family would surely also suffer. He didn't care what would happen to him. So great was Alexander Dubkov's hate for the general. Two months after Dubkov received the word about his release, the general was released.

Dubkov realized right from the beginning that he would always have to follow the general, always know his whereabouts until the right moment would come. When Dubkov saw the general being let out of the prison gates, a rush of such great hatred came to him that he knew that he must follow through to the very end.

The general had not changed much since the last time Dubkov had seen him. Still small, fat, bald on the top with hair on the sides. The thing that seemed to stand out more than any of his other features, Dubkov thought, were his eyes. Sinister looking, narrow. It seemed to Dubkov that the general's face was always in a frown.

At first, Dubkov observed, the general did not do much socializing. He rented a small room and stayed there most of the day. At night, he would sometimes take long walks across the town and come back to his room at about midnight. But, as the months passed, the general was stopping more often than not at a house. He would stay a few hours and then go back to his room. A few weeks later, Dubkov found out that the general was engaged. Two months later, the general was married.

Life passed quickly for the general now. He had gotten a job as a foreman of a small factory, he was making a decent living, and everything was going nicely. His relationship with his wife was wonderful, and a year after their marriage, they were blessed with their first child. The world never seemed a nicer place, thought the general.

Dubkov had been observing the general and his happenings all this time. After the child was born, Dubkov decided that the general must now pay for his crimes.

Dubkov went over in his mind again exactly what he was going to do. He would follow the general home from work, grab him just before he reached home, push him into an alley, shoot him in the heart and in the head, and walk away. What would happen after that would be of no consequence to Dubkov. He had done his duty.

Everything went as planned. He followed him home step by step, waiting just for the right moment. Now! He ran up to him and shoved him into the alley. They were now alone, Alexander Dubkov the unfortunate prisoner, and the general, *the* general who committed such atrocities against other human beings. Dubkov held the gun in his hand and shouted, "Die, you treacherous murderer," pulled the trigger, and fired, again, again, again. The general's body slumped to the ground. But no blood came out of the body! There was no body.

It had all been an illusion.

Dubkov looked at the wall where he was supposed to have seen the slumping body of the general. All he could see were four bullet holes. Dubkov looked at the gun. It was still in his trembling hand. He let go of his grip, and the gun fell with a thud on the hard ground. It had just dawned on him. He would have committed murder, the ultimate sin, just to seek revenge. Not that the general didn't deserve it, but that Alexander Dubkov didn't have the right to carry out the "execution."

"Let someone else take care of the general," thought Alexander. "Yes, let the Almighty take care of him." "From now on I will live."

And so, Alexander started to live. After a while, he got married, settled down, got a good job. A year later, he and his wife were blessed with their first child. Yes, Alexander Dubkov had finally become a man.

A few years later, while Alexander was taking a late-night walk to enjoy the cool evening air, he happened to stumble upon the same alley where fate had played a hand. A hand that he had accepted. As he stared at the wall, all the anguished memories came back to him. Oh, how he now regretted all those wasted years!

Just as he was turning to leave, there stood right in front of him, the general. The general had a gun in his hand. A split second later it was all over.

Yes, the general had been after the prisoner, Dubkov, for years. The sole survivor in my camp. The person who wanted to send me to the gallows. Such a person does not deserve to live. These are the thoughts that led the general to commit just murder. Just one more murder.

Now it was over. The general lazily made his way home. Now the general felt fulfilled. He fondled the gun that had made his life so complete. Suddenly, chillingly, the gun started rising toward the general's head! Some mysterious force was guiding his hand. The gun was at his head. The trigger was pulled. The general slumped to the floor.

The soul of Alexander Dubkov could be heard laughing, laughing, laughing.

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IN LOVING MEMORY

A young Israeli woman lights a candle last year at Mt. Herzl at the memorial to the family and friends they lost on their way to Israel in 1991. More than two decades after thousands of the community were brought to Israel in dramatic and clandestine operations, the Jewish State dedicated the monument commemorating the 4,000 Ethiopian Jews who perished on the journey to Israel.

[FLASH 90 photo]

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This Week

National

Israel invests too little in education. Nobel laureate says. *Page 3*

JIAS gets $150,000 to integrate Russian Jews. *Page 6*

Morris the Lab is one of several guide dogs sent to Israel. *Page 7*

Arts & Travel

Coming-of-age feature about Australian school girl plays at Sprockets. *Page 35*

Heebonics

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Once every 28 years

Tens of thousands of men, women and children woke up at the crack of dawn on the morning of Passover eve to take part in the Blessing of the Sun. The event occurs only once every 28 years when, according to Jewish tradition, the sun reaches the exact spot it graced the heavens at the moment it was created. Countless special prayer services were conducted throughout the Jewish world. This photo captures the scene in the hills surrounding the ancient city of Safed in the hills of the Galilee. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Activists set to battle at Durban II

By MICHAEL J. JORDAN
JTA

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — Eight years ago, at the first UN World Conference Against Racism, pro-Israel activists endured a week of hate-filled insults, pamphlets, posters and marches in the streets of Durban, South Africa.

When they finally marched out of a forum that branded Israel genocidal and racist like apartheid South Africa, keffiyah-clad antagonists serenaded them with chants of "free, free, Palestine!"

Overwhelmed, activists vowed to prepare better the next time. That chance comes later this month: the Durban Review Conference will be held April 20 to 24 in the Swiss city of Geneva.

Palestinian supporters will hold another large street demonstration and brainstorm ways to strengthen their Israeli-apartheid movement. But this time around, Jewish groups are, among other things, sponsoring a pro-Israel rally, co-sponsoring a human-rights event that will feature Martin Luther King III and others, and organizing a Holocaust commemoration just outside the gates of the bucolic United Nations compound in Geneva.

"Some have told me the reactions now are like post-traumatic stress syndrome, because the community was so traumatized by what happened in 2001," says Felice Gaer, who attended Durban as director of the American Jewish Committee's Jacob Blaustein Institute for Human Rights. "Jewish tradition teaches us to repair the world, not turn our back on the world. So why will Jewish groups be in Geneva? To bear witness, fight back and repair the world."

Inside the actual forum, with Israel having announced its boycott long ago, each pro- and anti-Israel group will be allotted several minutes daily to address governmental delegations.

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Iran advances its nuclear capability – see page 33

The News in Brief

Canada

CJC Recalls Rwanda

TORONTO — Canadian Jewish Congress last week joined PAGE-Rwanda, a group for parents and friends of genocide victims in Rwanda, to mark the 15th anniversary of the Rwanda massacre. It began April 7, 1994, and over 100 days, some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slain by Hutu extremists.

Eating For Israel

TORONTO — Kosher restaurants in Toronto and Montreal will take part in the fifth annual America Eats for Israel fundraiser. On April 22, restaurants such as Marky's, Joe Boos, Golden Chopsticks and My Zaidy's Kosher Sushi in Toronto, and Morty's Steakhouse and Restaurant El Morocco in Montreal will donate 10 per cent of their gross revenues to American Friends of Meir Panim, which helps fund hot meals and relief centres for impoverished Israelis.

Contest Seeks Entries

TORONTO — B'nai Brith Canada last week launched its annual Students Human Rights Awards competition for students in grades 1 to 12. The national contest is open to young people of all backgrounds. It's seeking entries that "creatively engage youth in seeking solutions to real and pressing human rights problems" in Canada, B'nai Brith said. Prizes are awarded in four age categories. Submission deadline is May 22. Details at bnaibrith.ca.

World

Financier Charged

NEW YORK — Financier J. Ezra Merkin was charged in a civil fraud complaint alleging he misled hundreds of investors into placing $2.4 billion of their money with Bernard Madoff. The charges were brought against Merkin, who funnelled billions of dollars from non-profits and universities to Madoff through his Ascot Partners Fund, by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo. The complaint filed April 6 doesn't allege Merkin was aware Madoff was running a Ponzi scheme, but rather that he misled investors who thought Merkin was managing the money himself.

Jailed Cleric Accused

LONDON — A Muslim cleric jailed in Britain is continuing to issue fatwas and anti-Semitic statements, a moderate Muslim organization says. The Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism organization, alleges that Abu Qatada, who is described in Britain as the ambassador of Al Qaeda in Europe, is continuing to send his followers hate messages, including incitements to violence and anti-Semitic statements. The British Home Office promised to investigate any breaches of security.

Rapper Honoured

NEW YORK — Rapper LL Cool J was honoured by the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding for promoting racial harmony. LL Cool J received the Joseph Papp Racial Harmony Award on April 6 at the organization's 20th anniversary benefit held at the home of Russell Simmons, the music impresario and foundation chairman. The rapper thanked "the Jewish community for what they've done for me."

Demjanjuk One Step Closer To Extradition

WASHINGTON — Ex-Nazi guard John Demjanjuk has lost a bid to stay his deportation from the United States.

The April 10 decision clears the way for him to be deported to Germany. Demjanjuk, 89, who was stripped in 2002 of his U.S. citizenship for lying about his Nazi past, had been scheduled to be deported March 29, but was granted an indefinite stay of deportation by Judge Wayne Iskra on March 27. Germany wants him extradited to try him on an indictment that includes 29,000 counts of accessory to murder. His lawyers said he would appeal the April 10 ruling this week.

Iskra, of the Federal Immigration Court in Arlington, Va., on April 6 reversed his earlier decision, saying he didn't have the jurisdiction to make it.

Iskra ruled March 29 that Demjanjuk could remain in his suburban Cleveland home while he ruled on whether deporting him to Germany would constitute "torture," a claim set forth by family members who say he's too old and sick to travel. Demjanjuk filed an appeal before the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals on April 7.

He was accused in the early 1980s of being the notorious guard "Ivan the Terrible" at Treblinka, but he was released from jail in Israel after seven years when he couldn't be identified as Ivan beyond a reasonable doubt.

The U.S. Justice Department later reported that Demjanjuk had been a guard at Sobibor and was liable for deportation because he lied about his Nazi past to obtain U.S. citizenship. The Munich court said it had relied heavily on material provided by the U.S. Office of Special Investigations in deciding to prosecute him.

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Israel's survival at stake, says Nobel laureate

Aaron Ciechanover
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Country must invest more in scientific research and education: Aaron Ciechanover

Israel's very existence is at stake because the Israeli government invests far too little in scientific research and education, says Israeli Nobel Prize laureate Aaron Ciechanover.

In a dire warning during a recent visit to Toronto, the outspoken scientist declared, "If we lose our technological advantage, we may not be able to survive."

He added, "Israel doesn't have natural resources. We're floating on sand, not oil. Our only resource is human. If we don't invest in research, we'll lose everything we have."

"Or we may become a Third World country," he added in a stinging rebuke of Israeli government policy.

Ciechanover, who shared the 2004 Nobel Prize in chemistry with American Irwin Rose and Israeli Avram Hershko, issued his scathing critique in an interview at the University of Toronto, where he delivered a lecture on his groundbreaking work on protein degradation.

"Unfortunately, the Israeli government is investing less and less in scientific research and relying instead on miracles, donations from abroad. There is a lack of appreciation in the government for scientific research."

Ciechanover – a professor at the Technion in Haifa – lamented that Israel's educational system has deteriorated in recent years, judging by test results in subjects ranging from mathematics to reading comprehension.

"It's pathetic," said Ciechanover, the director of the Technion's Rappaport Faculty of Medicine and Research Institute. "It's disastrous, in my opinion. We're betraying the deepest Jewish values.

In a reference to Israel's security, he said, "We're surrounded by countries that don't recognize us. Our existence is not secure. We have to outsmart our enemies, and that will only come from education."

Again mincing no words, he observed, "Only by wisdom and cleverness can you win wars. Our defence system is completely dependent on education. Yet the president of the Technion has told me that his budget is being cut."

Ciechanover said that Israel needs peace in order to prosper. "I hope that the people who think we can live by the sword are wrong."

In a reference to the concept of territorial compromise, he said, "We have to sacrifice for peace, divide the land in some way. I want to believe that Arab mothers want their children to grow up in peace."

Asked why Israel is not dedicating sufficient funds to maintaining its universities at the highest possible academic level, he replied,

Continued on page 29

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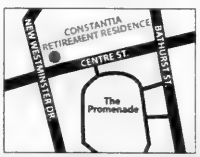

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A time to recommit

From the editor's desk...

Ever since the end of World War II, Jews have believed deeply and with profound conviction, have marched, demonstrated and stood at the forefront of mass rallies and protest assemblies shouting: "Never again."

The genocide of European Jews born of the monstrously evil racism of the Nazis would "never again" be tolerated in the world – never again against Jews, nor anyone else.

So we believed. So we hoped.

To be sure, thankfully, no further genocide has been perpetrated against the Jewish People since Adolf Hitler, though this has not been for lack of effort on the part of the enemies of the State of Israel. Few people, if any, believe the Arab armies that attacked the nascent Jewish state in 1948 would not have attempted to fulfil their stated aim of driving the Jews into the sea had they defeated the Israel Defence Forces.

But, alas, as we sadly know, genocide has not disappeared from the territory of intra-human, inter-ethnic, international relations.

Last week, for example, was the 15th anniversary of the start of the genocide in Rwanda. On April 6, 1994, marauding bands of armed Hutus in Rwanda began the slaughter of rival Tutsi tribesmen, women and children. In a period of some three months, they killed more than 800,000 Tutsis; 300,000 were children.

Twenty years before Rwanda, in 1975, Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot of Cambodia began a program of executions, forced labour and starvation of his own people that lasted some four years. He killed an estimated two million people.

Between 1992 and 1995, the Serbs of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina killed an estimated 200,000 Muslims in Bosnia.

A quarter century before the Holocaust, some two million Armenians living in Turkey were removed from their homes. Over a period of three years, from 1915 to 1918, an estimated 1.5 million people were killed.

Perhaps as many as 300,000 people have been killed in recent times in Darfur. Countless more remain in harm's way. And the civilized world seems incapable of preventing the genocide that proceeds apace there in the horn of Africa.

"Never again," therefore, has not been the bulwark rallying cry that we had hoped. The sincerity of our resolve has never wilted. But nor has it ever been enough to move governments, non-governmental organizations, regional alliances or the vaunted United Nations to prevent genocide.

At nightfall next week on April 20, we shall light a memorial candle to commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). We shall try to understand, in the limited, inadequate capabilities of the human mind and the human heart, that six million individual Jews were killed by the Nazis.

Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah is an appropriate occasion as well to renew and reaffirm the commitment to "Never again," certainly in respect of the Jewish people and, indeed, in respect of all human beings.

We who did not endure the horror and nightmare of the Holocaust cannot know, except through our imagination, what the survivors have remembered and had to live with each day of their lives.

The following poem was written by Suzanne Agasee in memory of the family whom the Nazis destroyed. She lives today in Toronto.

* * *

They knew me when...

I was born to my parents, Rochal and Isaac Najman
They knew me when I took my first breath,
They knew me when I cried,
They knew me when I cuddled into their arms
They knew me when I smiled my first smile,
When I had my first tooth,
When I stopped wearing diapers,
When I stopped nursing from my mother's breast,
When I said my first words.

I knew them when I was born,
When I took my first breath,
When I opened my eyes and saw their lovely faces,
Smiling and cooing at me.
I knew them when they cuddled me,
When they coaxed me to drink from a cup,
Take my first steps,
Hold their hands.

MY MOTHER WARNED ME TO 'BE NICE' TO THE SOLDIERS IN THE STREET.

Paris had already been invaded by the nazis
And they were billeted all over.
I listened to my mother.

My grandmother, Sara Laks, was there too. She lived with us.
My brothers Leon and Bernard completed the family picture
From January 12, 1939 when I was born
Until July 1942 when my mother and father were deported
First to Drancy, and two weeks later,
To Auschwitz.

* * *

May their memories be for blessing.

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BIRKAT HACHAMAH: Despite the snow flurries, close to 100 people showed up last Wednesday at Earl Bales Park, one of three Toronto-area locations where an outdoor sunrise service for Birkat Hachamah, the Blessing of the Sun, was held. An estimated 230 people took part in the these events sponsored by the Toronto Board of Rabbis. Jewish tradition teaches that once every 28 years, the sun returns to the position it held when the universe was created. Since the sun was not visible that morning, only part of the blessing could be recited, but the service included biblical, rabbinic and talmudic texts, as well as music. Orange juice and bagels were served to participants, donated by Toronto businesses. Here, at right, Rabbi Michal Shekel and Ryan Leszner lead the ceremony.

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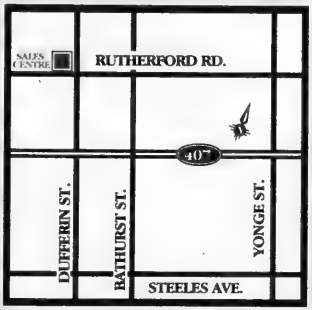

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BILD

JIAS gets grant to help Russians integrate

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (JIAS) has received a $150,000 grant from the Moscow-based Genesis Philanthropy Group to launch a pilot project in Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver aimed at helping Russian Jews become active in their local Jewish communities.

Genesis' mission is to develop and enhance Jewish identity among Russian-speaking Jews worldwide.

The project, JIAS Opportunity for Leadership Training (JOLT: Leadership Bridging Cultures), the only Canadian project funded by Genesis, started up in January and includes eight monthly training sessions and an internship in a Jewish agency.

Topics include connecting participants with their local Jewish communities, educating local communities about the Russian Jewish experience, deepening Russian Jews' own sense of Jewish identity, and fostering relationships among emerging Russian Jewish leaders and the established Jewish community.

Mila Voihanski, JIAS' executive director, said the agency began planning the project about two years ago out of a concern that Russian Jews were not engaging in the community.

"We had heard from both sides. The Jewish community said that Russian Jews were not active, and the Russian Jews said that they were never accepted. The time had come to begin a dialogue that addressed both concerns. We cannot ignore the fact that about 25 per cent of our population is made up of immigrants."

She created a program committee, she said, that included executive directors and board members from Jewish agencies in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Ottawa.

"I put a proposal together about enhancing volunteerism in the immigrant community, and I was put in touch with Genesis. Agencies in Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver were able to identify local donors, and they felt they had the capacity to take on the project."

Voihanski said JIAS hired Ronda Stoller Wunsch as national project co-ordinator, and found three local co-ordinators who recruit people for the program. There are now about 40 participants.

Wunsch said that agency leaders will speak at the sessions so participants will get some idea of where they'd like to intern. "In Calgary, one participant connected with the Jewish Historical Society and has begun writing stories about her immigrant experience."

The agency has received good feedback after the initial sessions, she said. "Both sides are learning about each other, and the immigrants feel welcomed."

Voihanski said her plan is to expand the project nationally, and eventually to other countries. "We're very excited about the way the project has taken off, and we know that the issues are the same everywhere."

CHOCOLATE SEDER

Canadian Young Judaea participants had a blast at the annual Chocolate Seder. Learning all about the customs and traditions of Passover has never tasted so good.

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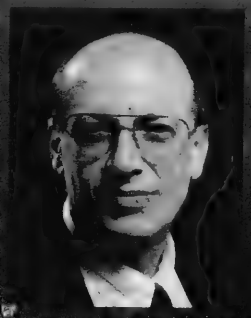

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Prof. Ben-Dor works at the Strategic Dialogue Center, Israel.
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Greater Toronto Area

Canadian group sends guide dogs to Israel

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

With his soft yellow-brown fur, caring brown eyes and puppy spunk, Morris is a genuine cutie on looks alone.

But this yellow lab, who is only a few months old, will soon be offering a lot more than looks. He is being groomed to leave Canada and make aliyah, so that he can be a guide dog for a visually impaired person in Israel.

Donated by the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, little Morris was generously provided to the Canadian Friends of the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind.

"Guide dogs give blind people a sense of liberty, independence and dignity," says Sara Gabriel, the Toronto-based director of development for the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind, which helps blind people in Israel achieve independence and mobility through the use of guide dogs.

"Guide dogs give these people a second pair of eyes, which is so important for them, because it means they can go to work, school and even run, without relying on others."

Preparing the dogs for a recipient is an involved process.

The pups typically stay at the centre for the first two months and are then placed with foster parents for about a year.

A supervisor from the centre is actively involved in raising the puppy, with the goal of creating an environment where the puppies become used to living with a family, and are exposed to a variety of situations that are amenable to guide dog training.

Then for five months, the dogs are trained in residential and urban settings, learning such skills as stopping at curbs, avoiding barriers and travelling obediently and quietly on buses.

Finally, they are matched with blind people, based on temperament, size and strength.

The person who takes the dog then goes through a comprehensives course.

Morris has been living at the foster home of Missy Mandel in Toronto, who, together with her husband and two kids, already has two dogs in her house.

"Morris is quite a munchkin," Mandel says. "He's a lovely, smart little guy, but it has been a huge challenge for us. But I know what we're doing is a real mitzvah – he will hopefully give someone else a chance for not only having a companion, but having a better life."

The Canadian branch of the centre was started four years ago by Morris Samson, a renowned veterinarian for whom Morris is named.

"Morris Samson was instrumental in bringing the Israel Guide Dog Center to Canada," Gabriel says. "He does this as a volunteer, which is a big commitment."

Most funds for the centre are garnered through donations and Gabriel notes that as the demand for this service grows, the need for more funds also becomes more pressing.

"We have a waiting list of people in need of guide dogs, which is part of the reason we have support centres in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom," she says.

"We don't have enough puppies and we also need a bigger facility, so we really do need to raise more funds to help many visually impaired people."

To learn more about the centre, visit www.israelguidedog.org or contact Sara Gabriel at 416-577-3600.

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Durban again

It was not likely a coincidence that organizers scheduled the followup to the 2001 United Nations anti-racism conference – known as Durban II – to begin on the eve of Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). The four-day event convenes April 20 in Geneva. Iran, the country whose theocratic rulers, are the world's highest profile Holocaust deniers, is an executive member of the UN Human Rights Council, the body charged with implementing the declaration and the protocols from the 2001 conference in Durban, South Africa.

Sharing the planning and the organizational burdens of the conference with Iran – indeed one can say adding more human rights piquancy to the process – are the governments of Libya, which has been the chair of the conference's preparatory committee, and Cuba, which is the committee's official rapporteur.

The UN high commissioner for human rights, Navanethem Pillay, will preside over the conference. Pillay and Jessica Neuwirth, the director of the high commissioner's New York, office have promised that "the Durban II conference will not be a hate-fest. Rather, it will be a celebration of tolerance."

We doubt it. Pillay's and Neuwirth's optimism, though sincere, is simply not warranted.

Tolerance is simply not part of the outlooks of Iran, Libya and Cuba on the broad diversity of human life on this planet. In fact, the very idea is oxymoronic alongside the names of those countries.

A more likely outcome of the various discussions and debates in Geneva will be a roiling mess of cultivated calumny against Israel. The draft statements that form the basis of the agenda in Geneva have imported the entirety of the vituperative inventory of anti-Israel decisions that were adopted at Durban I. Those decisions explicitly condemn Israel as the brutish victimizer of the lowly Palestinians.

The charged atmosphere inside the conference room will likely spill onto the streets of Geneva. Pro-Israel advocates intend to be there to face down – as much as they can and as volubly as they can – the anti-Israel hysterics and histrionics.

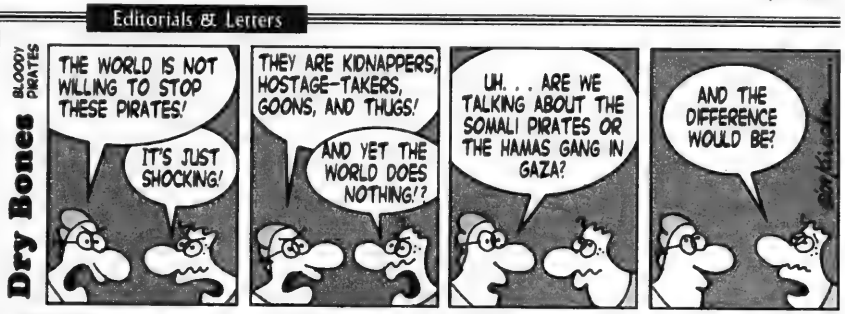
But as many observers have also pointed out, Israel may not be the only subject to be pilloried in Geneva.

Sparks and various electrical charges may sizzle in the thick air of the conference hall on account of an attempt by the Arab-Muslim bloc of nations to warn westerners away from criticism of religion (read: Islam). In light of the experience of the government of Denmark four years ago regarding cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, the members of the European Union will not willingly accede to the Arab-Muslim bloc's preferences.

On the evening of April 20, the Jews of Geneva will host a special Holocaust remembrance service. When we, too, light our memorial candles that night, let us resolve to join them in our hearts to defend staunchly the truth of our history and the right of the sovereign Jewish state to have a place among all other nations of the earth.

25 years ago in The CJN

Former defence minister Ariel Sharon came close to ending prime minister Yitzhak Shamir's campaign to retain the leadership of the Herut Party and thus be eligible to run for prime minister in the upcoming election.


Dry Bones
BLOODY PIRATES
THE WORLD IS NOT WILLING TO STOP THESE PIRATES!
IT'S JUST SHOCKING!
THEY ARE KIDNAPPERS, HOSTAGE-TAKERS, GOONS, AND THUGS!
AND YET THE WORLD DOES NOTHING!?
UH. . . ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE SOMALI PIRATES OR THE HAMAS GANG IN GAZA?
AND THE DIFFERENCE WOULD BE?

Editorial Advisory Board: Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ronson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Telem , Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Nelson Wiseman.

Israeli electoral system

The article "Israel Must Address Flawed Electoral System" (CJN, March 19) raises some very important issues. It is clear from the results of the last election that Israeli popular opinion is very much divided. All of this leads to much instability and often regrettable compromises. The report prepared by Prof. Menachem Magidor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem came up with some sensible solutions. It was recommended that regional elections be held to elect half of the Knesset's members, so that 50 per cent of the Knesset members will form a stronger tie between representatives and voters. The other 50 per cent would still be determined by the usual party slate, but instead of a two per cent threshold, there would be a five per cent requirement to attain any seats. As a result, many of the fringe parties would be eliminated and not have a disproportionate voice in the Knesset. Unfortunately, it would take bold leadership and co-operation among the four leading parties to achieve reform, but in these troubled times facing Israel, stability is an important requirement. The recommended reforms would eliminate the current situation, in which the governing party is under the constant threat of being defeated, causing and resulting in new elections. To avoid new elections, compromises are made that are not always in the best interest of the Israeli people.

Bert Raphael
Toronto

JEWISH DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES
KOBI
MY 5-YEAR OLD ALREADY TALKS A LOT..
...AT WHAT AGE WILL HE START WAVING HIS HANDS WHILE TALKING?

* * *

Jerusalem school goes 'green'

Considering the extensive attention to the April 8 once-in-28-years Blessing of the Sun, your readers will be interested to learn that Boys Town Jerusalem seized this historic moment to launch a campaign to transform its entire 18-acre campus to solar power. Once completed, Boys Town will be the first school in Jerusalem to exclusively utilize clean energy.

Boys Town's going "green" will be reinforced by a special "green" curriculum component that will stress Torah, talmudic and rabbinic literature sources for appreciating and protecting the environment.

Since its founding in 1948, Boys Town Jerusalem has pursued its mission of turning young boys from limited backgrounds into young men with limitless futures. From junior high through the college level, the three-part curriculum at Boys Town – academic, technological and Torah – is designed to turn otherwise disadvantaged Israeli youth into productive citizens of tomorrow. More than 6,200 graduates hold key positions throughout Israeli society.

Rabbi Ronald Gray
Executive Vice-President
Boys Town Jerusalem Foundation of America
E-mail: rgray@boystownjerusalem.org.

* * *

People search (1)

Henny (Hinderika) Zilverberg is the daughter of Jacob Zilverberg and Martha Polak. Henny was hidden during World War II by Mr. and Mrs. Rekker in Kollumerzwaag, The Netherlands. Both of them passed away years ago. On behalf of their son, I am trying to trace Henny. We know that she married Peter, who came from South Africa. She did send us a letter and a picture then. We still have these documents but the envelope with the address have gone. We heard that at one time she lived in Montreal. Please contact me if you have any information and I will pass it on to the Rekkers' son in The Netherlands.

Michel Meijer
Richmond Hill, Ont.
E-mail: leb83@hotmail.com

* * *

People search (2)

I am looking for descendants of my late father's first wife, Nettie Goldstein, born 1895. She was from Cumberland County in Nova Scotia. Members of her family include Lonnie, Judah and Laura. Nettie and my late father had a little girl named Jean. Please contact me if you have any information about the family.

Fay Wheeler
Howard, Queensland, Australia
E-mail fazee1@dodo.com or phone 0741294965

* * *

Seeking adoptees' stories

I am writing a book of personal adoption stories tentatively called Who Am I, Really? and am looking for people who are willing to tell me their stories for inclusion in the book. Basically, I want only adult adoptees. They can be people who feel happy, complete and self-confident in their identities and feel no need to search for their birth families; or, they can be people who – whether happy or not – have felt the need to search for their biological roots. These stories may have ended in either a happy reunion, an unhappy reunion or no reunion at all. If you or someone you know have a story to tell and would like to be involved in my project, I would love to hear from you. Please contact me at dkoven@rogers.com.

Diane Koven
Ottawa, Ont.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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info@cjnews.com

Reflections on Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah

An escape through films: the true story of Berthe Cygelfarb and Lilly Borenstein

By ROXANA OLIVERA

Movie tickets in hand, Berthe Cygelfarb and Lilly Borenstein recently stood in line in front of the Royal Cinema in Toronto to catch the 12th edition of Cinéfranco, Toronto's international francophone film festival. The two widows meet every week, in fact, to share their passion for films.

As Jewish children in Paris during World War II, however, Cygelfarb and Borenstein were not likely to be found standing in line waiting for a movie. Rather, they sneaked into Cinéma Magie at the corner of Charrone Street and Trousseau Street by slipping in through the rear exit, and then neatly blending into the crowd. Back then, they did not know each other and neither was aware of the other's presence at the movie theatre.

It was only here in Canada that Cygelfarb and Borenstein met for the first time when the two attended a gathering of hidden children. Over the years, Cygelfarb says with great laughter, "we discovered that we had been neighbours and that we had been sneaking into the same cinema through the same exit door to see the same movies!"

Lilly Borenstein and Berthe Cygelfarb [Roxana Olivera photo]

They were both poor children of Jewish refugees. Born in Paris in July 1931, Cygelfarb was the daughter of a Polish tailor and a Polish seamstress. Her mother, Channa, would make Berthe and her brother go outside to play whenever she and her husband, Israel, needed access to the dining room table to do their work. Berthe and her younger brother Albert readily obliged. They joined other kids from the street to play hop-scotch. But if it was a Thursday afternoon, Berthe would then forego hop-scotch and dash to the nearby Cinéma Magie. There, she would lose herself in the fantasy of hit movies featuring Charlie Chaplin or Shirley Temple.

> *'We discovered that we had been neighbours and that we had been sneaking into the same cinema through the same exit door to see the same movies!'*

Like many refugee Jews of this era, Cygelfarb's father was caught off guard in the first of three mass round-ups in 1941. On May 14, he was summoned to appear at a sports facility (called Japy) purportedly to regularize his legal status in France. There were 6,494 Jews summoned that day, but as many as 3,000 did not show up.

For his part, Cygelfarb's father believed that by going there, he would finally be able to get his papers in order. From Japy, he was then taken to Pithiviers, one of two camps located in Loiret. (The other camp was Beaune-la-Rolande.) "No one foresaw any danger at all," says Cygelfarb. "Initially, we were even allowed to visit him. So, I thought my father would come back."

Only a few days before her father was deported to Auschwitz in June of 1942, Cygelfarb and her mother travelled to Pithiviers to pay him a visit. "My mother stayed at the railway station and sent me to the camp alone," Cygelfarb recalls.

There, she spoke to the man in charge. "I think he took pity on me," she says. "I was only a child. So he called my father and my father spoke to me."

That was the last time Cygelfarb saw him. "He asked me to look after my mother and brother."

By July of 1942, rumours started to circulate around Paris that Jewish women and children were slated for deportation.

> *By July of 1942, rumours started to circulate around Paris that Jewish women and children were slated for deportation*

Cygelfarb's mother wasted no time looking for a place to hide. In the very early hours of July 16, 1942, she and a neighbour, along with their respective children, took refuge in their building's attic. While in hiding, they heard women and children cry as French police officers barged into their homes. Cygelfarb's little brother got a glimpse of their building superintendent pointing out windows for the officers. At nightfall, they abandoned their hiding place. Cygelfarb's mother tore the yellow stars from her children's clothes and together they took to the streets of Paris in search of a new shelter.

With the aid of underground Jewish organizations, Cygelfarb and her brother found safety staying with French Catholic families until war's end. Then the children were reunited with their mother. Soon afterward, Cygelfarb's hunt for her missing father began. She had a spark of hope that she would find her father alive, even though she knew chances were not good.

In Paris several years later, Cygelfarb learned of her father's deportation to Auschwitz. Not until decades later did she finally obtain written confirmation of his death.

Holding a telegram in her hands, Cygelfarb reads to me the last orders that sealed her father's fate. In it, none other than Adolf Eichmann himself orders the evacuation of the Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande camps and for the immediate transfer of the Jews of France to Auschwitz.

In a further effort to establish absolute proof of her father's murder, Cygelfarb managed to obtain a death certificate that was issued on July 28, 1942, by a certain Dr. Meyer.

Borenstein is more reticent to bring up painful details of the past. On July 16, 1942, in one of the most brutal deportations in the history of France, Borenstein, her mother and five-year-old sister were rounded up by the French police and placed in the Vélodrome d'Hiver stadium. At some point, Borenstein and her sister were separated from their mother, and a French police officer inexplicably set them free. Along with 12,883 Parisian Jews, Borenstein's mother, Anna Tepicht, was then loaded aboard a cattle car and sent to Drancy en route to Auschwitz. Borenstein never saw her mother again.

In Cygelfarb's Toronto home, old photographs of her parents and of her husband's family decorate her bedroom wall and living room shelves. Her yellow star hangs on another wall. Books and films on the Holocaust fill a display case in one of the rooms.

"I have seen every movie that has been made about the Holocaust," she tells me, "as if I need to punish myself for having survived."

Not that long ago, Cygelfarb learned, in a further coincidence, that her father and Borenstein's father, Bernard Tepicht, had been placed on the same convoy to Auschwitz.

"Perhaps our parents were friends at some point," Cygelfarb says. "That we will never know, but all I know is that Lilly and I will remain close friends for the rest of our lives. And we will continue to go to the movies as much as we can."

But, of course, they will only seek admission through the front door.

Roxana Olivera is a writer who lives in Toronto.

Opinions

Why I love Israel

Though passionately committed to Israel, I'm often critical of its government, including the new one. Here's an attempt to explain how I reconcile my love for the Jewish state with my misgivings about those who run it.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

• In Israel I feel engaged in its future and free to express critical opinions because I care deeply. As I belong to it, so it belongs to me and to every Jew who shares in its destiny. That's why, as a Reform Jew, I'm determined to oppose those who, in the guise of piety and fidelity, want to keep me out.

• In Israel, I live Judaism not only in my home and in the synagogue, but in the street and in almost everything I do, good and bad.

• I'm overwhelmed by the ingenuity that has created this modern state. Israel celebrates the human spirit at its best, but, alas, at times also at its worst. Yet all of it is real and open to the scrutiny of Jewish teachings and Jewish history.

• Without Israel, I'd have to choose between assimilation and the ghetto and thus be either a parvenu or a pariah. But I believe that to justify every political and military action by Israel, Diaspora-style, only harms it. Loving a country mustn't inhibit us from criticizing it.

• In Israel, Judaism is bound up with its future. In view of what we've been through as a people and considering our situation in today's world, without Israel, Jews would soon become a quaint curiosity and Judaism a museum item.

• In Israel, where I live without fear of both assimilation and ghettoization, I'm better able to be open to the concerns of others. Neither parvenu nor pariah, I see myself as a full partner in the ways of the world. Here particularism and universalism strengthen each other.

• In Israel, I experience Zionism as the liberation movement of the Jewish people. This prompts me to champion the liberation of all peoples, including the Palestinians. I hope that, instead of seeing Zionism as the oppressive and imperialist enemy, Palestinians will come to view Israel as an opportunity that their Arab and Muslim brothers have denied them.

• In Israel there are many unforgettable places, but for me Jerusalem is special, both in its physical beauty and in its link to the past. Here heaven and earth do indeed meet.

• In Israel, my wife and I have five of the 10 members of the immediate family with which we've been blessed.

• In the words of Amos Oz, the famous Israeli writer: I love Israel even when I can't stand it.

A message of unity

Amid all the Jewish animosity on campus, the Ottawa chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi), a fraternity with all Jewish members, recently held an honorary induction into the fraternity of two men – former federal cabinet minister Herb Gray and Michael Mostyn.

Justin Dahan in Ottawa

Herb Gray was Canada's first Jewish cabinet minister. He currently serves as the 10th chancellor of Carleton University, and is a companion of the Order of Canada.

Michael Mostyn, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, is the public affairs director of B'nai Brith Canada. In his position, he deals with the issues that arise on campuses where Israeli Apartheid Week is held. He also speaks to and networks with many Jewish communal leaders.

Members of the current Ottawa chapter and alumni from Ottawa and Toronto were involved in the initiation of these two men into the AEPi brotherhood. One notable participant was Moishe Smith, a fraternity member who works with B'nai Brith International and has close ties to both Gray and Mostyn. Expressing pleasure at being part of the initiation process, he helped welcome the two new members into AEPi's ranks.

AEPi president Jon Telch, who is graduating this year with a major in sociology, spoke at the event. "In Alpha Epsilon Pi, we strive to be the best across all our chapters, ranging from North America to Israel. Fraternities across the world are falsely portrayed in the media and movies. An event like this summarizes our political affiliations and illustrates the powerful men who have come from the same background as we do. We lead our brothers by demanding something special. Events like this prove we are the best of the best, and we hope to continue to strengthen our brotherhood by honouring more esteemed Canadian Jewish leaders like the Right Honorable Herb Gray and Michael Mostyn."

After the initiation, with the guests of honour still present, AEPi joined with Omega Psi Phi, an African-American fraternity, to present a program on "Diversity in Brotherhood," whose purpose was to strengthen ties between the Jewish and African-American community. Leaders from both fraternities spoke out against racism and about achieving unity.

Following these speeches, Mostyn, Smith and Gray shared a few words with the crowd.

These powerful men talked about the importance of achieving a safe university campus, and they regaled those in attendance with political stories about their past and present.

But the speech that caused the audience at Carleton to rise in a standing ovation was given by Herb Gray.

Among other topics, Gray spoke flatteringly of fraternity life, saying: "A goal of [your] fraternity is to help each student to develop character, to learn responsibility and to develop a proper set of values through living together in brotherhood. Alpha Epsilon Pi prepares young men for their role as responsible citizens."

Gray also gave a kind of history lesson, talking about Jewish involvement in the U.S. Civil Rights movement in the 1960s.

"I suggest that Passover, our festival of freedom, links our history with that of black Canadians and Americans," Gray said. "We and they not only faced slavery but also centuries of oppression, discrimination and racism."

All three guests of honour spoke eloquently and shared a message – a message of unity. It is this unity that we as Jews should seek, not only among ourselves, but also with allies who have shared similar injustices. This is the only way we can combat these injustices and ensure our past is never forgotten and never repeated.

In defence of the Wicked Son

Is the Wicked Son really so bad? "What is the meaning of this service to you," he asks. By emphasizing "to you," the Haggadah tells us he sets himself apart from the Jewish People and forfeits his place among those saved in Egypt.

Jesse Mintz in Halifax

Now, admittedly, there are many ways to understand the parable of the Four Sons – as analogous to characteristics within each individual that must be properly cultivated and controlled; as archetypes of students and models for how best to teach them; and as corresponding to the generations of Jews removed from a traditional setting and struggling with their identity.

And yet, in each understanding, the Wicked Son is vilified. Even his name – Wicked – juxtaposes heavily with the other sons' names that denote not a state of character, but a level of awareness and intelligence.

This article, my last one, is my farewell to The CJN. I have written here for nearly two years and would like to thank everyone for reading, even if you didn't necessarily agree.

And, in typical fashion, I'd like to do so by way of a polemic – I am the Wicked Son.

Shocking, I know. Those of you who know me will surely disagree. "Not a chance," you say. "You went to Bialik and CHAT [Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto], participated in the March of the Living and Birthright Israel, you can't be the fabled Wicked Son of the seder." (Note: if I had said I was the Simple Son, none of you would have batted an eye).

Rest assured, it's true.

But I'd like to defend the Wicked Son. I don't think he – nor I for that matter – deserves the bum rap he's been getting. After all, what does he really say that's so invective?

"What does this mean to you?" I've been struggling with a question very similar to that myself. Despite the idiom of walking a mile in another man's shoes, we can only understand the world around us through our own eyes. My experiences colour every thought I have as much as my education and morals guide me.

When I go to shul, I ask, "What does this mean to you?" When I sit around the Sabbath table, I ask, "What does this mean to you?" And when I participate in the seder, I invariably ask, "What does this mean to you?" I ask these questions not out of contempt or disdain but out of the curiosity of a student wanting to learn.

The rituals of Judaism have, as their basis, a core set of beliefs – primary among them is the belief in a personal God, the God who led the Jews out of Egypt. So when I sit around the table, without personally relating to the rituals performed around me, I very intentionally ask what it means to others, who undoubtedly have a different set of beliefs underpinning their actions, to better understand their mentality.

The Wicked Son is only the son removed from the paradigm of those around him. He is only the son trying to understand a Jewish world as he sees it without the Jewish subtext. He is every Jew who sees the seder night as a repository of Jewish culture and heritage, and tries to work out what ritual means without belief.

After all, he is at the table, isn't he? He is asking questions. He is interested.

Despite the coolness with which the so-called Wicked Son poses his question, he cannot be faulted for being set apart. The ritual he sees around him, having been performed for countless generations, does not have the same meaning for him as it did for his grandparents and theirs before them. And, in response to that, he asks questions.

And that is all I have tried to do in my tenure at The CJN – ask questions. I hope you have learned as much from this process as I have. Thank you for reading.

The Kirshner File

A sampler from the Jewish Film Festival

This year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival, a major event in Toronto's cultural scene, runs until April 26. Happily, it has something for everyone. Here is an enticing sampler of morsels from its delectable program.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Israel's former prime minister, Ariel Sharon, lies in a coma today, three years after suffering a massive stroke. Sharon, who was at the apex of his powers when he was suddenly felled, is the subject of Dror Moreh's tightly focused biopic, Sharon (Thursday, April 23 at 1 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema).

Concentrating on his career as prime minister from 2001 onward, this 90-minute film focuses both on the political and personal dimensions of his life. Moreh portrays him as an avuncular figure rather than as a bull in a china shop, the image he was usually saddled with in the media.

The godfather of the settlement expansion movement in the territories and the architect of the 1982 war in Lebanon, Sharon was considered all washed up due to his role in the accompanying Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut. Indeed, he was forced to resign as Menachem Begin's defence minister once the details of that event reached the public.

Back then, Sharon – a former general – was a great believer in military power, Moreh suggests. But after defeating Ehud Barak in an election, he tempered his views and came to appreciate the virtues of restraint in the face of provocation. In the wake of a horrific suicide bombing in Tel Aviv shortly after his electoral triumph, he did not, as widely expected, lash out at the Palestinians, Moreh points out. But he did order the reoccupation of the West Bank, in Operation Defensive Shield, after 29 Israelis were killed by a bomber at the Park Hotel in Netanya in 2002.

Sharon's decision to pull out of the Gaza Strip unilaterally, a topic Moreh explores at length, stemmed from his new-found belief that the occupation was unsustainable. His hatred of Yasser Arafat, the president of the Palestinian Authority, ran deep, particularly after the eruption of the second intifadah. But in deference to the United States, Sharon did not target him for assassination.

The film, augmented by archival footage and interviews with his aides, foreign officials and Israeli contemporaries, depicts him as a lonely, sentimental man who never quite got over the death of his beloved wife, Lily, whom he referred to as "a very special girl."

In unpeeling the layers of his personality, Moreh films Sharon in various locales. He inspects a mangled bus in Jerusalem following a suicide attack. He confers with his assistants. He adjusts a microphone at a rally. He meets George W. Bush at the White House. He comments on a sunset at his ranch in the Negev and gazes longingly at old photographs of himself. He encourages settlers in Gaza. He wanders through an art gallery.

In short, Sharon is a portrait of a canny politician at the top of his game.

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979), the illustrious American composer, had few peers. Not counting such iconic figures as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and George Gershwin, he was in a class by himself.

Teamed up with lyricists Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II, he wrote "stick in your ear tunes."

Roger Sherman's superbly entertaining film, Richard Rodgers: The Sweetest Sounds (Sunday, April 19 at 3:30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema), is an ode to a genius and a model documentary.

When you think of his memorable songs, your heads spins in admiration. He gave us Isn't It Romantic?, Blue Moon, Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin', If I Loved You, You'll Never Walk Alone, It Might As Well be Spring, Some Enchanted Evening, Getting to Know You, My Favorite Things, The Sound of Music, Climb Ev'ry Mountain, My Funny Valentine, The Lady Is A Tramp, Bewitched, Bothered And Bewildered and Do-Re-Mi. These songs, from such Broadway hits as I Married An Angel, Pal Joey, Carousel, South Pacific, Oklahoma!, The Sound of Music and The King And I, left a lasting legacy.

Beyond exploring his captivating musical contributions, Sherman's biopic delves into his life and partnership with Hart and Hammerstein. The son of a New York physician who changed the family name from Abrahams to Rodgers, he was a prodigy who met Hart when he was only 17.

Although Hart was an alcoholic whose work habits left much to be desired, Rodgers was devoted to him. Rodgers, his disciplined approach notwithstanding, was a difficult and neurotic man given to depression. And as Sherman discloses in the tail-end of this 117-minute film, he, too, drank too much.

Perhaps it was the pressure he was under. From 1935 to the early 1940s, he and Hart had nine consecutive hits on Broadway, from Jumbo and Babe In Arms to The Boys From Syracuse and By Jupiter. Critics, of course, expected more of the same. But by 1941, Rodgers had to turn to Hammerstein, given Hart's unreliability. Hammerstein, a workaholic whose last success was Show Boat in 1927, hit it off beautifully with Rodgers. Their first show, Oklahoma!, was a sensation.

Ariel Sharon visits an art gallery in Israel.

Within a few years, Rodgers and Hammerstein were an American institution. They had 18 years together, earning 35 Tony Awards, 15 Academy Awards and two Pulitzer Prizes. With Hammerstein's untimely death at 65, Rodgers' best days were behind him. As Sherman observes, their plays are still going strong.

Rodgers' contemporary, Harold Arlen (1905-1986), is profiled in Don McGlynn's documentary, Somewhere Over the Rainbow: Harold Arlen (Thursday, April 23 at 2:15 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre).

Like Rodgers, he was an original. His songs were fresh and imaginative and ranged from Stormy Weather and That Old Black Magic to Let's Fall In Love and Blues In The Night.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., the son of a cantor, Arlen's real name was Hyman Arlook. An accomplished pianist and vocalist, his collaborators were Ted Koehler, with whom he wrote his first well-known song, Get Happy, and Johnny Mercer, with whom he wrote Over the Rainbow, which the Recording Industry Association of America rated as the 20th century's number 1 song.

In this thoroughly enjoyable film, Arlen plays the piano, sings and reminisces, while two of his colleagues, Koehler and Mercer, recall his prodigal talents. Better still, some of the finest vocalists of his time, including Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Tony Bennett, Lena Horne, Barbra Streisand and Mel Torme, belt out his inestimable songs.

If you're looking for a complete change of pace and atmosphere, try The Debt (Saturday, April 25 at 7 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema). Starring the Israeli actress Gila Almagor, Asaf Bernstein's thriller is set in Israel and Europe and turns on a manhunt, conducted by three Mossad agents, for a Nazi war criminal, the Surgeon of Birkenau.

Composed of flashbacks, and unfolding in Hebrew, German and Russian, the picture is taut and suspenseful, a fine example of its genre. Almagor, a veteran of the Israeli stage and screen, delivers a competent performance, but she's really miscast here.

Gruber's Journey (Thursday, April 23 at 9:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre), ably directed by Radu Gabrea, also deals with the Holocaust. An Italian journalist embedded with the German army in Romania arrives in the city of Iasi in 1941 shortly after a pogrom. Plagued by breathing problems, he seeks out the services of an allergist, a doctor who happens to be Jewish. But as he conducts his search for this elusive specialist, he discovers the awful truth about Iasi. This is a jolting journey into the bowels of hell.

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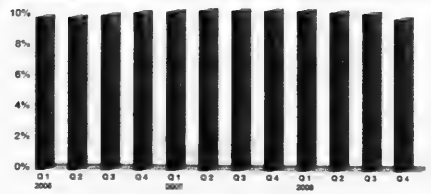

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JNF shaliach joins Israeli-Palestinian dialogue

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The North America Muslim Foundation held a discussion late last month at at the NAMF Centre mosque in Scarborough about the recent war in Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Yaen Vered

Yaen Vered, a shaliach for the Jewish National Fund who works for the Israeli Antiquities Authority, and Hicham Safieddine, a PhD student in Middle Eastern studies at the University of Toronto, each presented their opinions about the conflict to an audience of about 50 people.

Vered began his address by saying that when people talk about Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes after Israel's War in Independence in 1948, people forget that 600,000 Jews were thrown out of their homes in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, and other Arab countries.

He said these Jews, who were forced to leave behind assets worth billions of dollars, were absorbed into the Israeli Jewish community.

"We absorbed them and we went into a very serious time of rationing… We split whatever we had with our brethren," Vered said. "We built a country of refugees. There were 650,000 Jews in 1948 in the Land of Israel. In two years, we quadrupled that number."

Vered said that when Israel's independence was declared, "Israel was attacked… It is a fact that some of the Arab countries were promising the Palestinians that if they got out of the cities that the Jews were living in, [they would] get everything back," he said.

"When you begin a war… when you lose, you lose. When you win, you win… We took over parts of the country. [Arabs] took over parts of the country."

Vered questioned why the leaders of the Arab countries didn't help Palestinian refugees recover from the war.

"Why did they not take the initiative to come to help to absorb and help those poor people, the people who were expelled from their homes… to revitalize their lives?… Because they are used as a political cow and those people suffered all those years to remain political cows against the state of Israel."

Safieddine prefaced his address by asking the gathering not to fear to speak out for the Palestinian cause and to consider that there is a distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

"Every time we try to speak about the conflict, what happens is people who are aware that this might actually underline what is happening jump up and say anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is the same, and they try to suppress you," Safieddine said.

"The two types of people who are uncomfortable with [the distinction]… are the Zionists, because they want to suppress the criticism of Israel, and the others are anti-Semites who want to use criticism of Israel largely to criticize Jews."

Speaking about the three-week war in Gaza this past winter that killed an estimated 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis, Safieddine said that there is "no doubt that there were war crimes committed by the Israelis."

He added that "90 per cent of the time," Israelis break the ceasefires between the two sides and that "every time there is organized political resistance by Palestinians, the Israeli government tries to destroy it."

But Vered said that Hamas and its supporters were launching rockets aimed at civilian populations.

"There is no government in the world that would stand aside and not go into war in that case," he said.

When it comes to alleged war crimes, Vered said that Israeli pilots and soldiers are instructed not to target civilians.

"Unfortunately, when you take children and civilians as human shields, there is no question that some of them are going to get hit with shrapnel. You can't help it."

He added that he is sorry for the loss of life on the Palestinian side, but said that the discrepancy in the number of casualties has to do with the fact that the Israeli government invests in shelters and infrastructure to protects its citizens and soldiers from rockets and mortars.

Vered said the war in Gaza wouldn't have happened if Hamas put an end to the constant rockets aimed at Israel.

"Look how they live in Ramallah, how they live in Nablus, how they live in other parts of the West Bank. It's a really nice place to live. Why can't we do it in Gaza? Why should we and the Gazans be faced with such atrocities?"

Safieddine said he believes in a one-state solution and that what is now Israel should revert back to the way it was before 1948.

Vered said the concept of one state for two nations doesn't work anywhere else in the world.

Safieddine countered by saying that it did work in Palestine before 1948.

But Vered, said that before Israel declared independence, there were wars, riots and uprisings against Jews in 1917, 1921, 1929, and between 1936 and 1939. "So to say that everything was quiet and serene and so on is unfortunately not true."

He added that most Israelis support a two-state solution because "no Israeli would like to be in a position that the Hamas government would put them in.

"Hamas has enforced on the Gaza Strip a sharia law [Islamic religious law] and they are cutting off hands. They are killing their own people. There was a wedding of a Fatah person in Gaza… [Hamas] came in and shot 20 people. I don't want to live in such a place," he said.

Safieddine said Vered's anecdotes are exceptions and only promote the idea that Palestinians are "backwards" and "evil."

When asked by a moderator if the renunciation of armed resistance would help the Palestinian cause, Safieddine said that armed resistance is sanctioned by international law.

"If you are fighting an occupation, you have the right to use armed resistance, as long as you abide by the rules of the law… [it] is their right."

Vered, who was asked about the treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, said there are thousands of terrorists in Israeli prisons, some of whom "were caught with blood on their hands.

"They have visitation rights from their families, they have the right to study, they have the right to get phone calls… They have meetings in jail to have political discussions, and so on," he said.

"[Israel] has one prisoner with Hamas. And you know what they say. He will not see the light of day… That soldier [Gilad Schalit] was kidnapped. That soldier is not getting anything…" he said, adding that he has not been seen by the Red Cross and only receives and sends one letter a year to and from his family.

Safieddine said that Schalit was captured as a prisoner of war and has rights as a prisoner of war.

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Policies of Netanyahu's new government unclear

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Israel's new foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman's announcement that the Jewish state would not be bound by the 2007 Annapolis "shelf" agreement was criticized by much of the international media. Lost among the condemnation was Lieberman's declaration that Israel would adhere to the 2002 "road map" peace plan sponsored by the Quartet (consisting of the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia).

Since the road map calls for the creation of a Palestinian state as its final stage – whereas Annapolis was an effort to negotiate, without prior stages, a final status agreement – Lieberman, in effect, admitted (as some Israeli analysts pointed out) that Israel is still committed to a two-state solution.

The Economist magazine, which is often critical of Israel, did bring some nuance to its analysis of Israel's new government. In the April 2 editorial, "Change your tune," it wrote that "the politics of the ill-named peace process are invariably fluid. For one thing, Mr. Netanyahu is notoriously opportunistic, a quality that can sometimes be turned to a common good. He talks, albeit vaguely, of his desire to make peace with his neighbours, presumably including Palestinians… Previous Israeli leaders, including Mr. Netanyahu's predecessors, Ehud Olmert and Ariel Sharon, both once set their faces against Palestinian statehood but were persuaded that it was the only way to make Israel safe. It is possible that Mr. Netanyahu will in due course come to see similar sense."

Indeed, a number of analysts caution against drawing hasty conclusions about how the Netanyahu government will act. In "Netanyahu government reconsidering road map" (Jerusalem Post, April 6) Herb Keinon made three key points:

• The Netanyahu government has undertaken a thorough policy review "in which all diplomatic components – from the road map peace plan to the Annapolis process – are being re-evaluated," and so it would be wrong to prejudge precisely where the government stands;

• Regarding Lieberman's remarks about Annapolis, a senior Israeli official "said that until the government adopted a policy, the comments of various ministers reflected their own positions, but not government's."

• While a specific set of policies is being worked out, in general, the government sees ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of its central objectives, but it does not want to begin with Israeli concessions, which in the past have led nowhere.

Key requirements include strong, reliable Palestinian institutions and an economy that can underscore and sustain a durable peace, along with a unified Palestinian government committed to accepting Israel as a Jewish state.

On this last, crucial point, the Economist wrote that Fatah and Hamas, although " bitterly opposed," are " groping" toward a unity government. Whether they even achieve remains very uncertain. However, the magazine is overly optimistic in believing that Hamas can be cajoled into "accepting previous Palestinian agreements with Israel that include recognition of the Jewish state without having clearly to spit out the dreaded words of acknowledgment itself."

Yet short of a unified Palestinian government that is willing to live alongside Israel as a Jewish state, all discussion of what any Israeli government can be expected to do to nurture a two-state solution remains moot. It's as important for the media to focus on this part of the equation as on the Israeli side.

Benjamin Netanyahu

* * *

In " Educating a generation of jihadists" (Toronto Star, April 6), columnist Rabbi Dow Marmur wrote about Arab-Israeli journalist Khaled Abu Toameh's dismay during a recent speaking tour of North American campuses, in which he encountered more blind, anti-Israel rhetoric than in the West Bank.

Rabbi Marmur quoted from an article for the Hudson Institute by Abu Toameh: "We should not be surprised if the next generation of jihadists comes not from the Gaza Strip or the mountains and mosques of Pakistan and Afghanistan, but from university campuses across the U.S… What's happening on the U.S. campuses is not about supporting Palestinians as much as it is about promoting hatred for the Jewish state."

Added Rabbi Marmur: "What masquerades as pro-Palestinian is just anti-Jewish… This is anti-Semitism in the guise of human rights advocacy."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

Panel looks at Haifa's cultural, ethnic diversity

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Cultural and ethnic diversity in and out of Israel was the topic of a panel discussion sponsored by the Haifa Foundation and the Canadian Friends of Haifa University.

The forum, which took place April 2 at Beth Tzedec Congregation, centred on the Israeli port city of Haifa, whose diverse population consists of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, Baha'is and both Russian and Ethiopian new immigrants.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

The moderator, Beth Tzedec's spiritual leader, Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, suggested that an increasingly globalized world forces people to meet the challenge of diversity.

Haifa, where Jews and Arabs live in close proximity, exemplifies diversity, he said. In this country, the challenge is about how Canadians can acknowledge and respect diversity.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said that Jewish tradition is steeped in the values of diversity.

Shai Razieli, a native of Haifa who now lives in Toronto, said that Haifa's ethnic pluralism predates the establishment of Israel.

Hassan Shukri, the Muslim mayor of Haifa during the British Mandate period, appointed a Jewish deputy, and this custom remains intact today.

"Coexistence is in our blood," Razieli said.

Faisal Azaiza, head of the Jewish-Arab Center at the University of Haifa and the head of the MA program at its school of social work, discussed bilingualism and bilingual education in Israel.

Azaiza, a Muslim, said that while most Israeli Arabs speak Hebrew, the majority of Israeli Jews don't speak Arabic, yet two-thirds of Israeli Jews surveyed believe that Arabic should be a mandatory subject in Israeli schools.

Judging by surveys, Israeli Jewish high school students generally don't think that Arabic will be of use to them in later life.

Their Arab counterparts, however, learn Hebrew for pragmatic economic reasons, Azaiza pointed out.

Israeli Jewish parents who send their children to bilingual Arabic-Hebrew schools do so to break down social barriers. Arab parents do so on the assumption that their children will be better off in Israeli society with a sound grasp of Hebrew.

Support for bilingual schools is higher among Arabs than Jews, he said.

Ken Greenberg, former director of urban design and architecture for the City of Toronto, said he was "very surprised" that most Israeli Jews don't speak Arabic.

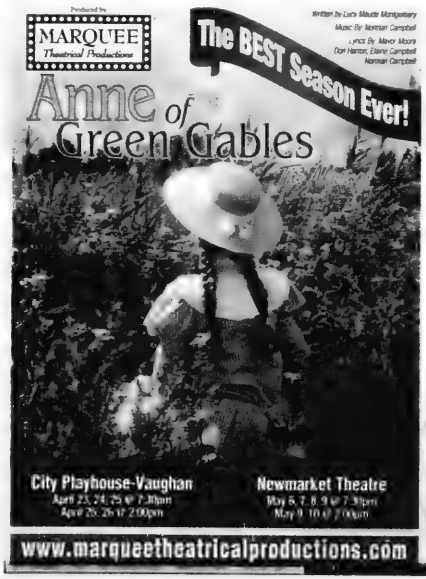
As ethnically homogeneous cities become a thing of the past, people will have to learn to deal with this phenomenon, he noted.

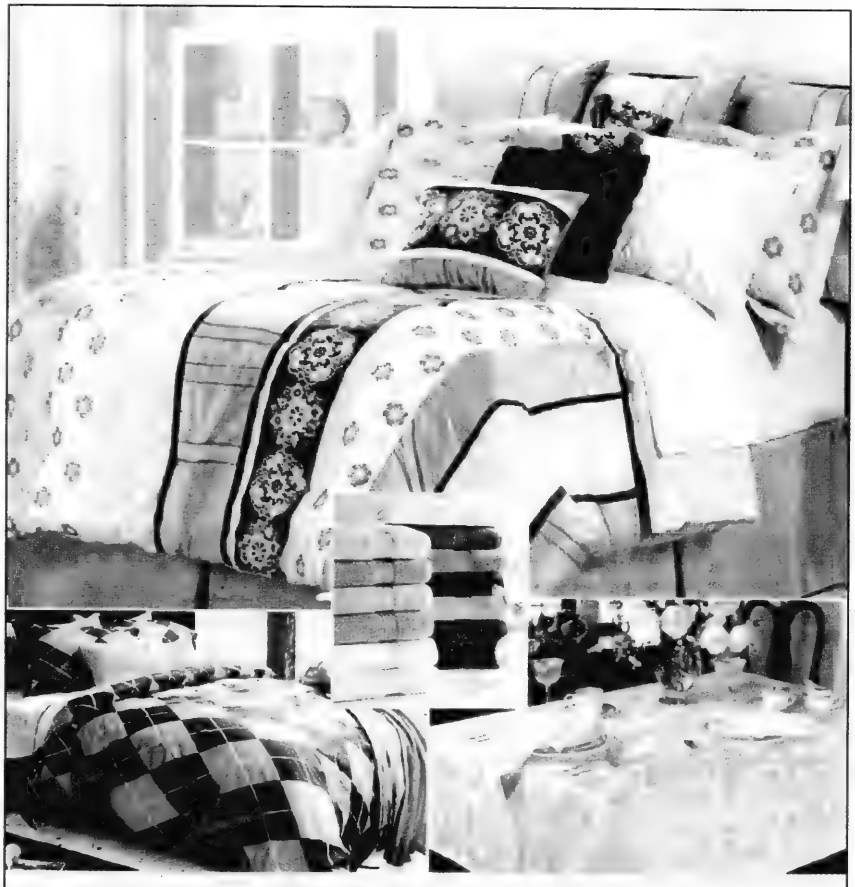
Greenberg said that while Tel Aviv looks almost as diverse as Toronto in terms of its inhabitants, it's composed primarily of Jews and some foreign guest workers.

Siamak Hariri, a Baha'i architect based in Toronto, described Haifa as "a special city" by virtue of its status as world headquarters of the Baha'i movement.

Baha'i temples are open to all faiths and people from all walks of life, he said.

Karen Mock, president of the Canadian Friends of Haifa University and a senior policy adviser on diversity and equity to the Ontario minister of education, discussed the challenges of realizing the promises of diversity in a multicultural society.

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Bone marrow testing drive planned at Adath Israel

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

The Toronto Jewish community has always responded enthusiastically when asked to come out to be tested as bone marrow donors.

We remember drives for Alison Atlas, Jay Feinberg, Audi Stanley – when people of all religious streams, all social groupings and all ages lined up patiently in the hopes of helping one of our own. Once again, the call is going out.

Jonathan Grossman, 46, is a self-described "software techie." In February, he was diagnosed with idiopathic myelofibrosis, a disease in which the bone marrow no longer produces red or white blood cells, or platelets. There is no treatment or cure, except for a bone marrow transplant.

A bone marrow testing drive, under the aegis of Canadian Blood Services and Gift of Life, takes place Sunday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Adath Israel Congregation. Eligible donors must be between the ages of 18 and 60, and in general good health. Unlike earlier drives, no blood is taken at the drive, only swabs from the inner cheeks.

Ideally, six matching genetic markers are necessary for a bone marrow donation to be successful. The best chance, then, is either from the patient's family, or, if there is no family match – as in Grossman's case – from someone who comes from the same general geographic area.

Grossman said that originally doctors felt that his gastro-intestinal symptoms were a sign of Crohn's disease, which several members of his family have. A long, frustrating course of blood tests at Toronto's Princess Margaret Hospital this past February confirmed that he has idiopathic myelofibrosis. Since then, he has had weekly blood transfusions to keep him alive.

"It was a shock," Grossman said. However, he said, his wife, Julie, and his family took it as "a call to arms. We were not blinded like a deer in the headlights – we were motivated to do something. That's what our family is like."

His daughter, Jessica, a student at the University of Western Ontario, has a Facebook group, to get information out to the public and to look for possible donors. He also has a younger son, Jason. Both children – and Grossman himself – are graduates of Bialik Hebrew Day School.

Julie Grossman, a clinical manager at Baycrest Hospital, has organized the bone marrow testing drive at Adath Israel. She said that she has arranged for six lead volunteers to manage the event, so that things will run smoothly.

For more information, call Julie Grossman, 416-932-8132, or visit the websites www.theoffice.com or www.giftoflife.org. Those tested in earlier drives do not have to be tested again.

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שישאר י'נינו

גידי קורן וחברים

ממשלה חדשה

אני נוטע בכבוש החוף ושומע את הודעת ראש הממשלה, עם כניסתו לישיבה הראשונה של ממשלתו החדשה. הוא מדבר על האתגרים הכלכליים והביטחוניים שעומדים לפנינו, ואנינו שוכח גם את המצב החברתי הקשה. אלא שהרכבת ממשלתו החדשה מעוררת פליאות וספקות בעיני רבים:

לא נקפה 'ממה מאז מינויו של ליברמן לשר החוץ, והוא מודיע שאינו מקבל את סיכומי אנאפוליס, ובקיצור-הוא מתכונן ללכת כמאז עם הערבים. בארץ ובעולם -תגובות קשות. בחוג השלטון החדש מובע זעזוע על חוסר מתינותו, ועל זה שהוא מקומם את אובאמה ואירופה נגד ישראל. על כך עונה ליברמן: סורי גאיין, אני אומר בדיוק מה שאמרתי כל הזמן, וכולם ידעו את עמדותי! מה שנכון נכון. הוא צנראה המדינאי ההגון היחיד במערכת.

שעושה בדיוק מה שאמר. זה שזה הולך להזיק לישראל-לא ממש בעיה שלו . כולם ידעו את דיעותיו, ובכל זאת מזועזעים. הדבר היחיד שיכול למנוע ממדינת ישראל את גישתו של ליברמן לנושא הערבי הוא הסיכוי שיוגש נגדו כתב אישום על חלק מהתיקים הנחקרים עכשיו-אני אישית מאחל לו שהתיקים ייסגרו ושהוא יוכל למרות דעותיו, להגשים את נצחונו הדמוקרטי.

החלטותיו התמוהות של נתניהו בתחום הכלכלה עוד יותר מדאיגות: בימים של משבר כלכלי עולמי, הוא מינה לשר האוצר את מקורבו יובל שטייניץ, פילוסוף במקצועו, שאין לו מושג ירוק בכלכלה. כל זאת בניגוד גמור למעצמות מערביות שמינו זה עתה כלכלנים בעלי ניסיון להתמודד עם האתגר הכלכלי האדיר. זה מזכיר את הפאשלה של מינוי אמיר פרץ להיות שר הביטחון לפני מלחמת לבנון השנייה, ומשול למינוי של רב ראשי לתפקיד הרמטכ"ל.

ואחרון, לא חביב-למרות שיש בממשלה שלושים שרים, רבים מהם ללא תיק, לא מצא נתניהו מועמד מתאים לתיק הבריאות העצום והמאתגר. וכך בעיות רציניות ביותר שנוגעות לבריאותם של שבעה מליון ישראלים נשארות ללא מענה. קשה להאמין שהחלטות מזרזות כל כך תרומונה לקדום הממשלה שיוצאת לדרכה, אבל הלוואי ואתבדה.

אוהדי נבחרת ישראל

ליבי לאוהדי נבחרת ישראל בכדורגל-אחת לכמה שנים, בסיועה של עיתונות מתלהמת, נדמה שאנו טו טו ישראל עומדת לעלות למשחקי הגביע העולמי או האולימפיאדה. כולם זוכרים בנעוריים שזה קרה בתחילת שנות השבעים, אבל שוכחים שאז התחרתה ישראל באסיה ולא באירופה...ואז מגיעים המשחקים עצמם ואיתם האכזבה. דומה הדבר להורים שיש להם ילד עם-איך נאמר זאת- קשיי הבנה ולימוד, אבל יש להם חלום שהוא יגיע לפרופסורה בהארוורד – וכל פעם כשהוא נכשל בבחינה הם מיואשים ומאוכזבים, וכמובן מאשימים את המורה, המנהל, הילדים האחרים ומי לא.

"ואיך זה שיוסי בניון משתף בנבחרת כל כך חלש"-צוטקת מקהלת הבולבולים. כעבור פחות משבוע כובש בניון את שער הנצחון עבור ליברפול-ללמדך שכשיש לידו קבוצת שחקנים טובה כמותו-יוצא משחק צוות מצוין. אבל שישאר בינינו.

יין ישראלי בטורונטו

תודה לנינה הוד שהביאה לידיעתי את העובדה שחסר יין ישראלי בהרבה סניפים של LLCBO.

זה לכשעצמו אינו מעיד על בעיה, אלא שלפחות מנהל סניף אחד הרגה שהם אינם רוצים לעצבן את המוסלמים באזורם, ואינם מעוניינים להפוך את הביקוש של יינות ישראליים בפסח למלחמה.

זה מיצוין מאוד מזר לאור העובדה שמוסלים דתיים אינם טועמים יין בכלל.

אשמח לשמוע מכם אם נתקלתם בבעיות דומות באזורכם. זה סוג של אפליה שאם היא קיימת-תפקידנו לעצור אותה.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

Divorce guide informs Jewish women of rights

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Jewish Women International Canada (JWIC), along with a committee of experts, has published a brochure about divorce for Jewish women.

The free brochure was made possible by Family Law Education for Women (FLEW), a public legal information project funded by the Ontario government whose goal is to inform Ontario women about their family law rights.

FLEW has produced materials on such topics as custody and access, child protection, domestic contracts, family law issues for immigrant, refugee and non-status women, and family law arbitration.

It's made up of representatives from a number of local groups, including YWCA Toronto, Metropolitan Toronto Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Springtide Resources and the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL).

Penny Krowitz, executive director of JWIC, said her organization got involved in the project about a year ago. "I was invited to a meeting, because FLEW decided to broaden its committee to include reference groups such as ours – the only Jewish group – who represent the demographics and experience of Ontario women."

Their idea was to publish materials on a wide variety of subjects pertinent to women.

"Our [mandate] was to outline a woman's legal and religious obligations when dissolving a marriage in a format that is simple to understand, relevant, accurate, and easily accessible."

Since February 2008, Krowitz has been meeting with her committee, which includes Evelyn Brook, a JWIC national executive board member and president of the Canadian Coalition of Jewish Women for the *Get*; Dr. Rachael Turkienicz of the Learning Centre; John Syrtash, family law lawyer; Judith Holzman, family law lawyer; Norma Joseph, a professor of religion at Concordia University and an expert on the *get*, the Jewish divorce document; Corinne Rusch-Drutz of YWCA Canada; Joanna Morrison, co-ordinator of community development services at JIAS Toronto, and Avraham Friedman, a former outreach worker at Jewish Family & Child.

As well as holding a number of planning meetings, the committee also met with local rabbis in the Orthodox community, including Rabbi Mordechai Ochs of Toronto's Orthodox Jewish divorce court, to get their input.

The committee researched what languages the brochure should be translated into – it's currently being translated into French, Hebrew and Russian – and held focus groups to get an objective and grassroots response to the material.

"The actual look of the material changed when we identified the need for a more reader-friendly style of presentation," Krowitz said.

In writing the brochure, she said, committee members had to keep in mind that they were writing for women from every background, "from secular to frum."

Information covered in the brochure includes the definition of a Jewish divorce, who needs one, and where to get it, as well as a list of community resources.

It also talks about the differences between Jewish and Canadian divorce law; who deals with custody, support and property division, and what happens when a husband refuses to give a *get*.

JWIC and FLEW plan to distribute the brochure to every centre across the province that has a connection to the Jewish community. For information, call FLEW at 416-961-8101, ext. 317, or JWIC at 416-630-9313.

Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit opposed

JTA

Palestinian officials have called on Canada to cancel a planned exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The officials say the exhibit would violate international law.

In a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and directors of the Royal Ontario Museum, Hamdan Taha, director general of the archeological department in the Palestinian ministry of tourism and antiquities, alleges the scrolls were acquired illegally by Israel when the Jewish state annexed east Jerusalem in 1967.

The Palestinians claim the six-month exhibit slated to begin in June violates at least four international conventions or protocols on the treatment of cultural goods that were "illegally" obtained, the Toronto Star reported last week.

"The exhibition would entail exhibiting or displaying artifacts removed from the Palestinian territories" by Israel, Taha wrote.

Pnina Shor, head of the artifacts treatment and conservation department at the Israel Antiquities Authority, which is organizing the exhibit jointly with the museum, told the Star that the complaint was unfounded.

"We are the custodians of the Dead Sea Scrolls," Shor said. "As such, we have a right to exhibit them and to conserve them."

William Thorsell, the museum's CEO, said he is "quite certain the scrolls fall within the parameters of the law."

A spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon declined to comment.

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Jewish Life

Coalition unites disparate forces

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

Politics make strange bedfellows. The recent Israeli coalition government is no exception.

Under the Law of Return, hundreds of thousands of non-Jews from the former Soviet Union have immigrated to Israel. These people have fully integrated themselves into Israeli society, attending Israeli schools, participating in Israeli youth groups, and serving in the Israel Defence Forces. On the surface they have become totally Israeli. The dissonance between Israeli identity and Jewish identity surfaces only when it comes to marriage.

The Israeli rabbinate, which controls all matter of personal status – such as marriage and divorce, and deciding who is a Jew – has refused to issue marriage licenses to them. This is understandable in a case of a Jew to a "non-halachic Jew" (someone who considers themselves Jewish by association or patrilineal descent, but doesn't meet the halachic criteria), but it's absurd when two non-halachic Jews want to marry each other. The only recourse for such couples has been a foreign marriage. Usually a quick getaway to Cyprus does the trick. After marrying abroad, a couple can "legally" return as husband and wife.

It was the demographic power of these people and their frustration with this absurdity that catapulted their party, Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is our home) to the forefront of Israeli politics. Its leader, Avigdor Lieberman, understood this well, and joined the coalition conditional on some sort of resolution to this issue.

Chief Sephardi Rabbi Shlomo Amar had already released a position paper suggesting that some sort of civil union between two non-halachic Jews be allowed. He proposed that not only is there nothing wrong with this, but rather it would constitute a mitzvah, a fulfilment of one of the Seven Noachide Laws that concern themselves with God's expectations for the nations of the world. Couples as such would thereby fulfil the Divine Will. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef concurred and backed the initiative.

The daily Yated Neeman, the newspaper of the Lithuanian yeshiva establishment, decried this position in the most unambiguous fashion. "This is a dangerous initiative that is liable to introduce civil marriages to the Jewish people and cause a serious breech to the Jewish law," it said.

While it was clear to all that these arrows were directed at Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the apparently politically correct fashion of Lithuanian rabbis is to attack the Shas party.

The in-house advertisement went on: "It is well known to all that the Halachah is unequivocal, and there is no room for serious breeches included in this dangerous initiative."

Similar sentiments, in more toned-down rhetoric, were expressed in the daily Hamodia, the voice of the chassidic Gerrer sect.

Until the government coalition talks began, both Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv of the Lithuanian stream and Rav Yaakov Aryeh Alter, rebbe of the Gerrer chassidim, opposed any form of civil union as a dangerous slippery slope. While everyone has the right to their opinion, and even to diametrically change that very opinion, one is left breathless at the scope and timing of these rabbis' subsequent change of heart.

In joining the coalition, United Torah Judaism (UTJ), the party that represents the Lithuanian yeshiva world, not only fully embraced the concept of civil union, its leaders signed an understanding wherein they will participate in a committee that will "explore and recommend ways of including halachically recognized Jews who wish to avail themselves of civil unions when a halachah will not permit a marriage, such as a kohen to a divorcee or a Jew to a non-halachic Jew."

But this was only the first point of contention and then compromise between UTJ and the governing coalition. Lieberman insisted that for these Israelis, the process of conversion should be eased. He proposed to accomplish this by giving the power of conversion to a greater number of rabbis (including local rabbis), something that had been proposed and endorsed by Shas. Predictably, this, too, was decried by the Lithuanian and chassidic rabbis prior to the coalition talks as a course leading to corruption, bribery and other such unacceptable pressures on the rabbis. Only on the morning before the new government was formed did Rabbi Elyashiv agree to this broadening of powers.

UTJ finally signed a last-minute agreement with the coalition government.

The Jewish Body, by Melvin Konner, Random House.

Facts and provocative speculation

The author of this singular and impressive work – a mélange of facts and provocative speculation – is one of America's most distinguished anthropologists and physicians. At Emory University, he instructs students both about human biology and Jewish culture and history.

Books
Bernard Baskin

The Jewish Body, ambitious and wide ranging, is a history of the rituals of Judaism from brit milah to burial and includes such diverse topics as sex, menstruation, Jewish physical awareness, tough Jewish mobsters, the elusive Jewish gene and how the creation of Israel has led to Jewish affirmations of renewal and survival.

The author relates that when he was growing up in Brooklyn in the 1950s, "non-Jewish boys would sometimes taunt us with the demand that we show them our horns, and they seemed to believe that the purpose of our yarmulkes was to conceal the stubs of the cut-off horns. Since the devil and some of his imps have horns, this belief confirmed their worst fears about the "Satanic" Jews and their insidious aims of corrupting good Christians and dominating the world.

Actually, Konner shows that it was all a mistake based on an early Christian mistranslation of a biblical text. The Torah says that when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, "the skin of his face shone with rays." The Hebrew word "keran" means either "ray" or "horn." The translator chose "horn," which became the basis for Michelangelo's famous sculpture of the Horned Moses.

When the sex act is performed, affirmed the rabbis of old, with the wrong frame of mind, harm is done to the child that is born. They suggested the following: neither partner should be drunk, a man should not indulge in the act with his wife if he is intending to divorce her, a man must not be involved with nor have his mind on another woman. And finally, the sexual act must not result from a coarse or brazen overture, but from tenderness, respect and love.

The author laments the low Jewish birth rate and the inevitable decline in the Jewish population. In the United States for example, Jews are not replenishing their numbers. For every 100 Jewish deaths, there are 85 births.

The creation of the State of Israel has led to a new kind of Jew. After centuries in which Jews were hated because they were weak (and treated accordingly), they are hated today because they are strong. Strong is better. Or as former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir put it, "If we have to have a choice between being dead and pitied, and being alive with a bad image, we would rather be alive and have the bad image."

Konner, believes that the Nobel prizes, university presidencies, etc., will keep on coming, but that these achievements of the mind will be accompanied by a different concept of the Jewish body, one that has earned the Jews a new kind of respect in the world.

Iran looms as a threat to Israel's very existence. Is it possible that Iranian and nuclear bombs could kill millions of Israelis? Yes, asserts the author. "But then all of Iran's cities and towns will be turned to radioactive rubble, a terrible symmetry just like the one that prevented war between the United States and the Soviet Union for more than 40 years… physical strength can't always ultimately protect you, but it can make people afraid of you and that in itself is protection; so that where the respect can not be won by entreaty, it may be commanded, and where it can not be commanded, it may be enforced."

Verdict: stimulating and original, this relatively brief volume is a rewarding anatomical account of Jewish practice, history and culture.

Jewish Life

Poverty beyond Passover

CLASS ACT
By Daniel Held

For many years I have volunteered for the Passover food drive. My mother used to send me to school with a box of matzah or a can of gefilte fish to donate, my sister would shlep me along on delivery day to help load and unload the car, and now I encourage my students to bring in donations and help with the delivery. Each year as I help in collecting food, packing boxes and delivering them, I develop a clearer picture of the acute needs of so many in our community.

With big-ticket fundraising dinners and speakers, state-of-the-art community buildings and successful annual fundraising campaigns, it's easy to forget that there is still severe poverty and need in our community. Being involved in the Passover food drive grounds me in the reality of our communal needs.

The statistics are startling. An analysis of Canadian census data from 2001 indicates that 11 per cent of our community lives under the poverty line. The level of child poverty was nearly nine per cent, and more than 20 per cent of Toronto Jewish seniors are poor.

As the economy continues to decline and joblessness continues to increase, the numbers have surely worsened significantly since the census in 2001. Increased reliance on public social welfare is parallelled by increased demand on our community agencies such as Jewish Family and Child (JF&C), Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) and JVS.

Over the course of the last six months, I have been approached by scores of students who, facing difficult financial times, are forced to ask for subsidies and assistance for various educational programs. While communal institutions strive to be inclusive and implement the mantra that "no child should be denied a Jewish education," budgets are tight and some institutions are finding that there simply isn't enough subsidy funding to meet the need.

Assistance doesn't only come in the form of tuition subsidies. Jewish schools often help students afford basic school supplies, books, binders and even gym clothes. The socio-economic diversity in our schools, while often kept private and hidden, is a microcosm of the economic reality of our community at large.

It is critical that we publicly recognize the need within our community. While the Passover food drive has offered me a window into a segment of our community that is often left hidden, many don't have the opportunity to see the need first-hand. Anonymity of the recipient of tzedakah and confidentiality of personal financial circumstances is essential, but if the acute need of the poor is not placed publicly on the communal agenda, their plight can easily be swept under the carpet.

In our tradition we have a special mitzvah of maot chittin, collecting and distributing charity for Passover. The need, however, continues beyond the holiday. It is essential that we help those in need afford the supplies they need to celebrate Passover, but we also have an obligation to ensure that there is food on their tables the next week and the week after that.

All too often the spotlight of Jewish charitable causes skips over the poor of our community. At certain times of the year – during the Passover food drive or the Chanukah toy drive – we campaign for those in need, but the burden of poverty does not lessen during the remainder of the year. In today's economy, it is critical that we give the support needed to the agencies that help those in need. JF&C, JIAS and the kosher food bank, as well as schools and synagogues, work to help those in need. It takes the entire community, however, to ensure that their needs are met.

Once a year, the Passover food drive allows me to look through a window and gain a new perspective on our community. With Passover behind us, it's now time to open the blinds and ensure that these issues are at the centre of our communal charity agenda.

Tel Aviv turns 100, Part 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

If Jerusalem is the City of Gold, then Tel Aviv is the City of White. Tel Aviv has just kicked off its centennial celebrations, and much is being made of the city's unique architecture. Today, a look at what makes the city special and events planned to mark its special birthday.

As for the "white" reference, it refers to one of the city's unique treasures, its White City, "a collection of 4,000 Bauhaus or International-style buildings built in Tel Aviv from the 1930s by German Jewish architects who immigrated to the British Mandate of Palestine after the rise of the Nazis." **[tinyurl.com/telaviv11]** In July 2003, UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, proclaimed Tel Aviv's White City a World Cultural Heritage site. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv12]**

There are many sites that explore the city's unique architecture. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv13]** I particularly like this one because it takes advantage of "pano-photography," 360-degree panoramic images that let you simulate being at the centre of the photo and rotate it to take in the sights. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv14]**

The best way to keep up with this year's special anniversary activities is to download the 72-page official Tel Aviv Centennial Handbook. Anniversary activities include the following.

• The "White Night": party all night and visit the city's museum for free until dawn. (June)

• The inauguration of three walking trails marked by colours emblematic of the city: white (the Urban Heritage Route), Blue (the Sea Route) and Green (the Urban Nature Route). **[tinyurl.com/telaviv15]** By the way, the Centennial Handbook is one of the best on-line experiences I've had that mimics the feel of thumbing through a physical booklet. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv16]**

Speaking of walking, Google now provides first-class maps of Tel Aviv (and many other Israeli cities).

What I particularly like is the option that overlays user photos, videos and Wikipedia entries right onto the map, so that you get a real feel for the environs. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv17]** Google's maps are in English. If you'd like to compare them to the homegrown version, check out Mapa's Hebrew maps. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv18]** Both services are free.

All too often visitors from abroad spend the bulk of their visit to Israel elsewhere and perhaps make a perfunctory visit to Tel Aviv for some shopping. Doing that means missing some of the best museums and attractions the city has to offer. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv19]** And don't forget to take in a café or two. The author of this list of favourites seems to take some pride that scores of Tel Aviv cafés have been able to survive and thrive in a city where Starbucks folded and left. "There was just too much competition from local cafés that offered a better product for a lower price." **[tinyurl.com/telaviv20]**

If you crave being in the White City but don't have a trip planned, you can pick up a copy of Tel Aviv Short Stories. The fiction anthology of 52 stories set in Tel Aviv, written in English by 37 authors, has just been published and gives a wonderful taste of life in the metropolis. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv24]**

There's a lovely clip on YouTube that gives you a good feel for the city, the book and its authors. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv28]**

Although there is no shortage of official sites marking the anniversary, I'm partial to the blogs and articles by the city's own denizens. Lisa Goldman had written a charming paean in Forward. **[tinyurl.com/telaviv26]**

And I'll close with the words of Ashley P.: "Tel Aviv has changed a lot in 18 years, as have I… It has turned into a cool, happening metropolis. OK, so Tel Aviv residents can still be as aggressive as ever and still drive like lunatics, but the Tel Aviv that welcomed me with a cap in hand, and still lived 10 years behind Europe, has turned itself into a bit of a swan. Lots of green parks for the kids to play in, the latest fashions and trends, great places to eat and drink… but, of course, the Med still lapping at those sandy shores. My Tel Aviv: 18 years in a 24-hour city, celebrating 100. Mazal Tov!" **[tinyurl.com/telaviv27]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Herb Gray becomes chancellor of Carleton U

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Former deputy prime minister Herb Gray was recently named Carleton University's 10th chancellor.

At a formal ceremony held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the longtime former Liberal MP was installed by Carleton's new chair of its board of governors, Jacques Shore.

Victor Rabinovitch, CEO of the Museum of Civilization, has known Gray both personally and professionally for many years. He said hosting the ceremony at his institution was an honour. "For me, it was a double honour – personally and on behalf of the institution – like getting an aliyah on Rosh Hashanah," he said.

This is just the latest honour in a long and distinguished career for Gray. First elected to Parliament as a Liberal member for Windsor West in 1962, he was re-elected in 12 subsequent federal elections. When he resigned from the House of Commons in January 2002 to become Canadian chair of the International Joint Commission, an autonomous international organization that prevents and resolves disputes about fresh water that comprise 40 per cent of the boundary between the United States and Canada, Gray had served for 39 years, six months and 26 days, an unequalled record for continuous days of service in the House.

Gray will continue his work for the Joint Commission, since the role of chancellor is largely ceremonial. One of the main functions is the awarding of degrees twice a year, but Gray is not merely a figurehead.

Herb Gray, left, and Jacques Shore [Mike Pender photo]

He plans to help the university carry out its new strategic plan, called "Defining Dreams.

"Not just to define your dreams but to have input into implementing the dreams of the entire Carleton community for the university, this capital city, our country and perhaps even the world," he told the ceremony.

"The development of a great university like Carleton is an ongoing task," Gray added. "In these difficult economic times, it is a challenge, but we have to keep at it."

Quoting from Rabbi Tarfon in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Sages), Gray said "You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it."

He plans to continue to attend monthly meetings of the board of governors, to meet with Carleton president Roseann O'Reilly Runte and Shore on a regular basis and to generally be involved in what he considers to be as an "almost ambassadorial" role for the university.

Despite his accomplishments, Gray is a quiet and modest man who said he's very "honoured to be chancellor, especially since I am following in the footsteps of some very outstanding people."

His immediate predecessor was Westmount MP Marc Garneau, the former astronaut.

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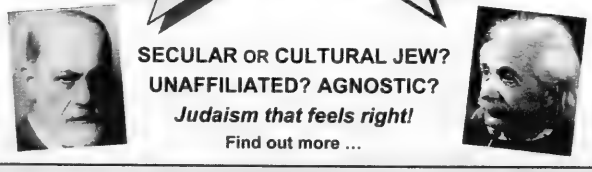

SECULAR OR CULTURAL JEW?
UNAFFILIATED? AGNOSTIC?
Judaism that feels right!
Find out more ...

Sunday April 19, 10:15 am
INTRODUCTION TO HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Sunday April 26, 10:15 am
CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Intermarried families very welcome

St. Andrew's Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. (Bayview/York Mills)

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism
RSVP: 416-385-3910
www.oraynu.org

Former MP honorary frat member

By CARA STERN
Special to The CJN

Herb Gray, Carleton University's new chancellor, recently became an honorary member of the international Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi.

Gray, a former deputy prime minister, was installed as Carleton's chancellor on March 5. He was initiated into AEPi on March 23.

"I have become connected with an organization that has, among its members and honorary members, an amazing array of talent, service, and achievement," he said, naming Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of Facebook, and Wolf Blitzer, a senior correspondent for CNN.

First elected to Parliament in 1962, Gray became Canada's first Jewish cabinet minister in 1969. He retired from Parliament in 2002 as Canada's longest serving MP.

Gray's initiation was part of the event Diversity in Brotherhood, which brought together members of AEPi and Omega Psi Phi, a predominantly black fraternity.

Gray noted that both the black and Jewish communities have faced slavery, oppression, discrimination and racism, adding that Passover, as a festival of freedom, links the two communities.

"Particularly in the '60s, [Jewish leaders] marched arm in arm with great black leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King, and faced physical violence and even death in this cause," he said.

There is a bond between AEPi and Omega Psi Phi in their fights against racism, said Jon Telch, the president of AEPi's Ottawa chapter.

"[The Omega brothers] are just as, if not more, passionate than AEPi about anything in terms of standing up against racism, not only for your own people's sake but everyone else's," he said. "If we both are fighting for the same thing, why not do it together?"

Clement Ndegaya, vice-president of the Ottawa chapter of Omega Psi Phi, said it was important to recognize the similarities between the two cultures.

"People get stuck talking about our differences," he said, adding that in reality, "we have a lot more in common than not."

Michael Mostyn, national director of public affairs for B'nai Brith Canada, was also initiated as an honorary member of AEPi at the event.

On Campus

From left are McGill students Sani Karam, Aaron Bilek, Noura Hassan and Chloe Bogaty, who were among the participants in the launch of We Are Peace, an initiative to promote dialogue between students on opposite sides of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Give Mideast peace a chance, student initiative urges

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

McGill University student Daniela Porat was so fed up with the competition between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinians to get their version of the Middle East conflict to the forefront on campus and the rancour it has engendered that she decided to inject a little empathy into the debate.

In an article in the student newspaper the McGill Daily, she wrote: "I implore McGill's Jewish and Arab groups to unite their efforts in educating students about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Not only will this be an experiment in diplomacy, it will be a testament to our potential as students to mend the fractures that divide our community."

The response was swift. The group Students Taking Action for Medicine and Peace (STAMP), which most recently led a successful fundraising campaign to aid cholera victims in Zimbabwe, took up her challenge. STAMP is an association of mainly medical and dental students; Porat, who is from Toronto, is studying political science and art history.

With STAMP, Porat is spearheading a new campaign at McGill called We Are Peace, aimed at building trust between students on opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and giving them an opportunity to get to know one another without partisanship dominating the discourse.

The launch event was held in the lobby of McGill's education department on April 2. More than 50 students, and some others, attended, enjoying falafel and painting a mural with symbols of peace, while Israeli and Arabic music played.

The mural, which contains the dominant message Shalom/Salaam (peace in Hebrew and Arabic), is to hang in McGill's main McLennan Library until June, "as a reminder to interact peacefully and diplomatically," said Porat.

Porat said she had become "distraught over the unbelievable antagonisms developing" on Canadian campuses, including McGill, following the Gaza offensive in December 2008 and January 2009, and during Israeli Apartheid Week in March.

She hopes this initiative is "a small but significant start to moving beyond such negative behaviour."

The mood at the launch was encouraging, she said. "We talked about the conflict, but it was muted and relaxed. Then we talked about everyday things."

We Are Peace is also going to hold a photography competition for students on the subject of Middle East peace. The 12 best submissions will be published in a calendar, that Porat hopes will carry the message of peace throughout the year.

Porat's attachment to Israel is strong and personal; she is sensitive to criticism of Israel, but is trying to understand how the other side feels.

For instance, a recent display in the McLennan Library on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza left her with mixed feelings. "I believe sending aid to the Palestinians is crucial, however, what I found disconcerting about the display was that, as a Jew, I felt I was being attacked with anti-Israel sentiments."

Her grandfather was the only person in his family to survive the Holocaust. After being liberated from Auschwitz, he settled in Israel. She was born in Venezuela.

As she wrote in the Daily: "We have to move beyond the inferences and assumptions that blemish our relations, so that our understandings of each other are not dictated by hate and rather built on a belief that we can learn from past persecutions."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009

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DATE: Wednesday, April 29, 2009 TIME: 1:00 PM
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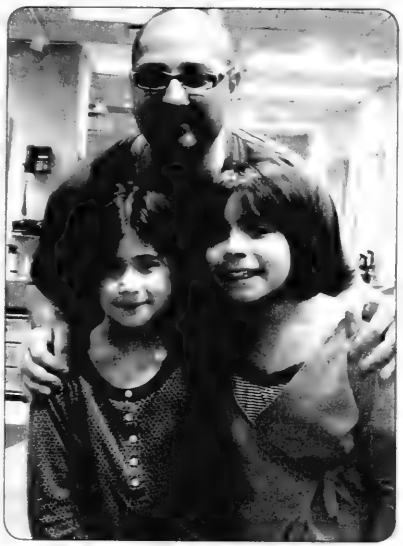


A LITTLE OFF THE TOP: Aya Danzig, left, and Rachel Perlmutar, Grade 3 students at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, posed with hairstylist Mario Grassa of Concepts Salon after they donated their hair to Angel Hair for Kids, a program that provides wigs and hair loss solutions to financially disadvantaged children who have lost their hair due to a medical condition or treatment.

Parkinson's not a barrier to an active lifestyle

Compiled by CJN Staff

Kenny Bearg finds it a little tough to get going in the mornings. He's up at 5 a.m. and is out of the house by 6:30. But for the first moments of the day, he's pretty much at a standstill.

"Whether it's getting dressed or anything else I have to do in the morning, nothing much happens until the meds kick in," Bearg says. "That could take a half-hour to 45 minutes. But once I get going, I'm fine."

Bearg, 57, has Parkinson's disease, a neurodegenerative disorder that affects about 100,000 Canadians. The most common symptoms are tremor, slowness and stiffness, balance problems and muscle rigidity.

The average age of onset of Parkinson's disease is 60, but it can affect people as young as 30 or 40.

Diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2003, at the age of 52, Bearg experiences muscle cramp and his legs get sore, but that doesn't stop him from working out at the gym most mornings before putting in a full day at work.

It's the little things that drive him crazy. He says, "One of the first things in Parkinson's is your handwriting gets very small. It's hard to write. That's one of the worst side effects."

Cutting meat at dinner is another annoyance because his hands are weak. Also, Bearg acknowledges, "My golf game is not what it used to be, but I still play."

His neurologist at the Centre for Movement Disorders in Markham, Ontario; his exercise instructor at Baycrest, where he participates in a Parkinson's exercise group; and the physiotherapists at the clinic he attends twice a week help him to maintain a full and active lifestyle.

Then there's the support he gets from people with Parkinson's. Recalling attending a meeting for people who had Parkinson's for five years or more, Bearg says, "I had only been diagnosed for two weeks, so I didn't know what to expect. But I came out of that meeting feeling great. I saw how well people were handling their Parkinson's five years down the road. They were working out, they were in great shape and they were positive."

Bearg has taken their example to heart. He has since joined a Parkinson's disease support group that meets for lunch once a month. He and his family have also become avid fundraisers for Parkinson Society Canada and participate in SuperWalk for Parkinson's every year. This year SuperWalk takes place on Sept.12 and 13.

He says, "I have great support from my family and friends. I feel lucky that there's so much research now on Parkinson's disease, and I'm just hopeful that one day there's a cure."

Visit www.superwalk.com to register online for SuperWalk. For more information, visit www.parkinson.ca.

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Q. I notice that with each passing year, my weight seems to inch up. How can I avoid becoming overweight? Is there a simple answer?

A. Actually, yes there is – don't gain the weight in the first place. I know that sounds sarcastic, harsh and critical, but I am serious. I see people every day, in my office and around me, who are struggling to lose weight. It is inevitable that as we age and our metabolic rate slows down, as we lose muscle mass, as we become less active, as menopause sets in for women, we will gain weight, so wouldn't it be smart if we just made every effort not to become overweight?

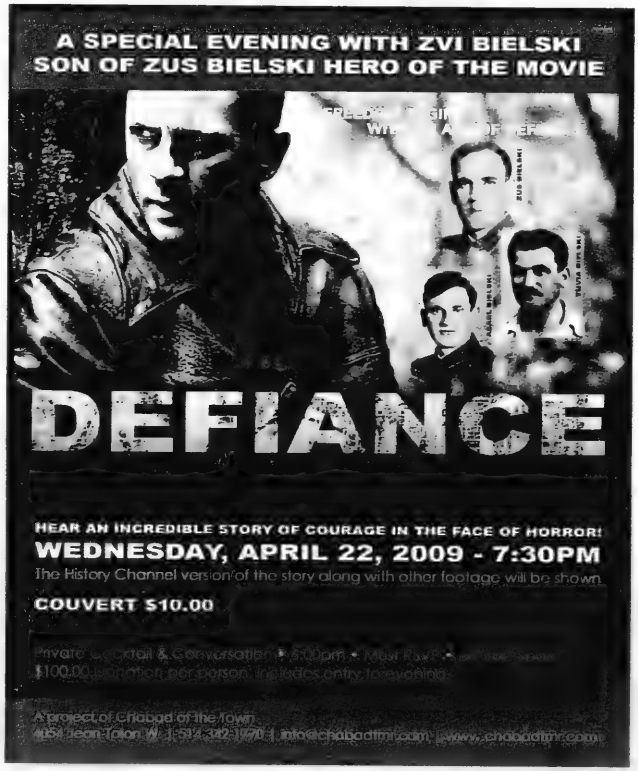
If you know losing weight doesn't work for you or is daunting or overwhelming, or if you just long to achieve and maintain a healthy weight over your lifetime, then do what you can to prevent yearly creeping up, which will ultimately lead to your gaining a large amount of weight that needs to be lost.

Be real with yourself. What do you need to make this happen? More activity? Change of activity? Smaller portions of the same food? Stop skipping meals? Healthier choices?

Whatever your weight, healthy or not, at the very least let's just stop gaining. As we age, we need to exercise more and eat less just to maintain the same weight, but it is doable. I see so many people resistant to giving up the foods (or alcohol) they enjoy, or unwilling to do so, and I encourage them to at least cut the portions down – continue to eat those foods but less, and enjoy their food and still lose weight.

So the next time you fear weight gain is on the horizon or are feeling it under your belt and getting overwhelmed with the idea of losing weight, start by maintaining those new practices. They will help people with healthy weights maintain their weight, and for those who are overweight, they may add some healthy habits that will at least mean no further weight gain and may lead to ultimate weight loss, too.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.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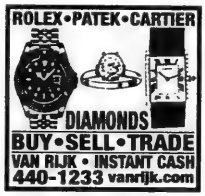

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

To send in digital photos, please visit

www.cjnews.com

and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Look who's 11! Mazel tov to Eden Hoffer on her birthday. Love, hugs and kisses from mom, dad, Avery, Zevi and Kugel.

Mazel tov to Lou & Lorraine Bortnick on your 65th anniversary on March 10. Love, Allan, Esther, Daniel, and Julia Bortnick, and Jessica, Sam and Rose Blaichman.

Esther & Murray Stroll, Isaac Gammal and Esther Surchin announce the engagement of Tracy & Allan. Siblings and grandparents Fortunee Gabay and Eddy Stroll are happy.

Happy sixth birthday Matthew! You're a big boy now. With all our love, your parents Paul & Sharron Lungen, brother Geoffrey and grandparents.

Naomi & Jacky Vidal are thrilled to announce the birth of Maya Rose Feb. 13. Grandparents, Happy Iscove and Mel Iscove, Margot & Felix Vidal.

Happy first birthday Jessica (Shifra Aviva) Beasley. All our love, Bubbie, ZaidiePop, Grandma, Papa, Mommy, Daddy, and big sister Rebekah.

Mazel tov on your second birthday my sweet Rose! Love, Bubbie & Zaidie Bortnick, Uncle Daniel & Auntie Julia, and Bubbie Pola.

Amy & Brian Laski are thrilled to announce the arrival of their daughter, Celia Eliana, born Feb. 1.

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What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
• Features • Heebonics
• Breaking News • Contests
• Past Issues and much more!

What's New deadlines: Monday, April 20, is the deadline for the April 30 issue and Monday, April 27, is the deadline for the May 7 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Friday, April 17

SOLEL: YOM HASHOAH

Join Solel Congregation of Mississauga as they commemorate Yom Hashoah with **John Freund** speaking on "Spring's End" during Shabbat services 8 p.m. 905-820-5915

Saturday, April 18

PARSHAH DISCUSSION

Morley Goldberg will discuss the weekly portion, Shemini, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

SHABBAT IN 60 MINUTES

Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich and **Cantor Eric Moses** lead an interactive Shabbat service. Learn to follow the Shabbat morning service and gain insight into the weekly Torah portion. Family lunch follows, adults $10, children free. 10:30 a.m. at Beth Shalom Synagogue. Reserve in advance for lunch, andrea@bethsholom.net or 416-783-6103.

Sunday, April 19

HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism presents an introduction to Humanistic Judaism, "What We Believe: How We Celebrate." 10:15 a.m. at St. Andrew's Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. RSVP, **Roby**, 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

ENGLISH TEA IN BARRIE

Am Shalom Congregation in Barrie hosts an authentic English high tea fundraising event for the entire family. 2 p.m. $10. Tickets, 705-792-3949, Tuesday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

THE CASE FOR ISRAEL

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents a new feature film by **Alan Dershowitz**, The Case For Israel: Democracy's Outpost, a defence of Israel's right to exist in the court of public opinion. 8 p.m. Free. 416-789-3213 or www.shomayim.org

Monday, April 20

MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE

Getting older brings with it new challenges. Join **Beverly Adler**, social worker, and **Barbara Burnett**, of Seniors For Seniors, for information on services that can enable individuals to function independently at home and in the community. 1:30-3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374 or lkamenitz@baycrest.org

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

The Toronto Jewish Community's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony: Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah ceremony will pay tribute to the child survivors of the Holocaust. Israeli Consul General **Amir Gissin**, will bestow the distinction of Righteous Among the Nations, given by Yad Vashem on behalf of the State of Israel, posthumously to **Catharina Develing** for saving the life of **John Sanders** who now lives in Toronto. Develing's daughter, also a Torontonian, will accept on behalf of her mother. 7 p.m. at Earl Bales Park.

Join **Temple Har Zion** and **Beit Rayim Synagogue** for a service observing Yom HaShoah. 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion.

CHUG HATANACH

Dr. David Novak will lead a study group in a discussion of The Book of Nehemiah, chapter 10. 8 p.m. at Beth David Congregation.

Tuesday, April 21

LUNCH AND LEARN

Ellen Roseman discusses "Tips for Tracking, Saving and Investing Your Money." Lunch 12:15 p.m. Learn 12:45 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. By reservation only, 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Continued on page 25

Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah
יום השואה והגבורה
Multi-Generational Public Reading of
Megillat Hashoah
The Shoah Scroll
A Community Commemorative Service at
Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue
Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 7:30 pm
FEATURING CANTORS
• Aaron Bensoussan
• Ben Silverberg
• Marshall Loomer
Copies of Megillat Hashoah will be available during the programme and for sale following.
Photo credit: David Shankbone, Yad Vashem Hall of Names
Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue
55 Yeomans Road, Toronto, Ontario M3H 3J7
416-633-5500

On the occasion of
Yiskor
it is tradition to make a charitable donation in memory of a loved one or friend.
As Yiskor is observed during Passover, it is a time to remember.
Remembering your loved ones and those who fell defending Israel over the past sixty years
Jewish National Fund is on the ground with action, not words. The proceeds from this year's Yiskor Campaign will be allocated to assist the children of the besieged city of Sderot in Israel to find a period of relaxation at JNF summer and winter camps in Israel.
Please complete and return the Yiskor form enclosed in this issue
JNF

What's New

Continued from page 24

TREASURES OF LITERATURE

Treasure of Jewish Literature Book series presents **Marilyn Herbert** reviewing Ministry of Special Cases by **Nathan Englander**. Refreshments 1 p.m. Program 1:30-3 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. $15. 416-636-1880, ext. 235

LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Barbara Frum Library offers "Tea and Books." Enjoy a cup of tea and hear staff talk about their favourite books, today, May 19 and June 16 at 2 p.m. 416-395-5440

NAZIS & PROFESSIONALS

In commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, the Law Society of Upper Canada and the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada host a panel discussion examining how professionals in the fields of law, medicine, the arts, and education were suborned to participate in the Nazi era agenda of injustice, persecution and genocide, leaving the principles of their professions behind. 4-6 p.m. followed by a reception. 130 Queen St. W. To register, 416-947-3413 or rticzon@lsuc.on.ca.

YOM HASHOAH PROGRAMS

Beth Tikvah Synagogue commemorates Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah, highlighting Jewish resistance, with partisan, **Faye Schulman**, who will share her story of strength, resistance and courage. Featuring a film on Faye's life and special music with **Cantor Tibor Kovari**. 7:30 p.m. 416-221-3433

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism observes Yom Hashoah V'Hagevurah: Holocaust Remembrance with a program and music by **Barbara Ackerman** and **Jason Baines**. 8 p.m. 18 Wynford Dr. RSVP, **Roby**, 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Wednesday, April 22

JEWISH JOKERS GROUP

The Jewish Jokers, Humour and Trivia Group meet at 7 p.m. at the Antibes community centre. $3. Call **Irv Helpert** for info, 416-661-2541.

SEX, VIOLENCE, PASSION

Beth Tzedec Library presents **Selma Sage** on "Sex, Violence, Passion: New Insights into the Bible, Sinners or Saints." 7:30 p.m. 416-781-3514, ext. 225

JUDAISM AND FOOD

"Eating Jewishly, Eating Ethically: Exploring Judaism and Food in the 21st Century," six classes examining spiritual, ethical, communal, ecological, animal and physical aspects of the relationship between Judaism and food culture with **Rabbi Aaron Levy**. Tonight-May 27, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the First Narayever Congregation. Preregistration required. $60, non members $75. 416-927-0546 or admin@narayever.ca.

Other News

HEROES AND HEART

Temple Har Zion's daytime programming committee presents **Janet Matthew**, co-author of Chicken Soup for the Canadian Soul, on "Heroes and Heart." Thursday, April 23, 1 p.m. Non members $5.

EMUNAH ROSH CHODESH

Emunah Women's next Rosh Chodesh Lunch 'n Learn Program takes place on Thursday, April 23, 12:30 p.m. at 4300 Bathurst St. with **Rebbetzin Sarah Stern** discussing "Shir Hashirim: An Overview." Lecture and light lunch, $10, non- members $15. Reservations required, 416-636-0036.

TEMPLE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Temple Sinai Nursery School, hosts its annual boutique night with products and services not readily available in stores including women's and children's clothing and accessories, party favours, jewellery, original artwork, beauty and wellness, kitchen wares, photography professionals, and more. Thursday, April 23, 4 p.m.-9 p.m. Free. 416-487-3281

JEWISH ANIMATED FILMS

The Barbara Frum Library hosts "A Showcase of Jewish Animated Films," eight short films on Jewish themes followed by a discussion. One of the animated films will be chosen as the subject of a mosaic mural to be installed on Bathurst Street at Lawrence Avenue, Thursday, April 23, 6:30 p.m. 416-698-7995 or www.muralroutes.com.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The Beth Sholom Music Series hosts an evening featuring members of the Beth Sholom professional choir performing "Up Close and Personal." Thursday, April 23, 8 p.m. Tickets, $18, 416-783-6103.

PHILOSOPHY CLASSES

Mekorot offers two mini-courses: **Prof. Paul Franks**, of the University of Toronto, explores "Responses to Modernity: The Philosophies of **Breuer** and **Rosenzweig**," two of the most important Jewish thinkers of the 20th century. Mondays, April 27 to May 11, 9:30-11 a.m. and **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, of Jews For Judaism, explores "Understanding Suffering," why bad things happen to good people, a perplexing and painful question for believing individuals. Explore passages from the Bible, Talmud, Maimonides, the Piaczener Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph Y. Soloveitchik. Thursdays, April 30-May 21, 9:45-11:00 a.m. Both at Ulpanat Orot School, 45 Canyon Ave. Register, 416-877-2050 or ww.mekorot.ca

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Darchei Noam Hebrew School holds an open house offering an opportunity to meet other Hebrew school parents and hear a short presentation from the director of youth education after kiddush and Shabbat services, April 25, about 1 p.m. in the teen lounge. Shabbat service begin at 10 a.m. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.on.ca

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215 for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell The Kids, a workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs. Tuesday, April 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at The Promenade Mall, suite #313.

Widow/Widower 65+ Bereavement. Six session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 1- 2:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Today's Woman. A 6-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Maj jong players wanted. Casino Rama, Wednesday, April 22; Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, April 30. Other programs, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC. Screen the film Lerner and Loewe: Broadway's Last Romantics followed by coffee and discussion. Thursday, April 23, 2 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Chai Society Group at Beth Sholom Synagogue hosts a Lunch and a Movie followed by a discussion with **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich**. Wednesday, April 29, noon. $8. Reserve, 416-783-6103.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Lecture, "Thou Shalt Not Murder? Contemporary Jewish Crime Writing" with **Cheryl Freedman**. Tuesday, April 14, 1-11:30 a.m. $3/class, non members $6/class.

"Life Lessons in Parsha," Mondays 11:30-12:30 p.m. $3/class, non members $6/class.

Creative Writing classes with **Sylvia Warsh**, Fridays, April 17-June 19, 10 a.m. to noon. $54, non members $108.

Mix and Mingle, Wednesday, April 22, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

"Trips and Travel." Join a trip to Spain from June 1-14, $3200, non members $3300. Call, ext. 123

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Register for Hebrew classes, April 20-June 11: Modern Hebrew for Beginners Level A/Aleph, Modern Hebrew for Beginners Level B, Modern Hebrew: Intermediate Level, Modern Hebrew Conversation, So, What's New? Reading Israeli Newspapers, Hebrew Prepositions Workshop, Biblical and Siddur Hebrew. Information, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

Toronto Jewish Film Festival, April 18-26, over 90 films from 23 countries in 10 days. Screenings at the Bloor Cinema, the Sheppard Grande and The Al Green Theatre. Tickets, evenings $12, day $7, senior/student discounts available. 416-967-1528 or www.tjff.com.

Never/Again: Photos of Terezin and Rwanda by **Jeremy Mimnagh** and **Shannon Scully** closing reception April 23, 7:30 p.m. in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Art Space. visualart@mnjcc.org

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. centrecamp@bjcc.ca or ext. 378.

The Jewish Discovery Museum offers "Raising A Mindful Child," a workshop to the techniques that use stories rather than discipline to teach your child important life lessons. April 17-May 8. Info, **Sarah Brodbar-Nemzer**, ext. 390.

Join "Shabbat in the Atrium" every Friday at 11:30 a.m. for songs, stories, challah, a 15 minute celebration of Shabbat for all ages. Free.

"New Jewish Feminism," Kolel's 6-week course with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**. Begins Thursday, April 23, 9:30-11 a.m. at the BJCC. 416-636-1880 ext. 235 to register.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Maria Radulescu	Mar 28/09	4207 Sunflower Dr.
Myrna Silverman	Mar 28/09	208 Acton Avenue
Rose Pascal	Mar 28/09	Baycrest Apotex
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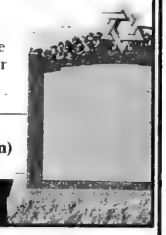

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Coast to Coast

Ottawa hosts Canadian Jewish studies event

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

This year's Association for Canadian Jewish Studies (ACJS) annual conference will be held for the first time in Ottawa from May 24 to 26.

The 33rd annual event, held in conjunction with the Congress for Humanities and Social Sciences, will kick off with a community day that is open to the public at no charge, to be held at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre on May 24.

In addition to morning and afternoon sessions, an exhibit of Jewish Canadiana will be on display, in line with the day's theme, Snapshots of the Jewish Canadian Experience.

Gerald Stone, who recently retired from Library and Archives Canada and who provided exhibit items from his personal collection, will lecture on some of the earliest printed sources on Jewish Canadian life, dating back to the 1750s.

"The goal of the community day is to allow the local community – not just the Jewish community – to hear scholarly lectures on Jewish Canadian studies that they wouldn't have the opportunity to hear unless they were taking a university course," said conference program chair Rebecca Margolis, an assistant professor in the University of Ottawa's Jewish Canadian Studies program.

According to a preliminary schedule, Margolis will be among the presenters on the Sunday, speaking about *Les Belles-soeurs* and *Di shvegerins*: Translating Québécois into Yiddish for the Montreal Stage. The play was performed in Yiddish in 1992 in Montreal and, briefly, in Toronto. Speaking with Margolis at the session on Ethnicity and Intercultural Encounters will be Goldie Morgentaler of the University of Lethbridge, who will discuss "Teaching Modern Jewish Literature in the Canadian Bible Belt."

A session on Holocaust and the Canadian Experience will feature Richard Menkis of the University of British Columbia and Harold Troper of the University of Toronto speaking on Tensions in the Canadian Movement to Boycott the 1938 Olympics.

Panels over the subsequent two days at Carleton University will include a session on Jewish cookbooks. Robin Bergart of the University of Guelph's McLaughlin Library, one of two speakers at the cookbook session, will discuss "What's a Christmas Cake Doing in the First Canadian Jewish Cookbook?"

As well, Leo Davids of York University will speak on Jewish Ethnicity in Canada; Monda Halpern of the University of Western Ontario will discuss Scandal and Silence: the Edelson/Horwitz Murder Case; and Hernan Tesler-Mabe of the University of Ottawa will talk about An Appreciation of Gustav Mahler and Jewish-Canadian Identity.

Rebecca Margolis

"One of the nice things about this conference is that we get a lot of really new research," said Margolis. "I'm really pleased with the diversity of the papers and the scholars. There are graduate students, independent researchers and established professors."

A Sunday evening kosher banquet, at $20 a ticket, will honour Ottawa poet Seymour Mayne, who will receive the association's Louis Rosenberg Canadian Jewish Studies Distinguished Service Award.

The University of Ottawa professor is director of and "essentially created" the university's Vered Canadian Jewish Studies program by rallying for it for three decades, said Margolis, who was hired in 2006, the year the program, one of only three of its kind in Canada, was created.

Seymour Mayne

Margolis said Mayne is "extremely committed to created an environment that fosters learning and creativity."

Local singer/songwriter Shelley Posen will perform at the banquet. His Jewish-themed songs are "really fun," Margolis said.

Margolis, who is originally from Montreal, would encourage Montrealers and Torontonians to consider attending the conference.

"People assume that Ottawa is sort of its own entity, the capital of Canada," she said. "It's in the middle of everything. It would be nice to have more connections with Jewish communities that are within driving distance."

Correction

In the article "Mock to head Canadian Friends of Haifa U" (CJN, April 8), the wrong website was cited. The address for the Canadian Friends of Haifa University website is www.haifa-univ.ca. The CJN regrets the error.

BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION:

Six girls and one boy celebrated their bar and bat mitzvahs on the NCSY Scholars Seminar over March Break, including, holding siddurim from left, Bette Feiner, Savanna Flicht, Tani Smirin and Miki Olchovski. Diana Rapoport, Jade Hoadley and Eric Pavlishyn (not shown) also celebrated their bat and bar mitzvahs. Pictured with the teens is NCSY staff member Stella Vit, centre.

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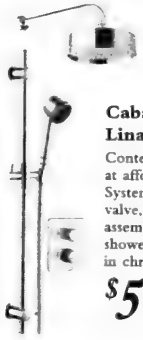

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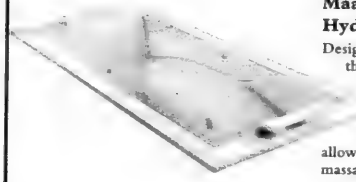

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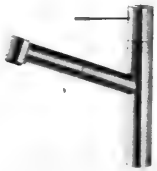

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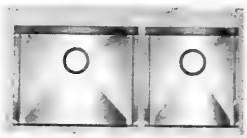

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UNESCO lists Yiddish program on language preservation registry

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Yiddish Women's Reading Circle recently received recognition from a UN agency.

The program, which features monthly readings in Yiddish of works by female authors, has been listed on the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization) register of good practices in language preservation.

"It's taken a few years to get listed," says Jeanette Block, one of the reading circle's founders. "Ours is one of just eight groups and the only Yiddish group listed on the registry so far. The registry is getting one million hits a month."

Jeanette Block

UNESCO's Endangered Languages Program launched its register of good practices in language preservation in 2005 as part of its effort to safeguard languages in danger of extinction. "Each of the world's roughly 6,000 languages reflects a unique worldview and culture complex, thus representing an integral part of living human heritage," a UNESCO report says. Yet, experts estimate that today, over 50 per cent of all languages are in danger of extinction. In accordance with UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, it is therefore the endangered language program's mission to aid in the preservation of linguistic diversity and to provide assistance to global efforts to safeguard languages.

According to a UN Communication and Information Resources document: "The register provides a knowledge supply and demand base where experience in language protection projects can be accumulated and made publicly available in order to give future preservation projects a head start.

"The rationale behind the... register of good practices in language preservation is simple: a collection of positive experience reports from past and current project agents shall provide a rich source of problem-solving approaches, hands-on solutions, practical information, adaptable models, and dos and don'ts of language preservation, to be easily accessed as a self-help tool for others trying to preserve their languages."

Block notes that Yiddish women's reading circles have a long tradition in Winnipeg. The latest version was started in 2001 at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre following the closing of the 80-year-old Jewish Public Library. (A sizeable number of the library's Yiddish books were transferred to the Gwen Secter.)

Block reports that attendance over the years has consistently been around 15 to 20. While most of the circle's participants are women, a few men have also dropped in from time to time. This past year, the ladies read the works of Dora Shulner, Shira Gorshman and former Jewish Forwards writer Adella Kean Kamenkin, who, in 1930, published two books of her advice columns for Jewish women newly arrived in America.

While Block notes that there are other Yiddish reading circles in the United States and Canada, what sets the Winnipeg group apart is that it meets in a permanent location. She also believes that an anthology the group published two years ago was an important factor in its being listed by UNESCO.

The book, Arguing with the Storm, is a compilation of short stories written in Yiddish by female authors and translated into English by several ladies in the group. Block's daughter, Rhea Tregebov, a creative writing teacher at the University of British Columbia, served as the anthology's editor.

It was Tregebov who first came across the UNESCO registry and looked into what was involved in qualifying for it. "I received an e-mail about the registry a year before we published the anthology and sent an e-mail to the contact person in Paris," Tregebov says. "I was a little hesitant at first. I wasn't sure that Yiddish would fit the definition. (The other languages currently on the list are Aboriginal languages.) But we received an enthusiastic response."

Block and Tregebov co-wrote the proposal. They pointed out that the reading group costs very little to operate, that it receives support from the Gwen Secter staff and that the program is held in the afternoons to accommodate seniors who may tire early in the evenings.

"There was a lot of back and forth," Tregebov says, "but we are thrilled to be included on the list."

WHITBY MAYOR VISITS FSWC: Whitby Mayor Pat Perkins, fourth from left, and other representatives from the Town of Whitby recently met with the leadership of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) in Toronto. The visit included a tour of the FSWC's Resource and Leadership Training Centre. Sheldon Adelson, far left, a volunteer member of the FSWC's community liaison program, coordinated the visit, part of ongoing efforts to help communities gain insight into the extent of anti-Semitism and intolerance in Canadian society. With Adelson and Perkins are, from left, Whitby Councillor Lorne Coe, Durham Regional Police constable Keith Richards, Durham Regional Police superintendent Jim Douglass, FSWC CEO Avi Benlolo, Josh Hacker and Melissa Mikel.

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Research levels said comparable to Canada

Continued from page 3

"It's a mystery. I don't know. There are all kinds of mysteries. Politicians are short-sighted. Education is a long-term enterprise."

Despite his sombre warning, Ciechanover acknowledged that the state of scientific research in Israel at present compares favourably to that of Canada, Europe and the United States, and is far more advanced than in the Arab world.

"They're not players in the game," he said of the Arab scientific establishment. "They (Arab nations) don't invest in science and technology. I don't have Egyptian or Saudi peers."

Turning to another topic, Ciechanover lashed out at international attempts to boycott Israeli academics and universities.

"It shows a basic misunderstanding of academic life," he said. "By boycotting us, you're stopping a transfer of information. What does it achieve?

"Academic life is based on freedom. We're talking about science, not politics. The only way to settle any problem is by talking, not by boycotting. Politics should be kept out of academia."

He himself keeps resolutely away from politics. "You don't want to touch it, even with a 10-foot stick."

Ciechanover charged that organizers of anti-Israel boycotts are anti-Semitic, pure and simple.

"First they blame Jews, and now they have Israel to blame. This is hidden anti-Semitism, a new form of anti-Semitism. These people are anti-Semites. They are motivated by anti-Semitism.

He claimed that Canadians are among the leading proponents of boycotting Israeli scholars and universities.

Ciechanover, who was due to fly to Germany to give a lecture following his trip to Toronto, said he feels uncomfortable in that country.

"I will never forgive or forget," he said, referring to Germany's central role in the Holocaust.

Ciechanover, whose Polish-born parents settled in Palestine in the 1920s, explained he agreed to go to Germany in the interest of fostering scientific cooperation and peace.

"I'm there to promote international collaboration. That's the way to prevent the next disaster and future holocausts."

Asked how the Nobel Prize has personally affected him, Ciechanover replied that it has humbled him profoundly. "I'm humbled by the complexity of nature and by the fragility of life," said Ciechanover, who keeps his Nobel Prize in a bank vault. "I'm humbled by other people's talents."

He has been extremely busy travelling since winning the prize. "It's an overwhelming experience. You get opportunities to see the world and Jewish communities in places like Ecuador and Paraguay."

He also sleeps much less, three hours rather than his usual six hours per night.

In a self-deprecatory observation, he mused, "Nothing has changed. You're the same old fool."

When not travelling, lecturing or teaching, he continues his research. In awarding the Nobel Prize to Ciechanover and his two colleagues, the Nobel committee cited their discovery of "ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation," one of the cell's most important cyclical processes. Thanks to their research, it is now possible to understand, at a molecular level, how a cell controls a number of central processes in the body.

"It's an ever expanding field," he said. "The more we know, the more we're aware of what we don't know. It's really a growing field."

Ciechanover, who was born in 1947, considers himself a patriotic Israeli.

"I grew up with the country. I went to military service, like everyone else. I participated in two wars, in the Six Day War as an orderly and in the Yom Kippur War as a physician."

He is pleased to learn that the Technion, the University of Toronto and Mount Sinai Hospital have agreed to a student exchange.

George Fantus, the associate dean of research at the University of Toronto's faculty of medicine, disclosed that the program is expected to start in the summer of 2010.

Cotler tables two petitions in Parliament

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Irwin Cotler, the Liberal Opposition's special counsel on Human Rights and International Justice, tabled a historic petition to Parliament calling on the government to do more on behalf of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

At a press briefing last week, Cotler said it was the first time such a petition has been filed in Parliament.

The petition coincided with the 1,000th day of captivity of Schalit, who was abducted by Hamas terrorists on June 25, 2006, in a cross-border raid from Gaza into Israel territory.

Speaking in Parliament last week, Cotler said Schalit, who is believed to be still alive, "is being held in complete isolation."

Irwin Cotler

"The petitioners note that he has been denied any kinds of rights afforded to him under humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention to which Canada is a state party and which rights Canadians have a commitment to respect."

The petition calls on the Canadian government to insist that bodies such as the Red Cross, the United Nations and other agencies be granted access to Schalit – including family members – as a bare minimum, in addition to being provided firm proof that he is alive.

The government should also insist on Shalit's repatriation to Israel as a "matter of fundamental decency and justice."

"No one even knows where he is being held," Cotler told reporters.

Cotler considered it tantamount to a "standing war crime" that Schalit continued to be held captive.

Cotler also tabled another petition in Parliament on behalf of his Mount Royal constituents and other Quebecers that voiced alarm over an escalating level of state-backed anti-Semitism in Venezuela.

The petition, Cotler told media, was not unrelated to the declaration that emerged from the recent international conference on anti-Semitism in London.

Cotler said Venezuela has seen a "delegitimization from the president [Hugo Chavez] on down of the Jewish people and Israel."

Cotler told Parliament that the events in Venezuela have included "attacks on Jewish persons, property and religious institutions, such as the firebombing of a synagogue in Caracas.

He said members of the Venezuelan Jewish community "fear for their safety and their denial of religious freedom."

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Health on the front burner at Kosherfest

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Kosherfest, the world's largest international kosher food show, was truly a kosher feast! The 2008 Kosherfest took place in Secaucus, N.J., with more than 350 exhibitors.

The kosher market is estimated to be a $14-billion industry and is growing at a phenomenal rate. A recent study by Mintel International showed that 77 per cent of consumers preferred kosher because of the quality, whereas only 16 per cent chose kosher because of religious beliefs. The average kosher consumer is under 40 years of age.

In 2008, there were more than 5,400 new kosher products – more than 13 times the number of products in 2003. There are now some 110,000 items with kosher certification, making it easier for consumers today to find kosher products anywhere in the world. Even the larger chain stores such as Costco are expanding their kosher departments. Seven major hotel chains in the United States have or are installing kosher kitchens.

There was a strong emphasis on health at last year's show, with more kosher health products on display than ever before. There was an excellent selection of natural, organic, gluten-free, sugar-free and lactose-free products. Gourmet, Passover, Asian and Israeli products were also strongly represented. Soy nut butter was offered as a peanut butter alternative, and many desserts were advertised as trans fat free. Gourmet frozen sushi that can go from the freezer to the table in minutes was a big hit. Many kosher wines and beverages were also prominently featured.

Kosherfest was international in flavour, bringing together kosher food manufacturers, caterers and distributors from more than 28 countries. Attendees hailed from Turkey, South Africa, Italy, Panama, Israel, Los Angeles, Chicago, New Jersey, Toronto and Montreal.

I met up with Kevin Hopps of Toronto, the previous manager of Sobeys in Thornhill, who was recently appointed the new CEO of Strubs Food Corp., famous for its pickles. Hopps is considered a leading authority on retailing in the kosher market and has worked in this market since he was 16 years old. He received the National Business Leadership Award 2008 from NCSY. In his new position, Hopps remains committed to "provide the best shopping experience for the kosher consumer" and believes that the kosher market will continue to go mainstream and vice versa. For more information about Strubs products, visit www.strubpickles.com.

Here were some of my favourite food finds at the show, both Canadian and international.

Bagel O's are yummy prefilled bite-size bagels which come in whole wheat and regular, filled with plain or flavoured cream cheeses. They go from the freezer to the toaster/oven in minutes, have zero trans fat, no added preservatives and are produced in a nut-free facility. They're distributed by Tastefully Yours Bakers of Toronto. For information contact 1-888-259-6069.

Stacey Kurtz of Toronto, marketing director of Fruit of the Land Products, won the 2008 Fine New Food from Israel Award with Beit Yitzhak's Pomegranate Spread. This luscious line of organic fruit spreads contains no added sugar, additives, preservatives or food colouring. For more information, contact www.fruitoftheland.com or 1-877-311-JAMS.

Zoglo's offered scrumptious samples of its delicious vegetarian products and consumers gobbled them up! The extensive line of healthy vegetarian products includes soy and tofu burgers, vegetable patties, and meatless burgers and wieners. Its Baker's Choice line of stuffed pastries includes mushroom, potato and spinach fillings. Zoglo's also produces hors d'oeuvres, crepes, falafel and assorted snacks for both consumers and foodservice. For more information, visit www.zoglos.com.

Bella Baby Foods, a new line of kosher organic frozen baby foods, won for Best New Organic Product. They are frozen in convenient 1.5-ounce packets so that moms can choose exactly how much food and what food combinations are right for their baby. The baby foods contain no artificial flavours, no added sugar or salt and are wheat- and soy free. They hope to have their products available in Canada soon. Visit www.naturallynora.com for more information.

Katz's Gluten Free Bake Shop (http://katzglutenfree.com) was named a new product winner in the best baked goods category for its delicious gluten-free challah dinner rolls. Owner Fradel Katz first developed gluten-free recipes for her family and later expanded into a full-fledged business with a variety of gluten-free breads, rugelach, muffins and other kosher baked goods. They are beginning to distribute their products in Canada. For more information, visit www.katzglutenfree or call 845-782-5307.

Levana Kirschenbaum, cookbook author and cooking teacher, introduced her new line of scrumptious baked goods which included whole grain spelt cakes, cookies, muffins and quick breads. Her products are pareve, low in gluten, high in protein and use natural ingredients. Her new product line was met with rave reviews. Her products are not available in Canada yet, but you can order by calling 718-927-4603 or visiting her website at http://www.levanadesserts.com/order.html.

I discovered a wonderful product, Kolatin Real Kosher Gelatin, which is produced by Glatech. This high quality gelatin is identical to non-kosher gelatin, without the rubbery texture associated with other kosher gelatins. Kolatin is pareve and kosher for Passover. It is currently available for manufacturers and will soon be available for consumers. For information, visit www.koshergelatin.com or phone 732-364-8700.

Attendees were thrilled to learn that you don't have to go to Israel to obtain professional training in a kosher cooking school. The Center for Kosher Culinary Arts in Brooklyn offers both professional and recreational cooking classes and has just added Techniques for Healthy Cooking to the curriculum. Visit the website at www.kosherculinaryarts.com or call 718-758-1339.

Naturally Norah offers a line of delicious all-natural cake and frosting mixes with no artificial flavours, colours, preservatives or hydrogenated oils. They are dairy-free, nut-free and gluten-free. The unique packaging protects against freezer odour and freezer burn. Central Epicure Food Products will be distributing this line in Canada. For information, contact Michael Nadler at 416-745-4323.

Norene Gilletz is a cookbook author, cooking teacher and food consultant. For information, call 416-226-2466 or visit her website at www.gourmania.com.

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Mapping the possible Netanyahu-Obama fault lines

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

Analysis

There are no fissures yet between the young Obama and Netanyahu administrations, but political geologists are mapping the fault lines.

So far, two major potentials for quakes have emerged, both having to do with timing: one concerns the pace of negotiating Palestinian statehood; the other has to do with projections about when Iran's alleged nuclear program becomes irrevocably dangerous.

The potential for differences about talks with the Palestinians emerged last week when Avigdor Lieberman, the nativist who ran to Benjamin Netanyahu's right during the election, gave his maiden speech as foreign minister.

"There is one document that binds us and it is not the Annapolis Conference," Lieberman said on April 1, a day after the new government was sworn in, referring to the process launched in late 2007 by the Bush administration. "That has no validity."

Instead, he said, Israel was bound by the "road map" peace plan, the outline for a two-state solution launched by former U.S. president George W. Bush in 2003. "It is a binding resolution, and it binds this government as well," he said, referring to the UN Security Council resolution that sanctified the "road map."

Israeli officials and pro-Israel officials in Washington strove last week to emphasize Lieberman's embrace of the "road map" as the first concrete sign that the Netanyahu government was committed to a two-state solution. Netanyahu's refusal before assuming power to make it a pillar of his foreign policy – a refusal that drove the moderate Kadima party away from the coalition – had stirred White House anxiety.

In fact, however, Lieberman's explicit – even derisive – rejection of the Annapolis process signalled a possible major strategic difference between the United States and Israel.

The "road map" had emphasized sequencing, a major concession to Israeli demands that the Palestinian Authority shows it is capable of containing terrorist violence before it achieves statehood. The previous administrations in both countries – Olmert in Israel and Bush in the United States – agreed to leapfrog the sequencing requirement after Hamas forced moderates out of the Gaza Strip in 2006; it was no longer considered reasonable to expect Mahmoud Abbas, the PA president, to be responsible for controlling an area where his forces had no presence.

The result was the Annapolis process, which encouraged the sides to come up with final status solutions as a means of enticing Gaza Palestinians to reject the militancy of their Hamas overlords.

"What Annapolis does is, it takes the 'road map's' phases as the basis for implementation but seeks to define the endgame first," said David Makovsky, a senior analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy think-tank.

Lieberman made it clear that was off the table: Israel was returning to an expectation of a holistic end to violence before it agreed to advance the peace process.

"I will never agree to our waiving all the clauses – I believe there are 48 of them – and going directly to the last clause, negotiations on a permanent settlement," he said. "No. These concessions do not achieve anything. We will adhere to it to the letter, exactly as written. Clauses one, two, three, four – dismantling terrorist organizations, establishing an effective government, making a profound constitutional change in the Palestinian Authority."

The response from the Obama administration was swift and came from its highest reaches – the president himself.

"Let me be clear: the United States strongly supports the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security," Barack Obama said in an address last week to the Turkish parliament. "That is a goal shared by Palestinians, Israelis, and people of goodwill around the world. That is a goal that the parties agreed to in the 'road map' and at Annapolis. That is a goal that I will actively pursue as president of the United States."

Mentioning Annapolis was no coincidence, Makovsky said.

"For the United States, that has worked on this process for the last couple of years, it's an important dimension," he said. "Obama's speech in Turkey was a bid to define where the United States stands."

There were signs that the issue was not about to disappear. Netanyahu issued a statement subsequent to Obama's speech that did not reference the speech and that was emphatically vague.

"Israel appreciates President Obama's commitment to Israel's security and to the pursuit of peace," it said. "The government of Israel is committed to both of these goals and will formulate its policies in the near future so as to work closely with the United States towards achieving these common objectives."

A minister from Netanyahu's Likud Party sounded a more belligerent tone. "Israel does not take orders from Obama," Gilad Erdan, the environmental affairs minister, told the Jerusalem Post after Obama's speech. "In voting for Netanyahu, the citizens of Israel have decided that they will not become the U.S.'s 51st state."

Obama has been careful to emphasize that he will take into account Israeli concerns. During his campaign, he enjoyed reminding reporters that he likes making difficult points to constituencies that may not be happy to hear what he has to say. That was evident last week when he told a roundtable of Turkish university students pressing him on the close U.S.-Israel alliance that he rejected those who would reflexively dismiss Israel's concerns.

"In the Muslim world, this notion that somehow everything is the fault of the Israelis lacks balance – because there's two sides to every question," Obama said. "That doesn't mean that sometimes one side has done something wrong and should not be condemned. But it does mean there's always two sides to an issue. I say the same thing to my Jewish friends, which is, 'You have to see the perspective of the Palestinians.'"

It's not clear yet how mainstream pro-Israel groups and their friends in Congress would line up should a fissure emerge.

One shot across the bow came in the form of a letter from Democratic Congressman Eliot Engel, published in the Washington Post.

"For a two-state solution to become a reality, Palestinians in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip must recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state," Engel said. "They must also renounce terrorism and understand that they cannot use terrorism as a negotiating tool to achieve their state. The Palestinians must also agree to abide by all previous agreements signed by their leadership."

He concluded with an allusion to pressures on Israel to come up with a final status document. "Peace will come to that region of the world when both sides recognize each other's right to exist in peace and security. It will not come from pressuring Israel to make unilateral concessions in return for worthless promises or worthless pieces of paper," he said.

Dovish pro-Israel groups, including J Street and the Israel Policy Forum, are already lining up behind the White House.

The two leaders met last year in Jerusalem. [Israel photo]

The Israel Policy Forum sent a letter to Hillary Rodham Clinton, the secretary of state, and Daniel Shapiro, the chief Israel-Palestinian officer at the National Security Council, asking them to urge Netanyahu to abjure settlement expansion and the Palestinians to prevent violence and stop incitement. The letter comes amid reports that Netanyahu struck a secret deal with Lieberman to build a settlement in "E1," a plot of land that bridges Jerusalem and the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement – and that Palestinians say will strangle a north-south corridor that is critical to a viable state.

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Israel Briefs

Olmert hearing postponed

Israel's Supreme Court granted Ehud Olmert's request to postpone a hearing in one of the cases against him in order to seek cancer treatment abroad. Justice Miriam Naor ruled that the hearing cannot be held before May 10. Olmert had been scheduled to appear before Attorney General Menachem Mazuz on April 19 in the Rishon Tours affair. Mazuz has warned the former prime minister's attorneys that he plans to indict Olmert in the case. Mazuz had rejected a request to postpone the hearing, despite a letter saying Olmert's cancer required immediate treatment. Olmert's attorneys petitioned the court earlier in the week to postpone the hearing and also requested that Mazuz organize a joint hearing on all three of the affairs in which the attorney general has indicated he will serve an indictment. Olmert was scheduled to fly to the United States on April 13 for treatment of his prostate cancer, which was diagnosed more than a year ago.

Leonard Cohen in Israel

Leonard Cohen will arrive in Israel in September, as part of his European tour. According to the singer's official forum, Cohen, who will turn 75 later this year, is expected to perform in Israel on Sept. 24. An attorney for Marcel Abraham, who will produce the concert, confirmed that the Israeli concert will indeed take place and said that he has received an e-mail finalizing Cohen's arrival. The likely venue for the concert is Ramat Gan stadium.

Kotel stones

A new conservation project to preserve the stones in the Western Wall has been instituted by the Israel Antiquities Authority. Israeli architects surveyed the holy site last year after some pieces of stone fell, and found that many of them were deteriorating. Over the next three months, each stone will be individually inspected and new mortar put in as needed. The project to conserve the stones in the Western Wall, and the conservation and development of the Western Wall compound, is one of the most complex projects of its kind ever undertaken in Israel, according to the antiquities authority. "The Western Wall and the monuments around it are among the most important cultural heritage sites in the world. Every year millions of people come to Jerusalem to see them. In order to ensure a safe and comfortable experience, the site should be constantly maintained and new services developed for the benefit of the visitors," an Antiquities news release stated.

Hezbollah active in Cairo

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah admitted that his agents in Cairo were helping Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Nasrallah confirmed that a member of a cell of 49 men with links to Hezbollah was providing logistical help to Hamas, according to reports. Sami Shihab, a Lebanese citizen, was arrested in Cairo. Members of Egypt's parliament are demanding that Nasrallah be placed on trial for allegedly dispatching his agents. The Hezbollah agents operating in Egypt were plotting to attack Israeli tourists at resorts in the Sinai Peninsula, Egyptian and Israeli officials said Sunday. Nine of the agents were charged by Egypt with spying for Hezbollah, according to reports.

Ha'aretz investigation

IDF reservists have asked Israel's attorney general to investigate a major newspaper for publishing testimonies by soldiers alleging human rights violations. More than 46 reservists who served in Israel's recent military operation in Gaza sent a letter to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz asking him to launch a criminal investigation against Ha'aretz for publishing the claims of at least two soldiers without checking to make sure they were real.The soldiers said later that they did not actually witness the incidents. An IDF investigation determined that the events described never happened.

- JTA and Ha'aretz

Activists planning to counter-protest

Continued from page 1

Yet the Israeli-Palestinian conflict won't be the only provocative subject: the forum may become a flashpoint for newer tensions between Islam and the West. With some European states still threatening a boycott, the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference will likely accuse the West of Islamaphobia and press to restrict criticism of Islam – and perhaps overwhelm all other grievances on the agenda.

"It's part of the Islamic group's strategy: rather than deal with extremist Islam, they take an offensive position and say Islam is the victim of western crimes," says Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based UN Watch. "What else will they talk about – genocide in Darfur?"

The original Durban conference – particularly the NGO forum that preceded it – was a seminal UN event in Jewish pro-Israel activism, echoing the "Zionism is Racism" era from 1975 to 1991.

Though some had warned the Arab-Muslim bloc – backed by developing-world allies – angled to produce an indictment of Israel at Durban, the on-the-ground reality shocked them.

The NGO document, hammered out in a hostile, intimidating environment, painted the Jewish state as the world's greatest perpetrator.

The text was so extreme, then-UN high commissioner for human rights, Mary Robinson, rejected it – a stunning blow for the host agency. Even today, the new commissioner, Navi Pillay, denounces "the virulent anti-Semitic behaviour" at Durban, though only blames some groups "on the sidelines."

What critics overlook is that while conference diplomats also inveighed against Israel, they excised the worst language. Nevertheless, the final text, under the heading, "Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance," lamented "the plight of the Palestinian people."

Hillel Neuer

In the context of an anti-racism proclamation, Israel's defenders say this implies racism – a charge they say has nothing to do with what they view as a political conflict. The Durban document identified no other state, so this remains a sticking point eight years later.

Observers expect Iran, Syria and others to level more charges against Israel in Geneva, but it's unclear whether Europe will allow them to revise the document.

Likewise, the 2005 Danish cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad – which sparked Muslim protests that turned violent – have spurred a "defamation of religions" movement that is seen as an effort to stifle criticism of Islam.

Jewish NGOs will be among those pressing the European Union to focus on topics they deem more legitimate. They'll also be networking with like-minded NGOs.

"While some groups try to bring as much harm and pain as possible to Israel, my job will be to build up a coalition among those who realize their agenda is being hijacked," says Shimon Samuels, director for international relations for the Simon Wiesenthal Center."

To avert some of the rowdiness of Durban, UN diplomats decided to eliminate the NGO forum and hold this session at their secure Geneva campus.

Instead, activists will joust farther away to win hearts and minds.

Presumably drawing TV cameras will be a major anti-Israel demonstration – especially with the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, a highly visible co-sponsor – and a "Warsaw to Gaza" event that links Israelis to Nazis.

Meanwhile, where Durban I was a milestone that launched a campaign against Israel similar to what aimed to dismantle apartheid South Africa – the ongoing "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" movement – Durban II will take the campaign one step further.

One organizer says leading legal minds – including several from apartheid-era South Africa – will huddle to figure out how to make the apartheid charge stick against Israel.

"Apartheid is already defined as a crime against humanity, but there's not a lot of experience in taking it to court," says Ingrid Gassner Jaradat, director of the Bethlehem-based BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. "If you strengthen the legal argument, educate and raise awareness, you also strengthen the efforts to prosecute this as a war crime."

Jewish activists are planning to counter-punch.

On April 20, Swiss Jewish groups will host a Holocaust commemoration that features Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, and others.

The event will be expressly non-political, with pamphlets and posters barred, says Sabine Simkhovitch-Dreyfus, vice-president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities.

However, the organizers also chose a highly symbolic location for the ceremony – in the large square just outside the main entrance to the UN compound.

"It's possible that it will be perceived by certain persons as politicizing the Shoah," says Simkhovitch-Dreyfus. "But this is certainly not our intention. To the contrary, we want to draw the attention of all delegates to a universal message. And we think the Shoah is one of the keys, if not the key universal, anti-racism message."

Moreover, some 40 human-rights groups will sponsor a Geneva Summit for Human Rights, Tolerance and Democracy to showcase Burmese, Cuban, Iranian and Egyptian dissidents; Jewish groups will co-host a Conference Against Racism, Discrimination and Persecution – viewed by some as a virtual "alternative" to the actual Durban conference – and Jewish and Israeli groups will put on an Israel Wants Peace rally – with activist and former Israeli government minister Natan Sharansky, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, and Ethiopian and Bedouin Israelis.

In related developments, senior U.S. officials in Washington and New York are leaning in favour of participating in the conference, diplomatic sources said on Sunday.

The diplomats, who share a close working relationship with the American delegation to the United Nations, informed leading Jewish officials in New York that Washington has increasingly become convinced of the need to dispatch representatives to the conference.

Leading figures in the organized American Jewish community have been lobbying western ambassadors and European diplomats in the UN to dissuade their governments from participating in the Geneva summit.

A senior Jewish activist who took part in some of the discussions with western diplomats told Ha'aretz that he would not be the least surprised if the United States indeed decides to send an official delegation. The official said that while the United States pledged it would not participate, it was not an adamant about its opposition.

Dozens of human rights groups and activists in the United States have petitioned President Barack Obama to rethink his decision to boycott the conference, expected by many countries to be used as a forum for criticizing Israel.

UN officials said a few weeks ago that Muslim-backed references to "defamation of religion" and criticism of Israel have been dropped from a draft being prepared for next month's world racism meeting.

Initial draft resolutions for the Durban II summit branded Israel as an occupying state that carries out racist policies. It now speaks only of concern about the negative stereotyping of religions and doesn't single out Israel for criticism, according to the officials.

With files from Ha'aretz

Iran reportedly has ability to create nuclear fuel

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Saturday that with the opening of a new facility to produce uranium pellets, Iran now controls the entire cycle for producing nuclear fuel.

Ahmadinejad has announced several times in the past that Iran has the knowledge necessary to enrich uranium ore into fuel pellets, but with the opening of the new facility, the Islamic republic says it now has the capability.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Speaking on Iranian state television, Ahmadinejad said the next step for Iran is to achieve proficiency in building nuclear power plants without help from foreign countries.

The United States and some of its allies accuse Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons. Iran has denied the charges, saying its nuclear program is merely geared towards power generation.

The German newsmagazine Der Spiegel published a wide-ranging interview with Ahmadinejad on Saturday, in which the president of the Islamic Republic said U.S. President Barack Obama's overtures to Iran show a "lack of something decisive" and should be followed by action.

"Great things are happening in the United States," Ahmadinejad told Der Spiegel. "I believe that the Americans are in the process of initiating important developments."

Ahmadinejad critical of Obama administration

When it was suggested that the president's moderate tone toward Iran represents a possible turning point in American-Iranian relations, Ahmadinejad expressed cautious reservation.

"I haven't understood Obama's comments quite that way," he told Der Spiegel. "I pay attention to what he says today. But that is precisely where I see a lack of something decisive. What leads you to talk about a new beginning? Have there been any changes in American policy? We welcome changes, but they have yet to occur."

In commenting on Washington's readiness to enter into talks with Tehran over its nuclear program, Ahmadinejad told Der Spiegel that the ball is in the U.S. court.

"We support talks on the basis of fairness and respect," he said. "That has always been our position. We are waiting for Obama to announce his plans, so that we can analyze them.

"Fundamental changes must take place to the benefit of all parties. The American government must finally learn lessons from the past."

Ahmadinejad repeated his attacks against Israel's legitimacy, claiming that the Palestinians bore the brunt of the consequences of World War II and the Holocaust.

"Why did the Germans cause so much trouble back then, allowing these problems to arise in the first place? The Zionist regime is the result of World War II," he said. "What does any of this have to do with the Palestinian people? Or with the Middle East region? I believe that we must get to the root of the problem. If one doesn't consider the causes, there can be no solution."

He said his country is not alone in its opposition to Israel's presence in the Middle East.

"Do you believe that the German people support the Zionist regime? Do you believe that a referendum could be held in Germany on this question? If you did allow such a referendum to take place, you would discover that the German people hate the Zionist regime.

"I do not believe that the European countries would have been as indulgent if only one-hundredth of the crimes that the Zionist regime has committed in Gaza had happened somewhere in Europe. Why on earth do the European governments support this regime?"

In the interview with Der Spiegel, Ahmadinejad again denied suspicions Tehran is working toward building nuclear weapons. Instead, he intimated that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons should be the primary source of concern in the region.

"We have no interest in building a nuclear weapon," Ahmadinejad said. "We have sent the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] thousands of pages of reports and made thousands of hours of inspections possible. The IAEA cameras monitor our activities. Who is dangerous and whom should the inspectors distrust? Those who secretly built the bomb, or us, who are co-operating with the IAEA?"

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SECOND APPLICATION TO HARDSHIP FUND FROM PRIOR INELIGIBLE NAZI VICTIMS NOW PERMITTED FOLLOWING CLAIMS CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERMANY

Jewish victims of Nazism who, upon the date of filing an application to the Hardship Fund of the Claims Conference were found not eligible, will now be given the opportunity to submit a second application. Relevant for the decision of these applications is the current situation of the applicant both as it relates to the applicant's current age and physical condition as well as any new historical evidence that has become available.

Potentially eligible Nazi victims who do not receive a letter from the Claims Conference are asked to contact the Claims Conference in order to commence a second application. Up to now, once a final decision had been made on a case, a second application was not permitted under the German rules based on changed circumstances. This decision affects Nazi victims rejected by the Hardship Fund who are alive as of March 19, 2009. For Nazi victims who were rejected by the Claims Conference and who are alive as of March 19, 2009 but pass away after that date, the Claims Conference is permitted to accept second applications from the spouse, or if the spouse is deceased, the child(ren) of the applicant. Any applications from such a spouse or child(ren) must be received by **December 31, 2010.**

Note: This decision includes eligible Nazi victims who have reached a certain age (65 for men, 60 for women), where the Nazi victim is presumed to have suffered the necessary damage to health required by the Hardship Fund.

In accordance with the German Government rules governing second applications, persons who, in connection with an application for one-time assistance under the Hardship Fund Guidelines, received a payment from the Claims Conference are not entitled to apply.

The Hardship Fund makes one-time payments of €2,556 to eligible applicants. The eligibility criteria for this program are determined by the German government, and applicants must meet those criteria to receive a payment. The full eligibility criteria for the Hardship Fund can be found at www.claimscon.org.

The Hardship Fund, established in 1980, has paid approximately $876 million to 325,000 Jewish victims of Nazism. The Claims Conference has continuously negotiated with Germany for changes to the program's eligibility criteria in order to be able to make payments to additional Nazi victims.

For information contact:
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Tel: 877-279-1188 Fax: 212-679-2126
info@claimscon.org **www.claimscon.org**

Book presents colourful history of Warner Brothers

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to the CJN

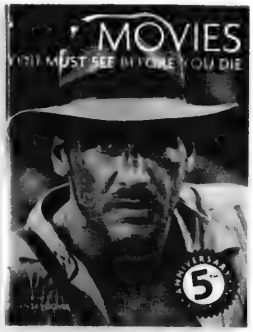
You Must Remember This: The Warner Bros. Story (Running Press) is an engaging, fully illustrated coffee-table book recounting the many cinematic milestones and less-than-memorable B-films churned out by the Warner Brothers Studio, one of the major filmmaking factories of Hollywood's golden era.

One of the most significant films to emerge from the hallowed Warner Brothers Studio was its "supreme triumph" of 1927 – The Jazz Singer, starring an already legendary Al Jolson, who at 42 should have been far too old for the part. Sappily sentimental, The Jazz Singer is primarily remembered today because it was the first talking motion picture or "talkie."

According to co-authors Richard Schickel and George Perry, elements of The Jazz Singer would foretell what the studio would become in its heyday as a Hollywood colossus over the next three decades.

The film's use of an urban, lower-class setting, and its depiction of the struggle between immigrant parents and a son striving to be a fully realized American – a jazz singer instead of a cantor like his father – would be reflected in scores of realistic, socially relevant Warner Brothers pictures in the '30s, '40s and '50s. In that era the studio mass-produced many "tough, violent, wisecracking, and above all socially conscientious movies that were unlike those of any of its competitors," Schickel and Perry write.

Only 70 movie theatres across America were wired for sound when The Jazz Singer made its debut in New York – which none of the four Warner brothers attended: they were obliged to return to California for the funeral of brother Sam, tragically felled by a stroke.



Cover of 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die

A little-known postscript is that the Warners made a 1928 sequel called The Singing Fool. Starring "Jolie" as a singing waiter on his way to stardom. It became the biggest money-maker in Hollywood history until Gone With The Wind in 1939. Critics, however, regarded it as one of the worst major studio films of all time.

You Must Remember This presents a capsule history of the famous brothers – one of whom, Jack Warner, was born in London, Ont., in 1892; the Polish-Jewish family moved to Youngstown, Ohio, two years later. Their father tried a variety of occupations including fur trader (in Canada), cobbler, butcher and grocer. In 1903 the family bought a projector for $150 and began showing films to the public; they opened a nickelodeon in 1907.

Just over a decade later the brothers bought the rights to My Four Years in Germany, a bestselling WWI memoir that they translated it into a money-making docudrama. They purchased their first Hollywood production centre in 1919 and were saved from bankruptcy in the 1920s through the immense popularity of the cinematic canine Rin-Tin-Tin.

The book's main purpose is to highlight the studio's many outstanding films down the years, spotlighting such stars as George Arliss, James Cagney, Bette Davis, Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Blondell, Errol Flynn, Henry Fonda, Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, Leslie Howard, Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, James Dean, Judy Garland and Joan Crawford – to name only a few. The roster of directors includes Michael Curtiz, Busby Berkeley, Walter Huston, Frank Capra and Alfred Hitchcock.

Poster of The Jazz Singer, the milestone 1927 film starring Al Jolson, as it appears in You Must Remember This: The Warner Bros. Story.

Page by page, the book marches relentlessly from a glorious past to an equally glorious but sometimes-dubious present. Warner Brothers classic films – again, naming only a few – include Little Caesar, White Heat, Casablanca, The Maltese Falcon, Treasure of the Sierra Madre, Mildred Pierce, Life With Father, Rope, A Streetcar Named Desire, Rio Bravo, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Bonnie and Clyde, The Wild Bunch, Woodstock, Clockwork Orange, The Exorcist, Harry Potter, The Color Purple, Batman and Sweeney Todd. The tradition of excellence continued even after the demise of the studio system in the '60s.

For the most popular films, the book offers full-colour movie posters and behind-the-scenes set photographs, while many more B-level entries receive honourable mention in the lively and intelligent text. Schickel and Perry compiled the book as an adjunct to a PBS television series, but it stands up well on its own as a worthy celebration of some of the greatest films of all time.

* * *

I've been on a movie kick the last few months, seeking out and watching hard-to-find cinematic classics from decades past. In particular, I've been drawn to the 1930s, the decade in which the cinema reached its maturity with such gems as It Happened One Night, Dinner At Eight, Counsellor-At-Law, The Wedding Night, Nothing Sacred, His Girl Friday, My Man Godfrey, They Made Me A Criminal and The Champ.

Discerning film lovers may feel the need for a good reference guide to help in tracking down worthy titles. Updated annually, Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide offers a succinct TV-Guide-style summation of cast and plot; with more than 16,000 films listed, it makes up in quantity what it may sometimes lack in quality. As a reflection of its worth, this guide is available for customer reference in many independent video-rental stores.

Maltin's entry for The Jazz Singer, for example, is typically brief but loaded with details. It informs us that cast members included William Demarest (the Hollywood warhorse who played Uncle Charlie in TV's My Three Sons) and Myrna Loy as an uncredited chorus girl, and that the 1953 remake by Michael Curtiz is as schmaltzy and sentimental as the original. (The 1980 remake, starring Neil Diamond, carries the dreaded "BOMB" rating in place of the usual one-to-four stars.)

Movie buffs who need more information will appreciate 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die (Barrons), a 960-page, full-colour compendium edited by Steven Jay Schneider. It's a pleasure to leaf through this thick and lavishly illustrated volume, which lists titles chronologically, usually one or two per page, with sidebars detailing cast, director and other talent along with information on Oscar nominations and wins.

As expected, major works by Alfred Hitchcock, Preston Sturges, Vittorio De Sica, Quentin Tarantino, the Coen brothers and other celebrated directors receive the prominent treatment they deserve. Refreshingly un-Hollywood-centric, the book is strong on foreign titles such as The Bicycle Thief (Italy, 1948), The Shop On Main Street (Czech, 1965), Kippur (Israel, 2000) and Gwoemul (Korea, 2006). The recent 5th Anniversary Edition also provides convenient indexes of directors and genres, as well as a checklist by which one may keep track of films watched.

Although one might quibble at the inclusion of some questionable entries (I would have omitted Natural Born Killers, The Usual Suspects, Kill Bill and The Passion of the Christ, for example), 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die not only offers a credible one-volume guide to world cinema but also an unassailable argument for renewing your membership at the local independent video rental shop.

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Kids' films from Australia and Holland explore important themes

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The 12th annual edition of Sprockets, the Toronto International Film Festival for Children, runs from April 18-24. Two of its films will be of particular interest to Jewish viewers.

Hey Hey It's Esther Blueberger is a coming-of-age feature-length movie from Australia about a socially awkward Jewish girl who longs for acceptance.

Directed by Cathy Randall, and co-presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, Hey Hey It's Esther Blueberger focuses on the above-mentioned girl, an outcast in the private school she attends in an unnamed Australian city.

Being different and somewhat eccentric, Esther (Danielle Catanariti), an intelligent and sensitive person, is ostracized by the snotty girls in her class.

That's a problem because she wants to invite them to her forthcoming bat mitzvah. Sensing that they will ignore her invitation, she wonders whether she's "normal."

These thoughts vanish after she meets Sunni (Keisna Castle-Hughes), a cool girl in another school. Sunni likes Esther precisely because she's not a boring conformist. Their friendship is cemented by Sunni's attendance at Esther's bat mitzvah and by Esther's decision to pose as a Swedish exchange student at Sunni's public school.

This likeable but slow-moving film, which features the winsome Toni Collette as Sunni's unemployed single mother, fleshes out two sub-plots. The first revolves around Esther's brother, Jacob, who's having a problem coping with anti-Semitic jokes at his school. The second focuses on Esther's deteriorating relationship with her mother.

In essence, the film celebrates the virtues of individuality and the importantance of being true to yourself.

***

Porajmos, a 16-minute documentary from Holland with English subtitles, turns on a teenaged gypsy who visits Auschwitz and is transformed by it.

Directed by Erik Fusco, it is set in Amsterdam and Auschwitz.

Maira Weiss, a 16-year-old Roma brought up in a trailer park with her siblings, is ambivalent about her heritage.

But after visiting the Roma pavillion in Auschwitz, where tens of thousands gypsies were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust, Maira forms a stronger bond with her often demeaned culture.

The film underscores the fact that ethnicity is a focal point of identification.

***

Hey Hey It's Esther Blueberger will be screened at Canada Square 1 on April 18 at 4:20 p.m., April 20 at 12 p.m. and April 21 at 9:45 a.m. At the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, it will be shown on April 19 at 3:15 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Grande.

Porajmos will be screened at Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Grande 8 on April 20 at 10 a.m. and April 22 at 1 p.m.

For tickets and info visit www.sprockets.ca. For tickets and info regarding the Toronto Jewish Film Festival visit www.tiff.com

Danielle Catanariti portrays an Australian Jewish student in Hey Hey It's Esther Blumnberger

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ENCORE ENTERTAINMENT STAGING NEIL SIMON COMEDY THE SUNSHINE BOYS

The Toronto-based not-for-profit theatre company Encore Entertainment is preparing to stage a production of The Sunshine Boys

Neil Simon's touching comedy-drama focuses on two cantankerous vaudeville veterans whose 43-year onstage partnership is matched only by their intense mutual dislike. Several years after their retirement, the nephew of one of the actors convinces him to join with the other for a television special to be broadcast live. However, they cannot be in the same room together without sparks flying.

The cast features **Jerrold Karch, Irving Dobbs, Aaron Sidenberg, Marion Hirschberg, Arnon Melo, Jessica Krasnichuk, Jack Berke** and **Ken Goldman**. Toronto Centre for the Arts (Studio Theatre), 5040 Yonge St. April 23 to May 3, 8 p.m. Sunday matinées 2 p.m. $28.50, $27. www.encoreshows.com, 416-872-1111

Anna Paquin

* * *

Film Evening with Atom Egoyan: Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University, the Toronto Jewish Film Festival and the department of film and television at TAU present filmmaker-professor **Eitan Green**'s award-winning film It All Begins At Sea, with renowned filmmaker **Atom Egoyan**, laureate of the Dan David prize, as guest speaker. Sheppard Grande Cinema, Sheppard & Yonge. Wednesday, April 22, 7:45 p.m. Screening and reception $100, with light refreshments. Sponsorships (and partial tax receipts) also available. RSVP, 416-787-9930 or norma@cftau.ca.

* * *

Sendler Film on TV: The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler, the Hallmark Hall of Fame film by director-producer **John Kent Harrison**, is based on the life of Nobel-prize nominee **Irena Sendler**. A Polish Catholic social worker, Sendler joined the Polish underground during World War II and was arrested and tortured by the Nazis for smuggling nearly 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto. On the day of her scheduled execution, she was rescued by the underground network Zegota. She lived in Poland to the age of 98.

Canadian-born actress **Anna Paquin**, who plays the title character in the movie, won an Oscar as a child for her work in The Piano and, more recently, a Golden Globe. The film airs Sunday, April 19, on the CBS network.

* * *

Anne of Green Gables: The Charlottetown Festival's production of Anne of Green Gables – The Musical plays in Toronto in May, courtesy of Dancap Productions. Freckle-faced Anne with her fiery temper, passion for melodrama and penchant for misadventures brings laughter, love and consternation to Avonlea in this Canadian classic based on the beloved novel by **L.M. Montgomery**. Elgin Theatre, 189 Yonge St. Tickets start at $25. May 7 to 24. 416-644-3665, DancapTickets.com

* * *

Irena Sendler

Arts in Brief

• United Jewish Appeal's Business Cabinet presents Funny Business: A Night of Jewish Comedy, with dessert and cash bar. $20. Absolute Comedy Club, 2335 Yonge St. Tuesday, May 5, 8 p.m. Doors open 7 p.m. Arrive early for best seats. RSVP Brenda Cooper, 416-645-2883, ext. 5135, or online at www.ujaevents.com.

• A closing reception for the exhibition Never/Again: Photos of Terezin and Rwanda by **Jeremy Mimnagh** and **Shannon Scully** is being held in conjunction with Holocaust Centre of Toronto, Facing History and Ourselves and Toronto Image Works. Miles Nadal JCC, Jacobs Lounge. April 23, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 133, or visualart@mnjcc.org

• Hop Stitch & Jump is a performance in support of children affected by poverty and AIDS. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. April 30, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $25, from www.mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Active Seniors presents a screening of the film Lerner and Loewe: Broadway's Last Romantics in conjunction with the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. With coffee and discussion. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, April 23, 2 p.m. Phyllis 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

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A wide-ranging selection from the Jewish Film Festival

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Yves Jeuland's Being Jewish in France is an absorbing and sprawling documentary. It will be screened in two parts, on Sunday, April 19 at 6 p.m. and on Monday, April 20 at 7 p.m. Both screenings are at the Al Green Theatre.

A history of France's modern Jewish community, its departure point is the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfus, an army officer who was falsely accused of treason and whose case divided a nation. The file footage of his reinstatement is atmospheric and priceless.

As Jeuland suggests, the Dreyfus affair was the culmination of an anti-Semitic campaign spearheaded by such far right propagandists as Edouard Drumont.

The film, whose archival footage is supplemented by interviews with prominent French Jews, documents the immigration of Eastern European and Balkan Jews to France, the rift between Yiddish-speaking and assimilated members of the community, the rise of fascism, the upsurge of anti-Semitism in the 1930s, and the Vichy era after Germany's invasion in 1940.

In the second episode, it examines the impact of the Holocaust on a community that lost one-quarter of its population, the settlement and absorption of North African Jews, the attitude of Ashkenazi Jews toward Sephardi newcomers, France's fleeting alliance with Israel, and the effect of the Six Day War on French Jews.

Jeuland also explores France's complicity in the Holocaust and its attempts to come to terms with its role and the tension between Jews and Arabs following the eruption of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000.

***

Eran Riklis' Hebrew and Arabic language film, Lemon Tree (April 23, 3:45 p.m. at the Cinema Odeon Sheppard Grande), navigates the rocky shoals of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Hiam Abbass, right, plays a Palestinian widow in Lemon Tree.

Set in contemporary Israel, it turns on a grove of lemon trees near the so-called seam line, the border between Israel and the West Bank. Salma Zidane (Hiam Abbass), a Palestinian widow, tends to her lemons with tender loving care. But when Israel's new defence minister, Israel Navon (Doron Tavory), and his wife, Mira (Rona Lipaz-Michael), take up residence in a house next to Zidane's orchard, all hell breaks loose.

Israel's security service, concerned that terrorists may infiltrate through the grove and assassinate the minister, advises Navon to cut it down and erect a fence around it. In private, Navon opposes the recommendation. Nonetheless, he accepts it.

Salma rails against the order, viewing it as an infringement of her private property rights. She enlists the aid of a young Palestinian lawyer, Ziad Daud (Ali Suliman), who lodges an appeal to Israel's military court and falls hard for Salma's feminine charms. Since the court upholds the government's position, Salma takes her case to the next level, the Supreme Court.

If nothing else, Lemon Tree, ably directed by Riklis, is an allegory about Israel's long-running conflict with the Palestinians. Riklis focuses on the land question – an integral component of that bitter dispute – by building his film around Salma's lemon trees. Though he is basically sympathetic to Salma's plight, he hardly ignores Israel's need for security.

The cast is quite impressive, with Abbass and Lipaz-Michael leading the way. A thoughtful film, Lemon Tree offers a disturbing glimpse into one facet of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It is scheduled to open in Toronto theatres in May.

***

Little Traitor (Sunday, April 19 after the screening of Amos Oz at the Al Green Theatre), directed by Lynn Roth, is based on a story by that Israeli author and unfolds in Hebrew and English. It is set in Jerusalem in 1947, during the fading British Mandate.

Proffy (Edo Porat), an 11-year-old boy who likes playing war games and whose Polish-born parents work for the Jewish underground, is caught breaking the curfew by a British sergeant named Stephen Dunlop (Alfred Molina).

Rather than arresting him, Dunlop – an amiable man who reads the Bible and is trying to learn Hebrew – escorts Proffy to his home. Eventually, the sergeant and the precocious boy form a strong bond. Their unusual friendship is pointedly questioned by Proffy's anti-British friends and equated with treason, leading to unforeseen consequences.

Edo Porat, left, and Alfred Molina star in Little Traitor

At once brooding and joyful, Little Traitor coaxes great performances from its lead actors.

***

Jerusalem Day (Monday, April 20 at 2 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre), by Jonathan Aroch, focuses on a patriotic but polarizing Israeli holiday that has commemorated the unification of the city since the Six Day War.

For the national religious camp, the holiday summons up messianic fervour and signifies Israel's conquest of the territories. But to Israelis not so religiously or nationally inclined, Jerusalem Day is an exercise in nationalistic excess or an inconvenience from a business point of view. For Palestinians, it is nothing less than an affront.

The film is augmented by interviews with veterans who fought in Jerusalem and who agree that the battles there were among the most difficult of the war.

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Continued on page 39

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The Sway machinery plays ancient prayers to a bluesy beat

Sway Machinery guitarist and singer Jeremiah Lockwood, who was influenced by his grandfather Jacob Konigsberg – a famous cantor – incorporates Jewish prayers into his music. [Jori Klein photo]

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

Prayers such as *Avinu Malkeinu* and *Anim Zmiros* aren't tunes you would normally hear at a rock concert, let alone played by members of bands such as Arcade Fire and Yeah Yeah Yeahs. But that's exactly what happens at shows by the Sway Machinery, a New York all-star outfit led by guitarist and singer Jeremiah Lockwood.

Since 2006, the Sway Machinery has become a word-of-mouth sensation. Though they have been featured in the Village Voice and on National Public Radio, their reputation has been built on a series of passionate, high-intensity live performances.

Now the work of Lockwood and company is reaching a wider audience through their first full-length release, Hidden Melodies Revealed.

"I think for most people this music is obscure to the point of being a great big question mark, so the idea is to do something to expose the larger world to the cantorial tradition. And also the idea of music as knowledge, as information and a kind of storytelling," Lockwood said of the album's title and artistic philosophy.

Hidden Melodies Revealed is the culmination of a project first unveiled at a groundbreaking 2007 Rosh Hashanah show in the gothic precincts of the Angel Orensanz Foundation, formerly the Anshe Chesed Synagogue of Manhattan's Lower East Side.

After being developed through a series of live performances, the album was recorded in 2008 at Quebec's Petite Église, a private studio converted from a church by Montreal-based band Arcade Fire.

"It's a great space, it's a big space, it's an isolated space, and it just seemed to make sense," said saxophonist Colin Stetson, who plays with Arcade Fire and the Sway Machinery.

At the heart of the Sway Machinery's music are Lockwood's renditions of traditional prayers, delivered in his yearning intonation, along with original compositions and spoken word interludes.

A whole raft of other sounds and musical influences accompany Lockwood's idiosyncratic vocals. Instead of a bass guitar, the Sway Machinery relies on Stetson's bass saxophone, a feature that helps give the band its signature sound.

"In order for me to supply what's necessary as a bass player, it takes a whole lot of sweat and blowing, so it's visually a big difference. But then it also sounds slightly different than just a straight bass, it has an edge to it and cuts through," Stetson said.

The raunchy blues of Lockwood's Fender Telecaster and the world-beat drumming of Yeah Yeah Yeahs' percussionist Brian Chase also add additional dimensions to the music. And to top it off, the band also features Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra's Stuart Bogie and Jordan MacLean on tenor sax and trumpet.

Lockwood, who also plays with the genre-bending band Balkan Beat Box, has a long history of mixing and matching various strains of archaic music.

His grandfather, Jacob Konigsberg, was a famous cantor, and Lockwood recalls spending hours at his house listening to records.

"It's obviously about the music, but also about our personal relationship, my grandfather's amazingly warm personality. I spent a lot of time with him and I imbibed a lot from him – his way of thinking about the world, his esthetic approach," Lockwood said.

Lockwood's father, Larry Lockwood, is a well-respected composer, whose use of folk songs in contemporary musical settings greatly influenced his son's musical ideas and development.

But Lockwood has not hesitated to go outside of the family for mentorship and instruction. As a teenager, he fell in love with the blues and by 13, he took to playing on the streets and subways of New York.

"In New York, playing on the streets and the subway is part of the life of the city, and there's a lot of great musicians out there. It's a very special venue for performance. You're out there in the world, and there's an intense physical energy to pull people in from whatever they're doing," he said.

It was there that he met veteran Piedmont bluesman Carolina Slim, who would become a lasting teacher and influence.

"The blues and the cantorial music traditions share the feeling that they come from an unknown world," Lockwood said.

"Carolina Slim was a great artist and saw himself as being a preserver of the musical tradition he grew up with, and that stuck with me. He was also very idiosyncratic in that country blues style, where there's never any sticking to a formula," he added.

All of these influences come together in the music of the Sway Machinery. Despite its disparate elements, the band is more than a random assortment of styles. Rather, all of the different ingredients combine to form one passionate, soul-consuming whole.

According to Lockwood, the mystical and spiritual nature of the music is reflected by the name of the band.

"You have the image of the body moving in prayer, but it's also like we're machines formed by the divine intellect and what we're doing is finding a way to do it automatically, so that we can't control what we do, accessing the music on a primal level," he said.

The music's involuntary nature comes through most clearly on I Shall Chant Praise, a track in which Lockwood scat sings in a way that can only be characterized as speaking in tongues.

Given its unusual influences and origins, it's no surprise that Hidden Melodies Revealed is one of the most original and unusual Jewish music albums to be released in recent memory.

Though the innovative musical settings of the Sway Machinery are different than anything you're likely to hear in synagogue, both the majesty and the intimacy of the ancient texts remain.

Hidden Melodies Revealed is available from the JDUB Records store at http://store.jdubrecords.org.

From left are Brian Chase, Stuart Bogie, Jeremiah Lockwood, Jordan MacLean and Colin Stetson of Sway Machinery. Their debut CD Hidden Melodies Revealed is perhaps one of the most original and unusual Jewish music albums. [Scott Irvine photo]

Arts & Travel

Dancer makes history at Royal Winnipeg Ballet

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

Maureya Lebowitz is the youngest dancer in the history of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to perform the role of Juliet.

The 18-year-old danced the role in the Royal Winnipeg's production of Romeo and Juliet last month, during her debut season with the company.

Earlier this season, as part of the ballet's touring company, she danced the role of Wendy in Peter Pan, for which she got strong reviews in Winnipeg and Ottawa. She was an apprentice with the company last season

Lebowitz is the daughter of Gary and Beth Lebowitz of Darby, Mont. Her parents are originally from Minnesota – her dad is from Minneapolis and her mon from Hibbing (the hometown of Bob Dylan, to whom she is related).

Her parents were living in California but moved to Darby – about a two-hour drive from Missoula, eastern Montana's largest community – because they felt that it would be a better place to raise children, Lebowitz said.

"Darby was a great place to grow up," she said. "Living in the mountains, we learned to appreciate nature. We went horseback riding and learned downhill skiing. People are very friendly there."

Lebowitz has been dancing all of her young life. She remembers she loved twirling around in her special white Shabbat dress. "I loved the flow of the fabric," she said.

She began dance lessons at the age of three. She used to commute the two hours to Missoula for lessons. She came to Winnipeg to train at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School when she was 11.

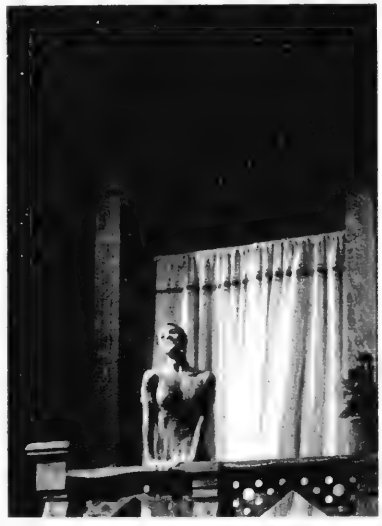
"I enjoy being in Winnipeg," she said. "I love living in the Exchange District close to the theatres and great restaurants."

In her apprentice year with the company, she danced in Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker and Carmina Burana, and in a tribute to famed dancer and choreographer George Balanchine.

Dancing, she said, is a full-time job. "We practise from 9:30 to 6 five days a week."

When the time comes to go on stage, she said she focuses all of her attention on the role. While dancing is physically very demanding, she works hard at it, to keep growing emotionally and physically as an artist.

"Hopefully, there will be many more dramatic roles in my future," she said.



Maureya Lebowitz in the RWB production of Romeo & Juliet. [Dmitri Dovgoselets photo]

Lebowitz is looking forward to visiting Israel for the first time this summer. She has recently been accepted into the Birthright Israel program and is excited about going.

"My brother, Aaron, lived in Israel for a year," she says. "I am looking forward to visiting family in Jerusalem."

The King and the Jester explores human tragedy and fear that pervaded the Lodz Ghetto

Continued from page 37

The King and the Jester: The Story of the Lodz Ghetto (Tuesday, April 21 at noon at the Al Green Theatre), by Yossi Godard, explores the depths of a human tragedy through period photographs, old movie footage, re-enactments, animation and readings from diaries.

The ghetto, the last in Nazi-occupied Poland to be liquidated, was a case study in self-preservation. The Jewish "elder" appointed by the Germans to manage its affairs, Chaim Rumkowski, believed that he could save its 160,000 inhabitants if only they produced enough goods for the Wehrmacht. To a certain point, he was right. Ultimately, he was wrong, since Nazi racial hatred trumped war production.

Godard mocks Rumkowski through the medium of a ghetto street singer named Yankele Herszkowicz, whose bitterly ironic songs deflate him. "Rumkowski is great," he croons. "So why is everyone sighing?"

As a cinematic document of despair, The King and the Jester chronicles the desperation, the hunger, the deprivation and the fear that pervaded the ghetto.

***

It is followed by Dorit Starik's short documentary, Transport 2-8-2, which revolves around a remarkable but little-known footnote of the Holocaust.

In 1944, Germany traded 282 Jews destined for the gas chambers for German Templers in Palestine. The exchange, which was completed with the arrival of the Jews at Rosh Hanikra, was almost torpedoed by Britain and the Mufti of Jerusalem.

Replete with interviews with Jews and Germans, the film spends far too little time in explaining the lives and philosophy of the Templers.

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival runs April 18 to 26. For tickets and info visit www.tjff.com.

Being Jewish in France deals with, among other topics, the anti-Semitic Vichy period, when Jews were forced to wear the dreaded yellow star

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Israel & the Jewish World

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM IN ISRAEL: The Jewish National Fund recently sent a group of Grade 10 students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto on a mission to Israel, where the students learned about the JNF's contribution to the country's development, and in particular, how it tries to find solutions to environmental problems. The students are seen at the Bahan water reservoir in Emek Hefer near Netanya, where they were told how water purification initiatives can be used as part of the foundation for partnerships between Arabs and Israelis. [Photo courtesy of JNF]

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Josh Tordjman makes his NHL debut

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

Montreal native Josh Tordjman made history last month when he laid claim to being the first Sephardi Jew to play in the National Hockey League.

Tordjman, 24, was the goaltender for the Phoenix Coyotes in two away games, on March 8 against the New York Islanders and March 12 against the New Jersey Devils.

Both were losses for the Coyotes, who are just one spot away from the cellar in the Western Conference. Tordjman let in a total of eight goals, but made 54 saves during the two games.

Tordjman is no longer on the Coyotes' active roster and has returned to its Texas-based affiliate, the San Antonio Rampage of the American Hockey League, where he has played nearly four full seasons. He is their top goalie, and, in January, he was named the AHL's goaltender of the month. In 49 games with the Rampage, Tjordman has a team-best .912 save percentage and a 2.57 goals against average.

Tordjman, whose parents are of Moroccan origin, grew up in Kirkland.

His dad, Lucien Tordjman, was his first coach for several years after Josh began playing organized hockey at about 4-1/2 years old.

"We got the call late Saturday night [March 7] that Josh was going to play the next day [in New York] at 3 p.m. I said to my wife [Judy], we've got to go. I called my daughter, Julia, and my parents, who have also been following Josh's career and they wanted to go, too," Lucien Tordjman said.

"So, we got up at 3 a.m. that morning and all six of us, including Julia's fiancé, got in the car and drove down."

It was well worth it. The elder Tordjman describes seeing his son in an NHL net as a moment of indescribable pride.

Lucien Tordjman, who came to Canada at age two in 1957, was hooked on hockey by the age of five himself, and never missed a Saturday night NHL game. He also was a pretty good player, spending many an hour on the outdoor rink in Kent Park in Côte des Neiges when he was a youngster.

Josh began playing hockey as a defenceman because of his skills as a backward skater. "But by 6-1/2 or 7, all he wanted to do was stop the puck."

Lucien was coaching in Montreal's Lakeshore Hockey Association, but not goaltending. He educated himself in how to coach that position, reading what he could and watching videos.

Early on, he realized hockey was not just a passing fancy for Josh. The boy loved to play endlessly, and it was hard to get him off the ice during a practice.

His NHL debut was a big break for Tordjman, who signed as a free agent with the Coyotes in July, 2006. The team is coached by Wayne Gretzky. Tordjman was finally called up from San Antonio as a back-up goalie to Ilya Bryzgalov.

Tordjman, a Beaconsfield High School graduate, is 6-1 and a slight 157 pounds.

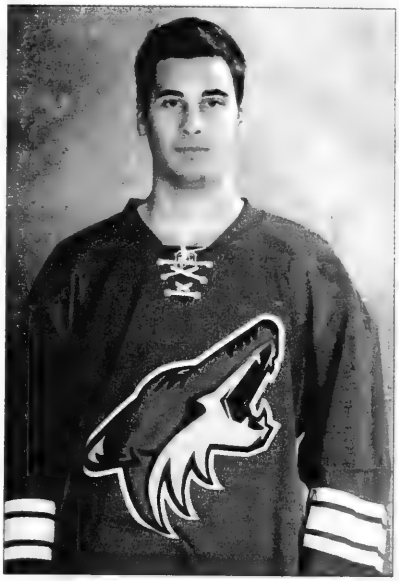
Prior to signing with the Coyotes, Tordjman spent four seasons in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League with Victoriaville and Moncton. In 2006, he led the Moncton Wildcats to the league crown and then to the Memorial Cup finals, Canadian junior hockey's ultimate competition. Nevertheless, Tordjman was passed over in two NHL drafts.

He started his pro career with the Nashville Predators as a walk-on, leaving soon when the Coyotes offered him a contract.

His dad is confident that his son will be playing again in the NHL, if not this season. "He has a strong competitive character, he loves to play hard and to win, and he's a real team player. I love the way he is just so passionate about the game."

* * *

In other hockey news, veteran hockey journalist and author Gare Joyce writes a well-researched lengthy essay on forward Benjamin Rubin's sudden and until now unexplained departure from the Montreal Juniors, published on the website Sportsnet.ca.



Montrealer Josh Tordjman made his NHL debut last month with the Phoenix Coyotes.

Joyce's conclusion is that Rubin was treated shabbily and that what began as a Cinderella story, with a young Orthodox Jewish kid being given a break in hockey's big leagues, has ended sourly.

After a respectable start with the new QMJHL team in September, Rubin was demoted by the Juniors to the fourth line, and in January the 20-year-old forward was let go. He has been playing triple-A in St. Jérôme.

Joyce writes that Rubin, who is shomer Shabbat, didn't have so much as a ride when he was released, because it was a Saturday afternoon. He couldn't pay for a cab or even phone home.

After initially refusing to play on Shabbat when he broke into the QMJHL with the Quebec Remparts two years ago, Rubin received the go-ahead to do so from his father's rabbi, a Torah scholar who advised him that it would be OK to play on Shabbat, as long as he performed no other "work," including driving. He did continue to observe the High Holidays.

The Juniors club is owned by Farrell Miller.

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Lieberman is dangerous

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

In times of upheaval – when we all begin to fear that the world no longer works the way we thought it did – we are prone to choose scary men as our protectors. Avigdor Lieberman is one of these scary men, and now he holds a frighteningly powerful position in one of the most vulnerable Israeli governments in the country's history. The fact that he will most probably gain more power and prominence in the coming months and years – unless the corruption charges currently being investigated by Israeli authorities stick – should make Israelis and Diaspora Jews worry.

New Views

Lieberman is a right-wing nut, a religious fanatic and an unabashed xenophobe whose political ideas could very well help to destroy Israel. Had it been accepted, his 2004 proposed plan to swap with the Palestinian Authority areas of Israel that are heavily populated by Arabs in exchange for sovereignty in the settlements would have been horribly injurious to the security of the Jewish state. Politically, the Lieberman Plan would have added fuel to the fire of "Israeli apartheid" activists, and militarily, it would have turned Israeli Arabs, most of whom pose no security threat to Israel at present, against the state.

Lieberman proposed to force Israeli citizens to pledge allegiance to their homeland at the risk of losing their voting privileges – a scheme, quite obviously, that's part of his larger plan to rid Israel of Arabs. But what about left-wing, fifth-generation Israelis – people who have sweated and fought for the Israel's survival, yet nonetheless, rightfully, have a problem with being forced to swear unequivocally to support every decision of the Israeli government? Would they also lose their right to vote?

The Lieberman Plan stinks no matter which way you answer that question. It puts a price on the kinds of freedom of thought, belief and expression that all humans should expect to receive for free. Israel is not Saudi Arabia or Cuba, places where one's ability to survive depends on saying the right thing to the right person at the right time. It is a democracy, where anyone can say anything at any time without fear of punishment. The Lieberman Plan suits the former category, not the latter.

At this dangerous time in the history of Israel and the Jewish people, Lieberman is the wrong kind of leader. When campuses around the world have become the main stage for anti-Zionists and anti-Semites trying to portray us as violent Muslim-haters (which most of us are not), a man who would evict Arabs from Israel must not be our mouthpiece. When the continued support of Israel's main allies is no longer a sure thing, we must put our best political foot forward and remind the world that our democracy in a sea of tyranny and religious hierarchy is worth preserving.

How is it that at a moment of great danger, Israelis have empowered a dangerous man? The answer, as it has been throughout history, is fear. When your enemies seem to be closing in, the most comforting words often harbour the most insular ideas. And this narrow-mindedness ultimately can bring tragedy.

The people of Israel did not vote in anywhere near majority numbers for Lieberman, yet he became a kingmaker in the recent election and is now one of the most powerful decision-makers in the government. This will not do. Israelis must show their inner strength and evict this dangerous man from the ranks of their leaders before he does the country any serious harm.

PASSOVER LEFTOVERS – CHICKEN & SPINACH, STRAWBERRY SALAD

- **4 c baby spinach leaves**
- **2 c cubed cooked chicken**
- **2 c strawberries, cut in half**
- **1 c green grapes**
- **1/4 c Italian salad dressing**
- **1/4 c orange juice**
- **1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- **dash pepper**
- **2 Tbsp. sliced almonds, toasted**

Arrange spinach on four chilled plates. Place chicken onto spinach and top with strawberries and grapes. In small bowl, combine salad dressing, orange juice and mustard and mix well. Drizzle over salads and top with almonds. *Serves 4*

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE SHAW STREET SHUL

B'nai Israel Congregation erected this synagogue 80 years ago, in 1929, on the east side of Shaw Street near Dundas Street, overlooking Bellwoods Park. Stars of David adorned both the exterior and interior of the building, which was designed by the Jewish architectural firm of Kaplan and Sprachman. Inset, a group of *ba'alebatim*, or synagogue elders, in the sanctuary. B'nai Israel sold the property around 1960, when the congregation merged with Beth David and moved to North York. The building is now a Catholic church adorned with crosses and statues of winged angels.

Sadness and celebration in the Jewish calendar

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Every year, after Pesach is over, I reflect on the eight days, and I'm always stunned that we were slaves in Egypt. I then look ahead to modern times, to Yom Hashoah, and am so deeply disturbed by the reality that six million of our people were murdered by other creations – hateful creations – of God. This reality is foreign to the lives that we live in Toronto in 2009.

URBAN WRITER

I continue to browse the Jewish calendar and focus on Yom Hazikaron, the day we remember fallen Israeli soldiers and victims of terror – Israel's Remembrance Day. I am again overwhelmed by our loss and the sacrifices that so many Jews and people have made to establish Israel and keep it alive.

When we look closely at the Jewish calendar and the moments we commemorate and celebrate, past the ritual and (sometime) fanfare, we are able to see millions of Jews who were brave and righteous, who walked the walk of being Jewish.

When you really look at those dates in history, you will see the faces of small children who scurried over the walls of the Kovno Ghetto in the dark of night to find some food for their families suffering inside those fortifications. You will see parents fearfully waiting for their valiant and precious little progeny to return.

Look intently at the months and years of the calendar and gaze upon the face of Simcha Frumkin, who was only 11 years old when he was forced along with his mother and father into that ghetto. For three years, he lived in that horrible place, until he and his family were transferred to Dachau in 1944. His father died there. At age 14, he was liberated.

This is our calendar. It's so painful to look at it. We remember Simcha's father.

Then we look again, over the horizon, past the blood-soaked earth of Europe, at a small patch of land – Israel – that we settled because of our bravery and tenacity, and because of a promise from God: "So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn" (Joshua 21:43-45).

There we see women bearing children, working the fields and fighting alongside men to ensure that our side of the promise is kept – keeping a watchful eye over this holy land and protecting us from any future Kovnos or Crusades.

We look closer, past the numbers on the calendar, at the faces of those women. We see Batsheva Unterman unbuckling her five-month-old baby from a car seat and passing her out the window to safety, only to be crushed to death by a bulldozer driven by a maniacal terrorist in the streets of Jerusalem.

So much of the Jewish calendar is dotted blood red. For incomprehensible reasons, many people hate us, so much so that they're willing to kill our children.

Those who hate us, however, are not the ones we see when we study our history and commemorate the dates that are highly significant to our people.

No, the beauty of the Jewish way is that we do our best to see past the murderer with axe in hand and instead set our eyes upon the beautiful faces of our ancestors – our predecessors, our brothers and sisters in Israel – who died because they were Jews, because they were warriors reminding us that to be Jewish is to be strong, prepared and courageous.

On Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron, remember them and strengthen yourself as a Jew so that our people can be safe everywhere and be able to practise our religion freely. Remember those who are in anguish today, Jew and non-Jew, for we are all creations of God. Be an active Jew!

Darfur? See Avrum's Blog at avrum.net.

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This Week

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Ottawa's best-known kosher caterer supported Jewish causes. *Obituary.* ***Page 19***

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Lawyer Robert Rotenberg turns author. ***Page 34***

Hana's Suitcase is subject of new documentary. ***Page 35***

Heebonics

Toronto filmmaker scores a hit on the web. ***Page 37***

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Western countries boycott Durban II

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GENEVA — Dozens of western representatives at the UN-sponsored conference against racism walked out during Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's address to the forum on Monday.

The diplomats rose from their chairs and walked out of the hall in Geneva as Ahmadinejad launched a tirade against the Israeli government. The Iranian leader also blasted the United States for its invasion of Iraq.

The move by western delegates followed announcements from a number of other democracies that they would not attend the review conference, known as Durban II. In January 2008, Canada became the first country to announce it would boycott the event, citing concerns it would turn into a replay of the hatred and bigotry demonstrated at the first UN anti-racism conference held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, and would promote racism and intolerance, not oppose it.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Israel later announced it would not attend, and in the days before the Durban Review Conference began, the United States, Italy, Holland, Germany, Poland, Australia and New Zealand followed suit.

France said Monday its ambassador to Geneva would attend but would walk out immediately if the conference turned into a platform for racist comments against Israel. Britain and the Czech Republic had earlier said they would take part in the conference, but without a high-level official.

Ahmadinejad was the only head of state to participate in the conference, and he began with a speech that seemed to give credibility to concerns the conference would focus on vilifying the Jewish state.

He branded Israel a "racist government" and accused it of "being the most cruel and racist regime," sparking the walkout by angry western diplomats at the conference and protests from others.

In a rambling speech, Ahmadinejad also pointed a finger at the United States, Europe and Israel and said they were "destabilizing the entire world."

Continued on page 31

Shoah decimated generations: prof

In commemoration of Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah, soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces stand in ceremony at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem at the monument to the ghetto heroes sculpted by Nathan Rappaport. ***[Flash90 photo]***

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — If not for the Holocaust, there would be as many as 32 million Jews worldwide, instead of the current 13 million, demographer Sergio Della Pergola has written in a soon-to-be published article.

Della Pergola, who holds the Shlomo Argov Chair in Israel-Diaspora relations and is director of the division of Jewish demography and statistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, tries to estimate the demographic damage of the Holocaust to world Jewry.

The Holocaust "struck a mortal blow particularly at the Jews of eastern Europe because of their especially young age structure," and particularly the number of children, he writes. This led to significant long-term demographic damage.

"The quantitative ramifications are far beyond what we think," he adds.

In the article, to be published in Beshvil Hazikaron, the periodical of the Yad Vashem Holocaust commemoration authority's School of Holocaust Studies,

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Natan Sharansky tapped to head Jewish Agency – see page 32

The News in Brief

Canada

Street Named For Ed

TORONTO — Toronto Mayor David Miller last week named a portion of Duncan Street in the city's theatre district for legendary businessman and theatre impresario Ed Mirvish. The April 15 ceremony honoured Mirvish, who owned Honest Ed's department store as well as the Royal Alexandra and Princess of Wales theatres. Mirvish died in July 2007 at age 92.

Graffiti Found

TORONTO — Anti-Semitic messages were discovered at a Pickering, Ont., public school on Easter Sunday. The messages "We hate Jews," "I love Hitler" and "Die Jews" were found on the exterior playground walls of Highbush Public School on April 12, Sun Media reported. Durham Regional Police are investigating. Local residents believe the daubings, apparently made on the weekend, were unrelated to Passover.

Prof Blames 'Lobby'

OTTAWA — A tenured University of Ottawa physics professor who was fired for giving an entire fourth-year class A+ grades in a course has blamed the Israel lobby for his dismissal. In a written response to his March 31 firing, the self-described anarchist – who had taught for 20 years at U of O and has a history of criticizing Israel's treatment of the Palestinians – said that "the university decision to dismiss me was itself tainted with Israel-aligned political influence." The university has refused further comment on the case, saying it could end up in arbitration.

Comic To Be Tried For Anti-Semitism

PARIS — A controversial French comedian will be prosecuted on charges of anti-Semitism.

Dieudonne Mbala Mbala will go on trial May 5 in Paris for bestowing a bogus prize on a notorious Holocaust denier, Robert Faurisson, in a Dec. 2 performance for an audience of 5,000 near Paris. If convicted, the 42-year-old comedian faces a maximum fine of nearly $30,000, the French news agency AFP reported.

Dieudonne, as he is known, has been barred from performing in most French cities since the December stand-up routine in which an actor dressed as a Jewish Nazi camp prisoner awarded Faurisson a prize for "unrespectability and insolence."

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Front political party who recently called Nazi gas chambers a historical "detail," sat among thousands of spectators who cheered and laughed when Faurisson made his surprise stage debut alongside Dieudonne.

Dieudonne has announced his intention to run for the European Parliament on an "anti-Zionist" ticket that groups far left and far right political parties. The vote is slated for June 7. Dieudonne, who is black, has been charged with racism and anti-Semitism in the past, including in Quebec, for remarks comparing Jews to "slave traders" and belittling the Holocaust.

World

Coleman To Appeal

MINNEAPOLIS — Norm Coleman will appeal a three-judge panel's ruling that former Saturday Night Live comedian Al Franken won Minnesota's election for U.S. Senate. A lawyer for Republican Coleman said April 14 the incumbent senator will appeal the ruling to Minnesota's Supreme Court. The panel ruled that Democrat Franken won a 312-vote victory and rejected Coleman's arguments that errors or irregularities in the vote counting violated equal protection standards.

Jew 'Crucified'

MANILA — A Jewish comedian from Australia had himself crucified in the Philippines on Good Friday for a new show. John Safran, 36, a TV personality in Australia known for staging outlandish stunts, was one of several people who chose to be nailed to a cross near Manila to symbolize Jesus' suffering on Easter, AFP reported. Safran, a graduate of an Orthodox boys-only school in Melbourne, was naked from the waist up and wearing a long-haired wig, and was heard moaning as nails were hammered through his skin into the giant cross. Safran was rushed to a medical tent afterward. The stunt was for a show titled John Safran's Race Relations, which Kim Dalton, director of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, said was a "thoughtful and challenging exploration of cultural differences and convictions."

Demjanjuk Stays

CLEVELAND — Ex-Nazi guard John Demjanjuk returned to his home several hours after immigration agents removed him for deportation to Germany. An appeals court in Cincinnati blocked his deportation on April 14. Demjanjuk, 89, must now prove his deportation would amount to torture due to his many illnesses. Family members said they were caught unaware April 14 when agents carried the former death camp guard from his suburban Cleveland home. Germany wants him extradited on charges related to the deaths of 29,000 Jews. An Israeli court convicted him in 1988 of being the ruthless "Ivan the Terrible" at Treblinka. But Israel's Supreme Court dismissed the charges and freed him in 1993 because he couldn't be positively identified. That ruling upheld evidence he had been a guard at another death camp, Sobibor, but said he had served time for that crime waiting out the other charges. He returned to Cleveland and U.S. courts stripped him of his citizenship for lying about being a death camp guard.

Time Change Sought

NEW YORK — The New York Jets want the National Football League to change the time of one of two home games scheduled on the High Holidays. In a letter to commissioner Roger Goodell, owner Woody Johnson proposed a game at 4:15 on Sept. 27 be moved to 1 p.m. so Jewish fans can arrive home before Yom Kippur begins at sundown. The Jets' home game on Sept. 20, falls on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. The Jets reportedly believed it was understood that a New York team wouldn't play at home for two weeks straight during the High Holidays.

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CJC Quebec gets new name despite opposition

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Despite the outcry of opposition, Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) is not going to reconsider its decision to rename its Quebec branch, the organization's chief executive officer says.

Toronto-based Bernie Farber said all CJC bylaws and protocols were followed before the decision was made to rename the Quebec region Congrès juif québécois, Section du Congrès juif canadien, or, in English, Quebec Jewish Congress, a Division of Canadian Jewish Congress.

The issue was discussed, after being formally proposed in January, and then adopted unanimously by the regional board of directors on March 18 and, with the exception of one dissenter, adopted by the national board on March 22.

He said the regional board, which has about 18 members, is composed of Quebec Jews from a range of backgrounds and is representative of the community. The national board of about 40 members includes Quebecers as well. Neither of those bodies was at full complement when the votes were taken. However, no wider consultation in the community is required by CJC's constitution.

"I think everyone should just take a deep breath and look at what really happened. The change is not as spectacular as some are making out; this is a change of emphasis… We are not taking anything away from the [division's] Canadianism."

The wisdom of the decision, he believes, will be proven over time, no matter which party is in power in Quebec.

Quebec, he insisted, is not a province like Ontario or Alberta, a fact that has been recognized, even by the federal government when Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared that the Québécois people are a nation.

Farber emphasized that the name will better equip CJC to advocate on behalf of the Quebec Jewish community. It will now be able to do so "in a way that emphasizes Quebec, without losing its connection to Canada."

He noted that CJC's Atlantic branch has always been known as the Atlantic Jewish Council.

Farber said the rebranding has actually been under consideration for some years.

He denied, contrary to what one media outlet reported, there was ever any plan to announce the new name on June 24, Quebec's Fête nationale, with it coming into effect on July 1, Canada Day.

The name change was to have become official at CJC's national plenary assembly that will take place May 31 in Toronto, Farber said. It was moved up after regional chair Victor Goldbloom mentioned the upcoming change at an interfaith model seder held in Ste. Agathe in March.

Continued on page 18

CJC CEO Bernie Farber

HEROES LIKE VLADIMIR PAID THE PRICE FOR ISRAEL'S FREEDOM

As we celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, the miraculous founding of the State of Israel, we have so much to be proud of — Israel's extraordinary accomplishments, the courage and bravery of its people, as well as their fortitude and determination.

Today in Israel, there are over 51,000 disabled veterans and victims of terror who have sacrificed their bodies and souls defending our Jewish homeland. **Vladimir Tokarev** is one such young man who was critically wounded in battle.

An only child, Vladimir was born in Siberia and made Aliyah without his parents at age 15. "My choice of Israel was motivated by Zionism," he says. In Russia, he had been a long-distance competitive ice skater. When Vladimir came to Israel, he continued training. He could have accepted the status of "Only Son" or "Excelling Athlete" and been given a safe job in the army. Instead, Vladimir chose to serve in a combat unit as a paratrooper.

He was called up to defend Israel in the Second Lebanon War (2006) and went with pride, despite being "scared to death." In battle, Vladimir was hit by a missile that landed just a metre away from him. His arm was crushed. Shrapnel penetrated his lower back and tore the width of his intestines. He underwent hours of surgery to repair his wounds and spent many months in the hospital.

Once discharged, Vladimir began his long road to recovery and started his therapeutic treatments at Beit Halochem in Tel Aviv. In addition to the physical injuries, he suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome and recurring nightmares of this horrific encounter. Rebuilding his life has not been easy.

Vladimir's sheer determination, along with the help, understanding, and support of the Beit Halochem staff have enabled him to rehabilitate. He is now studying, while still continuing his therapy and activities at Beit Halochem.

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May his memory be for blessing

From the editor's desk...

Last week, our friend and colleague Alek Silver passed away. He was 84. (*Please see the obituary on page 7.*)

Alek was the editor of The CJN's Yiddish Vinkel (Yiddish Corner) for nearly a decade, co-ordinating or writing the column that was, for many of our readers, a twice-monthly visit to a home, a culture and way of life that lives on mostly in memory.

There still remain, of course, enclaves throughout the Jewish world where Yiddish is spoken; for example, in haredi communities, as academic pursuits in some classrooms at some universities and among the aging remnant who survived the destruction of European Jewry.

But as the colourful, vibrant thoroughfare of everyday life in which individuals conduct their personal affairs – buy their bread, instruct their children, read weather maps, break their heads understanding manuals to construct a baby's crib, write love songs – it no longer exists.

Alek Silver lived and travelled on that thoroughfare.

He was born and raised in the town of Stopnitz, Poland, and survived the war that most of the people he loved did not.

In Canada, he worked as a typesetter in the realm of words, sentences, books and fresh ink that he loved.

Like so many of his peers, he was an autodidact who taught himself the content and the nuance of the authors, writers, thinkers and poets who comprised Yiddish culture.

It is true, of course, that he was a Yiddishist, but not in the way that the term was intended by some or understood by others, namely, as a way to champion and foster an entirely secular approach to Jewish life, devoid of reference to or reverence for God.

Alek loved Yiddish for its own sake, as the living language of a unique people communicating to their unique God in their own unique ways. I saw him in synagogue most Sabbaths, and we would greet each other with an embrace and the shrug so typical of the self-deprecating Yiddish manner.

"How are you, my friend," I would ask, hopeful that he was well.

"Thank God," he would answer with a smile. "It could always be worse," he would add with a shrug.

Simcha Simchovitch, the octogenarian Yiddish poet and writer whose essay on A.M. Klein appeared in the April 8 issue of The CJN, recalled Alek as a "great activist on behalf of Yiddish." Alek designed, typeset and printed many of Simchovitch's books.

"He knew Yiddish very well. His death is a great loss."

Alek was a man of tender ways and gentle disposition. At his funeral, Rabbi Wayne Allen correctly noted that "Alek lived his life in hope and optimism. He let the better angels of his nature come shining through. He affirmed the positive worth of life."

He did not romanticize Jewish life in Europe before the war. He simply let the language of his youth and, in truth, of his soul, tell the story of that life.

His last column in the paper appeared two weeks ago, April 8. He recorded some thoughts in honour of Pesach. The column was entitled *Mayn Zaydyn's Afikoman* (My grandfather's afikoman). I excerpt a small portion of it for our non-Yiddish speaking readers, freely though not expertly translated into English. Perhaps they will be able to sense for themselves how he could so lovingly convey so much emotion with the compact, understated, onomatopoeic, conjoined words of Yiddish.

"My zaide was not a very wealthy man, but by the same token, no one could say that he was a poor man. Along with my bubbe Pes'l, of blessed memory, he conducted a lovely Jewish home according to the laws of Moses and Israel. Some time later, when I grew up and a little bit taller, I learned about some of the traditions that my grandfather held by.

"On the wall in my grandmother's kitchen, on a small nail in the wall, there hung a small round piece of matzah. I still remember that the matzahs in the little shtetl were made by hand. They were thicker than today's matzahs and there were little valleys and tiny mountains on them. When one of them became a little bit burned, it looked like black on white malaria. That's how the little round piece of matzah appeared to me, which in my younger years, I did not quite understand...

"What became of the last afikoman? I don't know. I wasn't there at the end. But I can well imagine what happened in their last moments. My grandmother Pes'l, with a great sense of purpose, removed the malarial piece of matzah from the wall and gave it to my grandfather Reb Mordechai Leib to hide somewhere. My grandfather took this last afikoman, kissed it and placed it in the side pocket of his jacket. He then patted the pocket and said: 'Pes'l, it's time to go.'

"They went outside... where they joined the few who remained from the Jews of the 'small ghetto.' Under the smashing heel of the Nazis' jackboots and the Nazis' wild screams, they went on their last way. The afikoman went with, and along with my grandparents, disappeared forever."

Alek Silver was an exemplar for all that was gentle and good and warm in the Yiddish world of our parents and grandparents. Thank you, Alek.

Your memory will always be for blessing. ***–MBD***

SeeJN

MIMOUNA CELEBRATION

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sarah, exchange a few words at a traditional Mimouna celebration in the northern city of Or Akiva, following the conclusion of Pesach. It has become a tradition that leading government personalities are hosted at Mimouna celebrations in Israel. The traditional feast is observed by Jews from North Africa, although today Mimouna has become popular with many Israelis who don't necessarily have a strong connection with former North Africa communities. [ISRANET photo]

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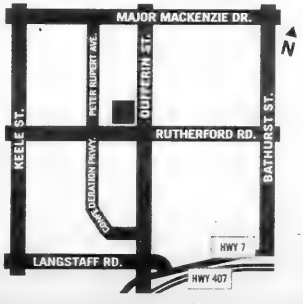

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NGO works to empower Ethiopian Israeli community

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Yuvi Tashome can't say with absolute certainty that the organization she co-founded to help the Ethiopian community is solely responsible, but she has been told that four years ago Magen David Adom used to receive two calls a day to send ambulances to Gedera because of violence, including stabbings – and today that number is down to zero.

"We were amazed," Tashome told The CJN in a Passover interview, when she was here at the invitation of the New Israel Fund of Canada (NIFC), which funds her organization, to speak to 125 people at a "liberation seder" at Beth Tzedec Congregation (co-sponsored by NIFC) about her journey to Israel and the work she does today.

The 32-year-old director of Friends by Nature – a non-governmental organization she started with eight people – left Ethiopia at age 6 and immigrated to Israel with her family as part of Operation Moses after walking through the Sudanese desert.

Friends by Nature is committed to long-term work that empowers Ethiopian youth at risk and their families in Gedera, which has an Ethiopian Jewish population of 1,700.

"We wanted to do deep work with the Ethiopian community," said Tashome, who has a degree in education and Israeli studies from Ashkelon College, a satellite of Bar-Ilan University. "We knew something was wrong with the way the [existing] programs were helping them. We thought that one of the problems was that everything is a project for one, two or three years, and then it's over."

As well, she added, programs she was familiar with had originated outside the Ethiopian community and had no Ethiopians in managerial positions.

Before co-founding the new group four years ago, Tashome ran a program that facilitated hikes for young people from grades 7 through 12, and opened dialogue about Ethiopia and Israel. "It was good, but not good enough," she said.

Among the issues facing the Ethiopian Israeli community are poor school attendance, drug and alcohol abuse, and run-ins with police among youth, who make up more than half the Ethiopian population in Gedera.

Tashome believes a major problem is that many Ethiopian Israeli young people "haven't found themselves" as Ethiopians or Israelis.

"They don't belong anywhere." Those born in Israel "don't know anything about their parents being powerful. They only know the weakness of their parents."

Tashome's story is different. Her mother, who was widowed in Ethiopia and remarried another Ethiopian in Israel, "did a lot of things that were the exception," Tashome said. She ran an NGO for children in Ashkelon, told Ethiopian stories to kindergarten students as a volunteer, and is now studying for a degree.

Yuvi Tashome [Frances Kraft photo]

As a child growing up in Ashkelon and other cities, Tashome did her homework at programs that were run for Ethiopian youth.

"Nothing really happened in the house, and the message of that was that your family is not good enough," she said.

But when youngsters feel comfortable bringing their friends home, it keeps them off the streets, she explained.

One of the programs she runs now is called Homework at Home. "It's a funny name, because homework is supposed to be at home," Tashome said. "Other programs take them out of the house."

Ethiopian youngsters may find it difficult to do homework at home because of the number of siblings in the house, lack of quiet, and lack of a computer and proper table, Tashome said.

As part of the program, teachers visit the home on a weekly basis to work with small groups of children. "After a while you see the mother and father have their motivation. They turn off the TV, take the [younger] kids to another room."

Some families, after time in the program, have decided to buy computers or change the lighting to make it more conducive to doing homework.

Friends by Nature has also run hiking programs for young people and their parents. "During the trip, [young people] see that the parents know so much about things that grow in Israel and what you can do with them. It's the first time they know that their parents know something that is relevant to Israeli life." Often it is a springboard for further parent-child discussion, she explained.

As well, Friends by Nature has a volunteer program for young adults who have finished their army service. Participants identify needs in the community, plan and implement solutions, and are also taken to tour Israeli universities with an eye to their own future plans.

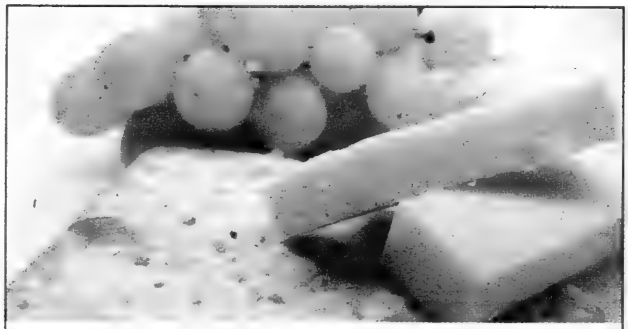
They become role models for younger Ethiopians, Tashome said. "It's about empowerment."

The changes Tashome's group is working toward seem to help Ethiopian youth integrate better into the larger Israeli society, she notes.

"We noticed that if you know more about your Ethiopian culture, Ethiopian *masoret* [tradition], and have experience of your parents with knowledge and power, then... that gives the kids self-confidence to have friends who are not Ethiopian."

For Tashome – whose husband, a seventh-generation Israeli, is also a co-founder of Friends by Nature – her work has become even more personally motivated in the last few years.

As the mother of a three-year-old, who is expecting her second child in September, Tashome said, "What we're trying to do is to live in the neighbourhood for a lifetime, raising our kids there. The motivation is very personal. It's for my kids, so I'm working hard."



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Obituary

CJN columnist saw the good in the world

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Family and friends remember Alek Silver, who died April 13 at age 84, as an optimist who always saw the good in the world.

Alek Silver

As a Holocaust survivor, he lived through a nightmare, but it did not shape his life. "He did not let the horrific experience turn him into an unhappy soul," said Rabbi Wayne Allen in a eulogy at Silver's funeral.

Rabbi Allen related a story from the Talmud about two boys who enter a rose garden. "One complained about the thorns and thistles, and the other called it a wonderful and beautiful place.

"There are two kinds of people – those who see the world through hurt and pain, and those who recognize the dangers and obstacles and are saddened by it, but [still see the beauty].

"Alek did not ignore the pain and suffering – he transcended it. He loved and lived and celebrated. His life was filled with meaning, despite the evil that was done to him."

A typesetter by profession – he was the longtime owner of Toronto Typesetting – Silver came to Canada with his parents and his sister, where he met his wife, Lesley, also a Holocaust survivor. They were married 55 years.

"He was pro-Israel, had tremendous faith and loved learning. He attended lectures almost every week and was always reading. He was attracted to anything that had to do with Judaism." Lesley Silver said.

His passion, she said, was writing and editing in Yiddish, and over the years he spent his free time editing a Yiddish bulletin out of Miami and writing for the Hebrew Journal. "People from Europe or the United States often sent him manuscripts to be edited or translated," she added

Since 2000, Silver wrote a Yiddish column twice a month for The CJN, in which he covered different aspects of Yiddish culture, often writing about poets and authors from past generations.

"He loved all of his writing. He wrote until the end," Lesley Silver said.

Paula, Silver's daughter, said despite a number of illnesses over the years, her father "just kept going and going. Nothing slowed him down.

"He always told us how thankful he was to be here, and he was happy to take care of his family, [be with his] friends, and work on his writing and editing."

Silver leaves his wife Lesley, daughters Paula and Michelle, sons-in-law Peter and Ian, three granddaughters, and his sister Helen.

BOWLEREINU FOR ZAREINU: More than 100 students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Richmond Hill campus participated in the first Bowlereinu for Zareinu at Richmond Hill Pro Bowl on April 5. The event raised more than $16,000 for Zareinu Education Centre, a day school and treatment centre for children with physical and developmental challenges. Seen, from left, are Bowlereinu co-chairs Danna Zevy and Samantha Zevy, Zareinu events co-ordinator Shawna Samuel, and Bowlereinu co-chairs Arielle Zahavi, Lauren Moses and Eliana Goldberg.

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Minimal starting point

The curtain went up last week on the new U.S. administration's first Mideast diplomatic presentation. The primary player was U.S. special envoy George Mitchell. He visited with some of the key leaders in the area, exchanged "frank" views with them in private, posed dutifully for photos with his brimming company and made pronouncements outlining the broad peace parameters envisioned by U.S. President Barack Obama.

What we saw was neither drama, nor comedy. At times it bordered on vaudeville, but deep within the unscripted scenes, we heard the soliloquys of tragedy.

At every turn, Mitchell reiterated the American government's committment to a two-state solution as the ultimate way to bring about peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. There was nothing new in this. Indeed the majority of Israelis hold the same view.

In his meeting with Mitchell, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested out loud, deliberately into the cameras and microphones, that Palestinians must recognize and accept Israel as a Jewish state.

The mere thought, however, of Israel as a Jewish state is anathema to the Palestinians. Palestinian Authority (PA) spokespeople immediately launched into a chorus of recriminations against the Israeli leader.

Chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat said that the demand to recognize Israel as a Jewish state was "an admission by the Israeli prime minister that he cannot deliver on peace."

Azzam al-Ahmed, a senior Fatah official said, "We reject Netanyahu's demand to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. This demand illustrates the racist nature of Israel and the extremist policies of its government. It also shows that Israel is not serious about making peace with its neighbours."

Omar al-Ghul, an adviser to PA Prime Minister Salaam Fayad, said: "No Palestinian leader can ever accept this demand even if the whole world recognizes Israel as a Jewish state."

The question that begs to be asked is: Why?

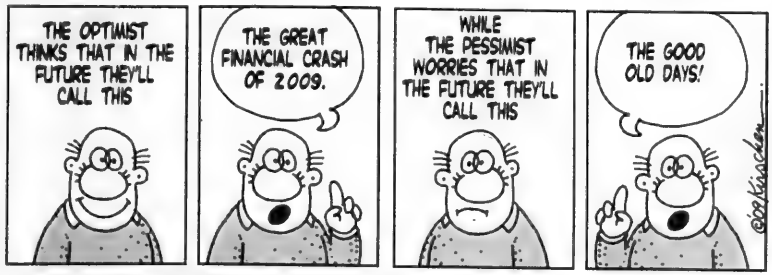
Why if the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict lies in a two-state answer cannot one of the two states be Jewish? What end result, exactly, do the Palestinians intend if neither of the two states can be for the Jewish people?

"I am prepared to negotiate with any side that desires to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians," Netanyahu told reporters on the weekend in response to the accusation that his declaration was a pre-negotiation demand. "Contrary to reports, I don't condition dialogue with the Palestinians on recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. Nevertheless, progress in the peace process does depend on the willingness to recognize Israel as a Jewish state."

For those of us who believe that the Jewish people as well are entitled to live in their own sovereign state, Netanyahu's position is eminently reasonable. But more than that, it is surely an obvious, minimal starting point for an end result that envisions two states. We trust and hope that Mitchell and Obama agree that it is.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israel might have to face "thousands of years of terrorism," despite the fact the PLO's terrorist infrastructure was destroyed in the 1982 Lebanon war, Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir warned in a Passover interview. Shamir said even if Israel made peace with all of its Arab neighbours, it could still face attacks from those that oppose its existence.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CJC Quebec region name change

Where do the Quebec regional officers get the idea that Quebec Jews would welcome the change to Congrès juif québécois, Section québécoise du Congrès juif canadien or, in English, Quebec Jewish Congress, the Quebec division of Canadian Jewish Congress ("CJC Quebec Region changes its name," CJN Montreal; "CJC changes its name in Quebec," CJN Toronto, April 8). Everyone I spoke to about it was ardently against the change. They feel they are Canadian Jews who happen to live in the province of Quebec. On April 2, there was a CTV poll on the plan and 89 per cent were against it. There is a hint of separatism in it.

Stanley Baker,
Westmount, Que.

* * *

Obscuring reality in the name of an idea

It is interesting how in the name of an idea one can obscure reality. "At least once in the national memory of a people, there has to be imprinted not just the historical reality of being liberated, but the constant idea that we are free. What God gave us at the Exodus was the possibility of ever-renewable freedom… The Exodus instructs us that all of life is a choice to be free," Elliott Melamet writes in his column "The Exodus gave us access to transcendence" (CJN, April 2).

If this was God's message, why then did the Almighty not protect the Jews but leave them to be "tortured and gassed and shot and exterminated… persecuted and harassed and exiled and ridiculed." Instead He "gave us the possibility of ever-renewable freedom." What is the use of the "constant idea that we are free" when in reality Jews were "tortured, gassed, exterminated"? To be free is not only an idea and a choice, but a struggle. Instead, the Jewish people were told to wait for the Messiah.

"That idea," Melamet writes, "represents our salvation." What about the six million Jews who believed in this idea and were exterminated? Had the Almighty sent several plagues to liberate the Jews from the death camps as he liberated Jews from slavery in Egypt, only then could Melamet declare that "that idea represents salvation."

Sam Zehavi
Montreal

* * *

Not in our name

How bizarre to think that the government of Israel, which is responsible for the safety and protection its citizens and residents, would even consider, let alone act "in the name" of those who protested under this unfortunately chosen banner ("Israel-bashing Jews: not in my name," CJN, March 5). Only egocentric people sitting in the comfort and safety of a home 6,000 miles from the possibility of having a Qassam rocket land on their children's daycare could conceive of such an idea. Hard to know whether to laugh or cry.

Marc Grushcow
Toronto

* * *

People want help with shivah protocol

Many thanks to Frances Kraft for her story describing what saying Kaddish for her father has meant to her and for her companion piece on shivah etiquette ("Thoughts on Kaddish, nine months in" and "Shivah dos and don'ts," CJN Toronto, April 8; CJN Montreal, April 17).

It seems the catalyst for the latter were requests from CJN readers. This strongly suggests people want and need help with shivah protocol, probably as shivah calls become more common for members of the postwar boomer generation. While most of us can navigate these situations by instinct, there are finer points of shivah dos and don'ts that may be unfamiliar. May I suggest that Jewish leaders offer public classes or discussion groups on this aspect of bereavement. It would be a mitzvah.

Dorothy Lipovenko
Westmount, Que.

* * *

Columnist missed some Jews

In a valiant attempt to include every known Jewish organization and group, columnist Gerald Gall missed quite a few Jews ("Canada's Jewish communities," CJN, April 8). In Toronto, we have Darchei Noam, one of Canada's Reconstructionist congregations with approximately 250 families and growing. At Darchei Noam, there are at least two members who are neither Sephardi nor Ashkenazi, and I know of quite a few others whose ancestors never saw Spain or any part of Europe. They belong to yet a third group of Jews known as Mizrachi. The Mizrachi (a.k.a. Oriental Jews) are Jews from India, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Ethiopia. There is also Oraynu Congregation for humanist Judaism, which is part of the secular humanist Jewish movement.

Henry Lobbenberg
Toronto

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Perspectives

U.S. should reject its role as 'Great Satan'

By KAMBIZ TAVANA
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Since taking office, U.S. President Barack Obama has given concrete signs that he's serious about engaging with Iran. And the Islamic Republic signalled back last week that it may be ready to do business.

Whatever the new U.S. approach to Iran may be, I propose that Obama keep the following points in mind. First, it would be a mistake to direct all efforts at Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as if he makes all the important decisions. It's true that the Islamic Republic's constitution gives the supreme leader final word on all matters of state, but this is expressed more as a veto power than direct involvement in decision making.

When Iran had a reformist president – Mohammad Khatami – from 1997 to 2005, nuclear development was suspended for nearly two years, and the country co-operated closely with the United States on Afghanistan.

Khatami's successor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, of course, has been far more hard-line and has proceeded full steam ahead on the nuclear program. But both men served under Khamenei, who, rather than rule by fiat, tries to build a consensus between different camps. When the supreme leader makes up his mind, it's usually in favour of the policy he thinks has a better chance of being sold to the largest public in Iran.

If the United States has any hope of budging Iran on the nuclear question, it must put itself in Iran's shoes. The need to develop a nuclear capability is something all Iranians agree on. It unites the people – and all the country's political parties – no less than the eight-year war with Iraq did.

A nuclear capability is not just a matter of national pride. It's seen as the ultimate defensive weapon. Iranians are convinced that a nuclear capability – and uranium enrichment may be sufficient here – is the best guarantee against regime change from outside. After all, the United States has invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq, and it's still deeply involved in both countries.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

If America wants to convince Iran to give up its nuclear aspirations, both its carrot and stick need to be massive. The latter would have to be painful and effective sanctions, by no means easy to implement. With or without sanctions, the Islamic Republic has long been good at getting what it needs on the black market, and this could include a nuclear warhead if deemed necessary. A massive carrot, meanwhile, would have to address not only Iran's security but also its economic needs.

We must remember that two political trends prevail in Iran. One, of course, is the trend that preaches hostility toward the United States. It requires the "Great Satan" in order to justify its own human rights breaches and its meddling in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories. This trend represents a minority view, but it's a very dangerous minority, controlling much of the country's resources and production, and also its armed forces and military industries.

In truth, it's not possible to make a deal with the extremists in Iran. This camp uses the conflict with the West, and especially Israel, to maintain its hold on power. Even if most Iranians want a deal with the United States, the extremists have the capacity to scuttle reconciliation. This could be done by, for example, taking American naval forces prisoner in the Persian Gulf and accusing them of trespassing.

At the same time, Iran's rational majority wants normal relations with the West and their country's return to the international community. Even if its leaders are not part of the state's inner circle, they have the support of most of the people. So any move toward reconciliation needs to strengthen the moderates who are already in good positions so they will have popular support to execute the plan.

Therefore, a new approach by the United States should be multilayered. First, it should improve the lives of ordinary Iranians. One incentive could be assistance to the country's civilian aviation industry, since sanctions on Iranian aviation are perceived as contributing to many fatal air crashes.

A dialogue could also connect the U.S. Congress to Iran's parliament, whose members are elected by popular vote – not always a fair vote, but the closest thing. These people reflect both Iran's reformists and conservatives. To be realistic, initial contacts might involve much shouting and finger-pointing, but that's the way to start.

The next step should be mutual access for the media of both countries. This would be especially important for Iranian journalists, who should have the chance to question United States officials and politicians. The press has always been skilled at bypassing censorship, and once talk about America is unencumbered in Iran, the Great Satan will be viewed as plain old America, familiar to people from their childhood because of superheroes such as Batman and Spiderman, and even Barbie.

After that, there should be educational exchanges, especially on legal issues – where the United States can be helpful in the training of human-rights lawyers – and joint cultural events in theatre, books and the arts.

Should America really do all this to win Iran back? One thing is certain: if the United States doesn't do it, no power in Iran can change the status quo. The Islamic Republic can't survive without the existence of the "Great Satan," which justifies its remaining in power to conduct its dirty little games.

Kambiz Tavana is an Iranian investigative journalist who currently works in the Prague headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a news corporation funded by the U.S. Congress.

Netanyahu should attack Iran

By YOSSI MELMAN
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If I were Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's national security adviser, I would advise attacking Iran. It doesn't have to happen immediately. Although Iran has crossed the "technological threshold" and already has most of the know-how, equipment and materials to enable it to create a nuclear bomb, it will take another year at least, and maybe even three, to implement the potential and the capability it has accumulated.

In any case, Israel must wait in order to not disrupt U.S. President Barack Obama's strategy of talking to Iran, a strategy that is destined to fail.

These are the main considerations that should determine whether or not to attack:

1. Would nuclear weapons in Iranian hands really constitute a clear and present danger to the existence of Israel?

2. Does Israel have the intelligence and operational capability to enable it to strike hard at Iran's nuclear sites?

3. What damage would be caused to Israel by an Iranian response?

4. Would an Israeli attack harm vital U.S. interests?

5. How would the Arab world react to such an attack?

As an adviser, here are my answers.

1. It's not certain that nuclear bombs in Iranian hands would necessarily constitute an existential threat to Israel. The Gulf states, such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, should be more afraid than Israel, and in fact they are extremely worried. It's also difficult to imagine that the ayatollahs would use nuclear weapons. Such a use would not only eradicate the nation being attacked, it would also destroy the regime of the religious leaders as well as the lives of millions of people in Iran. But Israel will still have difficulty trusting the rationalism of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Ayatollah Ali Khomanei.

2. Israel has the military ability to cause serious damage to the Iranian nuclear program, to hit the nerve centres of production: the uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, the uranium conversion facility in Isfahan and several additional sites where they are working on assembling the bomb. Such an attack would delay Iran's nuclear capability by several years, but would not destroy it entirely.

3. Iran has about 100 missiles that can reach Israel, and it would also activate Hezbollah and its terror networks worldwide. But in spite of its technological achievements, Iran is a backward country, burdened with problems of prostitution, drugs, poverty, ignorance and above all, corruption. It's doubtful whether a country that is riddled with rot is capable of maintaining a strong and efficient army. Iran is a paper tiger.

4. An attack that's not co-ordinated with Washington would cause a deep rift with the United States and lead to the imposition of harsh sanctions against Israel.

5. The Arab and Muslim world would condemn Israel.

Ostensibly, the obvious conclusion from these answers is that an attack against Iran is too great a gamble, one that Israel's leadership should not take. That is also the reigning opinion among senior members of the Obama administration – from Vice-President Joe Biden to Defence Secretary Robert Gates, who recently spoke on the subject – and most U.S. experts.

An exception to this group thinking can be found in words written recently by editor David Samuels in the online magazine Slate, in an article titled, "Why Israel will bomb Iran." The essence of his assumptions, which favour attack, are as follows: Israel's special status in the United States stems not only from common cultural values and the Christian belief in the Holy Land and from the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust, but also, and primarily, from Israel's image as the lone ranger who fights the bad guys in the Wild West of the Middle East, in order to defend its existence. Recently there have been cracks in this image due to what are seen as Israel's failures in the most recent campaigns against Hezbollah and Hamas. In Samuels' opinion, Israeli weakness is undermining strategic co-operation with the United States, while Iran is trying to achieve regional hegemony.

According to Samuels, while an Israeli attack may serve American interests, it will force the Obama administration to behave as though those interests have actually been harmed. The angry Arab and Muslim world will always suspect that Washington was a secret partner and gave Israel the green light to attack. In order to assuage Arab Muslim anger, the United States will have to force Israel to withdraw from the territories and enable the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Therefore, a good adviser must tell Netanyahu: don't wait until they force you to do something you don't want to do. Pre-empt it. An attack on Iran is a window of opportunity that could not only remove the nuclear threat, but also restore Israel's status as a regional superpower and its image as crazy and unpredictable, and a state that will stop at nothing.

The truth is that such an attack serves the interests of the United States, the West and the Arab world, but they would find it difficult to admit it and would be forced to respond harshly to an Israeli offensive. Therefore, if I were the national security adviser, I would explain to the prime minister that an attack alone, even if it succeeds, would not serve Israel's true national interests.

In order to implement a strategic breakthrough, the Israeli government will have to orchestrate a formative historic event. It must agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state and operate at a feverish pace to that end. In such a case, not only would the United States and the pro-Western Sunni Arab world accept the attack on their Shiite rival, they would even welcome it, thus making it possible to pave the way to more peace agreements with Arab nations, security arrangements and a strategic alliance based on common interests.

Opinions

The power of sacrifice

Each year, when the Torah reading approaches Vayikra, I struggle with Vayikra's focus on animal sacrifice. Contemporary consumers buy meat in groceries, never witnessing the slaughter of animals. The thought that this gory act is to be done in a sacred place seems bizarre to 21st-century minds. Many, uncertain in their understanding of Vayikra, take solace in Maimonides' controversial remarks considering animal sacrifice to be a concession to the cultural norms of the biblical period. If that's Maimonides' view, we think, it's not so bad if we can't understand sacrifices either.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

But discomfort with Vayikra goes beyond PETA-style concerns. In Vayikra, animal sacrifice serves as a proxy for ourselves. Each sacrifice is a replay of the drama of the Akedah, with the owner playing Isaac's role. This type of selfless devotion is foreign to a zeitgeist built around personal identity.

Identity reigns supreme. Our designer-made possessions reflect our "personal style," and we focus on self-esteem and self-confidence. Intertwined with our self-absorption is a materialism that is bonus-built, consumption-driven, and consumer-oriented. This is not a sacrifice-friendly culture.

However, sacrifice is an idea whose time has come. The outrage over executive bonuses shows the deep anger at the corporate world's sense of entitlement. There has been a realization that the economic crisis is not simply a failure of the financial system, but also a failure of character, a crisis brought on by the arrogance and greed of traders and bankers. Humility and selflessness, the core virtues of sacrifice, are the very things we so desperately lack.

The midrash says there is nothing more perfect for serving God than the humble, broken heart. A humble heart has remarkable spiritual powers. Its vision isn't clouded by ego, and its generosity isn't smothered by greed.

Seen this way, sacrifice isn't about destruction. On the contrary, sacrifice releases the power of a humble heart.

While the past year has produced more than its share of villains, there are quiet heroes as well. Chesley Sullenberger landed a full airplane without working engines in the Hudson River, saving 155 lives. Beyond Sullenberger's flying skills was a deep sense of dedication. He didn't leave the sinking plane until he had walked the entire cabin twice to verify everyone had left, and insisted that he be the last one to leave the life raft he was in.

Sullenberger's heroism reminds us of forgotten virtues. As we see how greed and grift have ravaged our economy, perhaps it's time to respect those who live lives of dedication. Perhaps it's time to remember the virtues of humility and generosity.

Perhaps it's time to remember the power of sacrifice.

Durban II: Let's turn a negative into a positive

An internet petition titled "Jewish Canadians Concerned about Suppression of Criticism of Israel," would be laughable if it was not so tragic and typical. Of all the modern ills to worry about, as Jews and as Canadians, this problem seems trivial. Especially following the Gaza operation, claiming that criticism of Israel is being suppressed is like claiming that Canadians don't talk enough about the weather.

Gil Troy in Montreal

These are boom times for Israel critics. Anti-Israel week has become a fixture on many campuses, perpetuating the libel that Israel's actions in defending itself in its nationalist conflict with Palestinians are comparable to South African racism. Year-round, Israel has become the left's favourite whipping boy, demonized in the sloppiest and most distorted of ways.

Self-righteous protesters, however, love feeling oppressed. No self-respecting Israel-bashers in North America want to admit that their position allies them with the world's dictators and anti-Semites, with evil Arab oil monarchs and genocidal Hamas terrorists, with nuclear-proliferating Iranian mullahs and racist, sexist, homophobes hostile to democracy, with right-wing neo-Nazis and left-wing purveyors of the "Zionism is racism" libel. So what better way to earn some radical street cred than to claim that evil forces are suppressing speech, resurrecting the anti-Communist excesses of the 1950s?

The petition is just one more example of these attacks' intensity and inaccuracy. "We do not believe that Israel acts in self-defence," these self-righteous scolds proclaim. This claim ignores more than 1,179 innocents (and counting) that Palestinian terrorists have murdered since Israel compromised during the Oslo peace process, the 10,000 Qassam rockets fired under the lovely auspices of Hamas, and the relentless attacks on bar mitzvahs and seders, cafes, university cafeterias, kindergartens and bars. This lie ignores the culture of peace Israel has created despite it all, and the pornographic culture of political violence that pollutes the Palestinian national movement. This distortion overlooks Israel's treaties with Egypt and Jordan, its concessions to Yasser Arafat and his Fatah movement in the 1990s, and Israel's voluntary withdrawal from Gaza less than four years ago.

To "back up" the claim, the petitioners assert that "Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, receiving $3 million a day." This lie, which some students parroted back to me recently, too, ignores the fact that since 2003, American foreign aid to Iraq has often dwarfed American foreign aid to all countries combined.

But why let facts get in the way of a popular talking point?

I don't fear these Israel-bashers and their treasured libel-Israel week. As a strong believer in free speech, I wouldn't do anything to prevent peaceful political activities on campus, no matter how absurd or intellectually dishonest. Petitions such as this only prove how jaundiced so many Israel critics are, whether they're Jewish or not. I trust the court of public opinion to reject these half-truths. I'm proud to see how Canadian public opinion has soured on the Palestinian case, appalled by the terrorism and frequently seeing through the victimization routine that avoids compromising to achieve pragmatic solutions.

My fear is that not enough of "us" – Jews and non-Jews who care about the truth, who resent the libels – are willing and able to refute these lies, to punch through the postures. With the world set to witness the followup to the 2001 UN anti-racism conference (held in Durban, South Africa), where pro-Palestinian forces will shift the focus from the serious challenge of fighting racism to trendy demonization of the Jewish state, let's learn from Jewish tradition to turn a negative into a positive. Every day that Durban II meets, let us have teach-ins about Israel and celebrations of Zionism. For each lie cast, let's try to plant some seeds of truth, ensuring that in the end, good will triumph.

Braided memories of the Holocaust

Shortly before his death, the Italian chemist and writer Primo Levi observed that the stories of the victims of the Holocaust, "those who did not return," can never be fully recovered. Levi acknowledges the limitations of the memories of survivors like himself who, while having suffered unspeakably in concentration camps, "never fathomed them to the bottom." But unwilling to consign the dead to oblivion, Levi understands that the living must "speak in their stead, by proxy."

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

When we gather as a community on Yom Hashoah to remember the Holocaust and to commemorate its victims, we take on Levi's mantle of memory by proxy. By now, of course, the majority of people at commemorative ceremonies have no personal memory of the Nazi genocide. Our remembrance draws on several memory strands: personal memory, familial memory, collective memory and historiography.

Personal memory draws on the recollections of survivors and other eyewitnesses. We are privileged to live among survivors of Nazi persecution who made their way to Canada. These personal memories, shared with one's intimate circle and sometimes with total strangers, open a portal to the past as nothing else can. Many survivors have made the painful journey backward into the past to write memoirs, record testimonies and craft creative works.

Familial memory builds on a mixture of stories, traditions and ways of being that are passed down from generation to generation, both consciously and unconsciously. Graphic artist Art Spiegelman, for example, recalls that when his mother would take him shopping as a little boy and he needed to find a washroom, she would tell him quite casually of the latrines at Auschwitz. One of my students told me she saw aspects of her father in a story our class was reading about a child survivor who, as an adult, kept purchasing properties in an impossible attempt to recover his lost home.

Collective memory is forged from the way that a community looks back at the past and understands its meaning. Even when time passes and the events recede into the distant past, they remain in living memory, relevant to the present. Like the story of Pesach, the way a society speaks about its past both reflects and affirms its sense of identity, values, and cohesion as a people.

These three ways of engaging the past – personal, familial and collective – have traditionally been seen as different from, and in opposition to, historiography, the writing of history. Relying on documentary evidence to establish a factual account of what happened, history has been seen as a more objective, distanced endeavour, more reliable than memory, but also more detached.

This dichotomy is spelled out by Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist who first developed the concept of collective memory. Writing between the two world wars, he noted: "So long as remembrance continues to exist, it is useless to set it down in writing or otherwise fix it in memory… the need to write the history of a period, a society, or even a person is only aroused when the subject is already too distant in the past to allow for the testimony of those who preserve some memory of it."

Much of what we understand today of collective memory draws on Halbwachs' insights. But the study of the Holocaust has broken down the opposition between history and memory, bringing these two modes into fruitful conversation. Historical documentation has been ongoing, robust and abundant. Simultaneously, the voice of testimony has grown more urgent and more resonant.

Poignantly, Halbwachs himself would not live to see the evolution of his concepts. A Catholic professor at the Sorbonne, he was married to a Jewish woman, the daughter of a prominent French Jewish intellectual. Outraged by the roundup of French Jews by the French militia, Halbwachs protested to the Vichy government. After his wife and in-laws were deported to concentration camps, he himself was imprisoned by the Gestapo in Lyons, and then sent to Buchenwald. His death there is recounted by his former student, the novelist Jorge Semprun, who was sent to Buchenwald as a member of the Resistance.

Holocaust commemoration exemplifies Halbwachs' understanding of memory as dynamic, profound and alive. Drawing on diverse sources of knowledge and understanding, it allows us to braid these varied strands into a complex retrieval of the past.

The Kirshner File

Israel and Turkey weather a crisis in relations

Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip this past January prompted four countries – Mauritania, Qatar, Venezuela and Bolivia – to sever bilateral ties with the Jewish state. Israel took these diplomatic setbacks in stride, but when Turkey condemned Operation Cast Lead, as the massive three-week incursion was dubbed, Israel took the criticism to heart, pulling out all stops to avoid a fullblown rupture of relations.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Although Israel values all its international relationships, even with nations of no real geopolitical importance, Israel was particularly concerned by Turkey's vitriolic response to its invasion of Gaza. Turkey is not only Israel's closest Muslim partner, but it was the first Islamic state to recognize Israel, even though Turkey voted against the 1947 United Nations Palestine partition plan. Since the 1990s, Israel's political, economic and military relationship with Turkey has grown exponentially, despite opposition from neighbouring nations such as Iran and Syria, and a flood of Israeli tourists has poured into Turkey.

For a while after January, these gains seemed threatened by Turkey's harsh reaction to Israel's thrust into Gaza. Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan – the leader of a moderate Islamic party – led the charge, describing Israel's land and air campaign as an example of disproportionate force, "a crime against humanity" and "a dark stain on human history."

In a further rebuke, he called for Israel's ouster from the United Nations and deplored its deployment of white phosphorous shells. All the while, he claimed that he is not an anti-Semite, even as he brazenly suggested that the "Jewish-backed media" had circulated a false story that Hamas forced Palestinian civilians in Gaza to be human shields.

Capping his blistering critique, Erdogan, who visited Israel four years ago, petulantly stormed off a stage at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, after an unpleasant verbal exchange with Israel's president, Shimon Peres, who less than two years earlier had become the first Israeli to address the Turkish parliament, the Grand National Assembly. After Erdogan accused Israel of "killing people," Peres, pointing his fingers directly at him, declared that Turkey would have responded in identical fashion had enemy rockets been fired at Istanbul, his hometown.

By all accounts, Erdogan's anger stemmed from his belief that Israel's then-prime minister, Ehud Olmert, had "betrayed" and "stabbed him in the back." Olmert visited Turkey a few days before Israel attacked Gaza, but much to Erdogan's embarrassment, he did not bother informing him of Israel's intentions. As a result, members of Erdogan's Justice and Development party accused him of conspiring with Israel to betray the Palestinians.

Nonetheless, Erdogan rebuffed calls to break relations with Israel, explaining that Turkey's foreign policy is based on reason rather than emotion. As he put it, "Dear friends, we are not running a supermarket here, we are running the Republic of Turkey."

Despite Erdogan's note of caution, Israel came under heavy fire from his government. The president, Abdullah Gul, having cancelled a visit to Israel during the war, deplored the invasion as "a criminal act." The justice minister, Al Mehmet Sahin, went further, asserting that Israel is "the biggest provocateur of terror in the world."

In keeping with the anti-Israel atmosphere prevalent in Turkey, the chief prosecutor's office in Ankara, the Turkish capital, announced an investigation into Israel's operation to determine whether it could be classified as genocide.

Yet even as they demonized Israel, the Turks were careful not to burn their bridges and started the process of mending fences with their Israeli allies. Shortly after the Gaza war ended on Jan. 18, Turkey's deputy prime minister, Cemil Cicek, said, "We want to protect our relations with [Israel]"

In line with this conciliatory approach, Gul sent Peres a letter expressing a desire to visit Israel in the coming months. Meanwhile Erdogan and Peres talked by phone, agreeing that the Davos incident should not affect relations. Olmert, calling them important, asked his fellow ministers to exercise restraint.

To quell lingering tension, the then-Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, met with her Turkish counterpart, Ali Babacan, while Israel's chief of staff, Gen. Gabi Askenazi, apologized for comments made by the commander of Israel's ground forces, Gen. Avi Mizrachi, who criticized Turkey's 1974 invasion of Cyprus and its treatment of ethnic Kurds.

As the crisis wound down, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, who had been in Ankara only months earlier to tighten military cooperation with Turkey, said, "Turkey is a country of strategic importance in the Middle East. We have a long history of extensive and important ties with Turkey. The sooner we ease tensions and reach a mutual understanding with it on how to fight terror, the better."

Ehud Olmert and Recep Tayyip Erdogan meet in Ankara [Flash 90 photo]

In this spirit, Israel's ambassador to Turkey, Gabby Levy, and Turkey's envoy in Israel, Namik Tan, delivered soothing statements in a demonstration of public diplomacy.

Levy, saying that he was working to repair relations, observed that Turkey draws a distinction between bilateral ties and its pique over the invasion. Tan, emphasizing the centrality of Turkey's links with Israel, referred to them as "strategic."

With these upbeat comments, Israel and Turkey patched up their quarrel over Gaza. Turkey took delivery of a shipment of Israeli drones, even as Erdogan hurled invective at Israel, while Israel announced it would hold joint naval exercises with Turkey in the summer.

But if the past is any guide, the simmering Palestinian question is likely to be a source of acrimony yet again in the future.

Turkey denounced "Israeli oppression" of the Palestinians after the outbreak of the first intifadah in 1987. In 1988, Turkey became the first country with formal relations with Israel to recognize the concept of Palestinian independence within the framework of a sovereign state. In 2004, Erdogan branded Israel as a "terrorist state" after it assassinated the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in Gaza.

Erdogan's party is partial to Hamas, even though Erdogan himself rejects "ethnic nationalism" and politics based on identity. Not long after Hamas won the Palestinian election in 2006, the Justice and Development party invited Khaled Meshal, a senior Hamas official, to Turkey. Erdogan did not meet with Meshal, but he criticized Israel's blockade of Gaza and suggested that Israel should respect the will of the Palestinian electorate.

On the other hand, Erdogan has taken Hamas to task for its use of terrorist violence to achieve political ends. Turkey's foreign minister, who has mediated peace talks between Israel and Syria and is now ready to try again, has been forthright on this issue. He has urged Hamas to abandon armed struggle in favour of working within "the political system."

Beyond the prickly Palestinian issue, Israel and Turkey have disagreed on a number of other issues.

Turkey expressed concern that Israeli jets en route to bombing a nuclear facility in Syria in 2007 jettisoned their fuel tanks near its border with Syria.

Israel annoyed Turkey by rejecting a Turkish Cypriot request to open a representative office in Tel Aviv and to build a field hospital near Gaza. Israel and Turkey have been at odds over Iran's nuclear program. Turkey has repeatedly pressed Israel not to recognize the wholesale massacre of Armenian civilians during World War I.

Despite these irritants, and the fallout from the recent war in Gaza, Israel and Turkey remain close allies.

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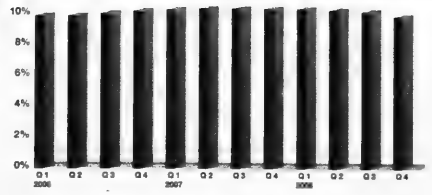

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Durban II will 'scapegoat' Jewish people: PM

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

In a Monday-morning conference call with journalists organized by the Washington-based think-tank The Israel Project, Prime Minister Stephen Harper repeated Canada's denunciation of this week's United Nations World Conference Against Racism.

Stephen Harper

Speaking just before the start of the anti-racism conference in Geneva, Harper – who called in from Kingston, Jamaica, where he was scheduled to hold bilateral trade talks with Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding – reminded reporters that in June 2008, Canada was the first country to pull out of the conference, known as Durban II.

At that time, he said, Canada also indicated it "would not fund the participation of Canadian NGOs in the Durban process," he said.

"We're pleased that many countries have since followed Canada's lead in withdrawing."

As of Monday morning, the list of non-participating countries had grown to eight, with the United States, Australia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and New Zealand joining Canada and Israel on the sidelines.

Feature

Harper said Canada was "leading the world in championing international understanding and pluralism" and also in its stance against anti-Semitism and racism "in all other forms. We're very concerned that anti-Semitism is growing in volume and acceptance, justified by opposition to Israel itself."

He added: "Canada will not lend its name and reputation to an international conference that promotes these kinds of things."

Citing Canada's participation in the preparatory committee for this year's conference, Harper said it was clear from the start that Durban II will be nothing more than an attempt to "scapegoat the Jewish people."

Harper also criticized the fact that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – who has repeatedly called for the eradication of the State of Israel and denied the Holocaust – was the only head of state scheduled to address the conference on Monday, and noted that his address was timed "no doubt" to coincide with Yom Hashoah, he said.

"Our government will participate in any international conference that combats racism," Harper said. "We will not, however, lend Canada's good name to those, such as Durban II, that promote it."

Amnesty's dangerous defamation

By HASKELL NUSSBAUM

Amnesty International owes Israel a heartfelt apology. The world's premier human rights organization, with nearly two million members across the globe and the winner of a Nobel Peace Prize, recently called for an embargo against Israel due to its "war crimes," a serious charge.

Only Israel did not commit war crimes.

Under the Geneva Conventions, an attack that kills civilians is a war crime only if it is "excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated." Amnesty nowhere mentions on what evidence it decided that Israel used "excessive" force compared to the military advantage that Israel anticipated by targeting Hamas personnel and rocket launchers that were aimed at Israeli civilian population centres.

Guest Voice

Moreover, Amnesty also fails to mention that Israel repeatedly took steps to warn the civilian population to avoid proximity to military targets, including phoning civilians on their cellphones to warn them of upcoming strikes on their building – a first in the history of warfare. It does not mention that Israel routinely utilizes "smart" bombs that minimize collateral civilian deaths and that the Hamas launchers were deliberately embedded in densely civilian areas.

Of course, Amnesty did not make these charges in a legal venue. And if the organization was a small, student-run group, one could perhaps forgive them for being careless about the legal implications of their words. But for Amnesty, with its reputable bona fides and its wide experience in courts across the world, one must assume that their words were chosen carefully and for the audience intended: the courtroom of public opinion.

And that is precisely why Amnesty ought to be ashamed. Not only is it defaming a country's behaviour unjustifiably, it is watering down the very concept and terminology of war crimes. It is cheapening the charge of "war crimes" that ought to be legitimately applied when civilians are deliberately targeted and killed. After Amnesty's reckless use of the phrase, when Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir is charged with "war crimes" one must either draw the conclusion that, for Amnesty, Israel's behaviour is on par with al-Bashir's, or that the term "war crime" is hopelessly broad and effectively meaningless.

Nor is Amnesty alone in its watering down of once-legal concepts and terminology, especially when activists are targeting Israel.

For example, Israel is often accused of being an "apartheid" state. The term apartheid is specific and narrowly defined and it is clear that Israel, which grants full legal rights to its Arab citizens, does not fall into the category. Yet that does not stop a former U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, from using the term in connection with Israel; it does not stop students across the world from convening an annual "Israeli Apartheid Week"; and it does not stop even former Israeli ministers, such as Shulamit Aloni, from making the same charge.

This dangerous trend of watering down legal concepts for the purpose of attacking Israel has already had real implications in the world of law. Thus, a Spanish court recently decided to investigate Israeli soldiers for possible war crimes related to a 2002 attack on a top Hamas terrorist. (The Spanish prosecutor investigator has since suggested the investigation be called off.) The Israeli government has announced that it will help defend soldiers charged with war crimes over their actions in Gaza. And international NGO's such as Human Rights Watch, have called on the UN Security Council to set up a commission of inquiry into alleged Israeli war crimes.

All this is possible because Amnesty and others who defame Israel know that they can do so with impunity. They suffer virtually no negative effects due to their libel. For Amnesty, the organization's deep coffers insulate it from most criticism, and for many of the other NGO's, their anti-Israel agenda is part of their appeal to their funders. There is nary a court in the world where Israel could expect to win a defamation suit against those accusing it of war crimes or of being an apartheid state. And the more effort Israel expends defending itself, the more the charges enter the public's lexicon and, over time, become intractably associated with the Jewish state.

It is for this reason that it is so important for public leaders to "name and shame" those groups who charge Israel with crimes it did not commit and who recklessly water down the effect of heinous crimes by attributing them falsely or without due weight. It is imperative that people who care about human rights protest when the premier human rights organization in the world issues exaggerated and hyperbolic reports about "war crimes." It is vital that victims of the real apartheid in South Africa speak out against the watering down of their pain.

At a minimum, it is time for every one of Amnesty's members to demand that the organization issues an apology to Israel.

Haskell Nussbaum is a lawyer and author.

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Shoah service to be held in Oshawa

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jenny Eisenstein, a Holocaust survivor who has spent the last six decades performing songs of defiance and hope, will be the special guest at a Holocaust memorial service at the Beth Zion Congregation in Oshawa on Sunday.

Eisenstein, born and raised in Poland, has been performing Jewish and Yiddish folk songs since 1950 for audiences that have included former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel.

She said she likes to represent the poets and writers who documented what happened during World War II while the events were unfolding.

"They wrote poems, they wrote essays, the history of each day they lived through during those devastating years, and I am committed to bring their names to life and let people of today know that we were cultured people and we did not just face the tragedy without being aware of how important it is to memorialize it in writing," said Eisenstein, who was liberated from Auschwitz and currently lives in Thornhill.

During the April 26 memorial service, Eisenstein said she plans to speak about the day the Komionka Ghetto, where she and her family were forced to live near her hometown of Bedzin, Poland, was liquidated.

Having recorded her testimony on paper, Eisenstein said she plans to read her story about the hunger and thirst she and her family experienced, as well as the unsanitary conditions they were forced to live in and the day they were sent to Auschwitz.

Eisenstein said she will also sing songs that were written before and during the war.

One of the songs she'll perform, Es Brent (It Is Burning), written by Mordechai Gebirtig in 1938, was a prophetic song, she said.

"This was a song we sang that was a call before the Nazis came in. He was warning the people. He was inspiring."

One of the verses reads: "It is burning, brothers, it is burning! You are the only source of help. If you value your town, take up the tools to put out the fire, put out the fire with your own blood. Don't just stand there, brothers, with your arms folded. Don't just stand there, brothers. Put out the fire, because our town is burning."

She said that she intentionally chooses songs and poetry that have a message of defiance.

She said that The Partisan Song by Herschel Glick, who was a ghetto fighter from Vilna, is one of those songs that she plans to perform at the service.

"[The song] spread throughout all the concentration camps. That is where I learned it," Eisenstein said.

"It is a song of defiance, it is a song of hope, a song of the energy that we still possess and we mustn't diminish it."

The second and third verses of The Partisan Song are, "From lands of green palm trees to lands all white with snow, we are coming with our pain and with our woe. And where'er a spurt of our blood will drop, our courage will again sprout from that spot.

"For us the morning sun will radiate that day and the enemy and past will fade away. But should the dawn delay our sunrise wait too long, then let all future generations sing this song."

When asked to speak about what the songs mean to her, Eisenstein was overcome with emotion.

"Every time I perform, I pray that my songs will be heard, not only with the ears, but with the heart," she said.

"I see what I sing. I see it before my eyes, the events which have been recorded in that poem. I am hoping that it penetrates my audience."

The message Eisenstein wants younger generations to walk away with is that the Jewish people are strong and must "overcome the difficulties that appear on the horizon.

"We must go beyond it and know that we are worthy to be an independent people. We are worthy to stand in line with any nation and live up to the principles of humanity and of justice."

Lina Zatzman, who organized the service along with Cheryl Frayne and Marian Kassel, said that the service will also memorialize the victims of other genocides, such as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the ongoing genocide in Darfur.

Israel 2009 - 10

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On Campus

Jewish students dump paper with anti-Israel images

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Two Jewish students at York University took matters into their own hands earlier this month when they found cartoons in a left-wing campus newspaper that depicted Israelis as murderous Nazis killing Palestinians in Gaza

On April 6, the YU Free Press, a new monthly publication backed by union and student groups, issued a statement that said more than 1,000 copies of its March-April edition were thrown out by pro-Israel students Aaron Rosenberg and Moe Levin, who were recorded on video disposing of the papers.

"We found the first copies being put on the stacks and we opened it up to find anti-Semitic cartoons and anti-Israel rhetoric," Levin said.

"The most vehemently anti-Semitic thing in it were the cartoons… We threw it out in the same way that if we saw a swastika we would rub it out."

An article, written by Ali Mustafa, a member of Students Against Israeli Apartheid, included an interview with cartoonist Carlos Latuff and two of Latuff's cartoons about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Latuff – who won second place in Iran's International Holocaust Cartoon Contest in 2006 – is the same cartoonist responsible for the image printed on a recent Israeli Apartheid Week poster that depicted a helicopter labelled "Israel" firing a missile at a teddy-bear-holding toddler labelled "Gaza."

The poster was banned at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

One of the cartoons that accompanied Latuff's YU Free Press interview depicts Israelis dressed as Nazis executing people in shallow graves dug in the shape of the word Gaza.

Another image shows a Palestinian wearing a concentration camp uniform lying dead next to the security barrier.

One of two cartoons that appeared in the latest YU Free Press

Levin said the newspaper is "operating under the guise of free expression" but "this isn't criticism of Israel, this is unbridled anti-Semitism."

"What has been going on on campus is a steady evolution from the criticism of Israel to anti-Semitism," he said.

Levin said he has been in contact with MPs and the media to make them aware of the climate at York.

"We're hoping this gets exposed for what it is and that York is allowing this to be published under the guise of free expression."

But in its statement, the YU Free Press said that whether or not the cartoons are anti-Semitic is not the most important issue.

"What is of importance here is not so much the disputed content in question and whether or not it constitutes a particular kind of racism, but the fact that the elected response taken by these two individuals was to decide the matter for students rather than allowing them the opportunity to decide it for themselves."

Victoria Barnett, a member of the YU Free Press editorial collective, said the article and the photos fell within the newspaper's mandate, which is funded by unions such as CUPE 3903, which represents sessional teachers and teaching assistants at York, and student groups such as Ontario Public Interest Research Group, an organization that supports groups such as the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

"I don't think it's anti-Semitic, but it is a political cartoon," Barnett said.

"In the article, [Latuff] talks about his reasons for drawing particular things, and I think the cartoons are like any political cartoons that you can look up in other papers."

When asked if an image that paints all Israelis as murderous Nazis can incite hatred against Israelis as a collective group, she said, "I understand what you're saying, but… if the cartoons were anti-Semitic, if it was seen as a hate crime, we could be charged with that. But it's not… There is not enough evidence to press charges against us."

She added that the real issue is the fact that Levin and Rosenberg committed theft when they disposed of the newspapers.

"I understand people's discomfort with the cartoons, but there are other avenues of disagreeing with that and not throwing it out."

She said people should refer to the mandate of the newspaper, which states that it's "opposed to oppression in all its possible forms, and anti-Semitism falls under the idea of oppression in some sense."

York spokesperson Richard Fisher said that while "community groups are approved to get stands [to distribute publications on campus]… we don't have any control on the content. We also distribute the Toronto Star, and we have no control over that, either."

He said three complaints against the newspaper have been filed with the university and referred to York's human rights office.

In its press release, the paper's editorial collective said that it also filed a complaint with York, but Fisher said the administration has yet to receive one.

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Toronto's Jewish Community celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut

Sherman Campus hosts Independence Day festivities

Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations on Wednesday, April 29 promises fun for everyone.

On Wednesday, April 29, UJA Federation's Sherman Campus will be home to a family-friendly celebration in honour of the 61st anniversary of Israel's Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut).

Jewish Toronto is joining Jewish communities from around the world to mark Israel's birthday.

The celebration, which will take place in the Sherman Campus' south parking lot beginning at 5:30 p.m., will feature live Israeli music, inflatable carnival rides, children's entertainment, Israeli food and a kosher barbecue.

Thousands are expected to attend the annual celebration, sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and its Israeli Forum.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to not only celebrate Israel for its extraordinary accomplishments, its vibrant diversity and democracy, but to also celebrate the shared values between our community here in Toronto and Israel," said Mark Gold, chair of UJA Federation's Israeli Forum.

The Israeli Forum was established by UJA Federation to reperesent and cater to the unique needs of the Israeli Canadian community, utilizing their strength and resources to create an umbrella network.

"Toronto and Israel have always shared a unique and unbreakable bond, a bond that began even before the creation of the state itself," said UJA Federation board chair, David Koschitzky. "Each year, on Yom Ha'atzmaut, we have the opportunity to celebrate Israel and all that she means to us, with our friends and loved ones. Yom Ha'atzmaut has always been a special day in the lives of Jewish Torontonians, and this year's festivities promise to be unforgettable."

Women's Philanthropy: new name, same commitment

By Daniel Horowitz

The chair, vice chair and executive of United Jewish Appeal's Women's Philanthropy (formerly known as Women's Campaign & Advocacy) were recently installed, and with this talented roster of volunteers, things bode well for the coming year.

Liora Yakubowicz, the immediate past chair of Women's Campaign & Advocacy, explained the name change during the installation ceremony, recently held at The Lipa Green Building for Jewish Community Services, situated on Sherman Campus.

"Beginning with this evening's installation, we will be known as Women's Philanthropy," explained Yakubowicz. "The name Women's Philanthropy reflects the reality of the work all of us do at United Jewish Appeal – raising urgently needed funds, encouraging connection, community and friendship."

More than 100 people in attendance were introduced to the new chair of Women's Philanthropy, Andrea Cohen, and vice chair Sarena Koschitzky.

"The late Golda Meir once said, 'I would like to think that some day, when our dreams have been fulfilled, they will say it was women, giving of their ideas and resources, that made the difference,'" said Cohen. "Golda's words were visionary, and I feel incredibly proud to be standing here today in the wake of her legacy, representing UJA Women's Philanthropy."

The foundation of Women's Philanthropy is based upon six pillars:

- *Talmud Torah* – Jewish Learning
- *Chesed* – Kindness and Caring
- *Tzedakah* – Social Justice
- *Elu V'elu* – Diversity and Unity
- *Ahavat Israel* – Love of Israel
- *Tikun Olam* – Repairing the World

"I have many goals and dreams for the coming year," said Cohen. "But, most importantly, I want every woman on my team to feel personally invested in our work. I want the year to be educational – I want us to learn more about the needs and to understand the impact of our work – because therein lies the true value of our collective effort. We know that we have a challenging year ahead; but it is particularly during times like these that we must remind ourselves of the many people both in Israel and here, at home, that depend on the efforts of UJA."

The chairs of United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010, Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, also addressed those in attendance.

"Lisa, let me begin by wishing you a *yasher koach*," said Kimel - a past chair of Women's Campaign & Advocacy - to Lisa Draper, the outgoing chair of Women's Philanthropy, and the new chair of Campaign Operations for 2010. "Your passion inspired women in Toronto to become involved, and truly make a difference in the lives of so many. You inspired the women of our community to step forward, roll up their sleeves and shine."

"Debbie and I are confident that the women of our community will once again step up and show just how important a woman's gift, a woman's commitment, and a woman's touch is to this upcoming, important campaign," said Tanenbaum. "There is simply no limit to what motivated women, working together, can accomplish."

Women's Philanthropy Executive 2010: *Seated (l-r): Nurit Barr, Lisa Draper, immediate past chair; Andrea Cohen, chair; Sarena Koschitzky, vice chair and Felicia Posluns. Standing (l-r): Laurie Sheff, Karine Krieger, Anita Robins; Barbara Bregman, Agi Mandel, Lindy Goodman, Susan Maldoff, Shanitha Kachan and Cathy Belzberg. (Not pictured) Lesley Binstock Offman, Stacey Cohen, Camille Dan, Clara Cooper, Nancy Duckman, Tamara Fine, Judith Finer Freedman, Cindy Gordon, Carol Handelman, Elise Herzig, Varda Jourdan, Lauren Kimel Wise, Melanie Kraft, Jillian Robins, Lori Rosenthal, Hinda Silber, Janice Tkatch, Linda Waks and Kimberley Walters.*

Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership: Call for Nominations

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's successful leadership development initiative, The Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership, is now accepting nominations for prospective new volunteer leaders in the Jewish community. UJA Federation is inviting community members to nominate individuals who have demonstrated leadership potential for The Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership, Future Volunteer Leaders program which will begin fall 2009, lasting 14 months.

The deadline for nominations is April 30, 2009. For more information about the program and to obtain a nomination form please visit jewishtoronto.com/JoshuaInstitute, call 416.849.3137 or email Zeeva Millman, director of the Joshua Institute, at zmillman@ujafed.org

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Send your entry to: "Morrie" at contest@cjnews.com, or by mail to The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, North York, Ont. M3B 3K4 or fax to: 416-391-0949
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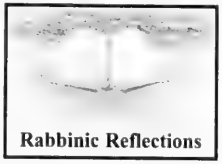
Jewish Life

The story of Job: a lesson for today

By RABBI ELEANOR STEINMAN



My strategy for reading the news each morning is like the way I watch a horror movie. I place my hands over my eyes and only watch through the slits in my fingers. Each time something scary happens on the screen, whether in a movie or on the computer, I quickly cover my eyes.

The difference between a horror movie and the daily news, however, is that the horror movie usually ends after about 90 minutes, whereas each day, the horrible reality of the current economic downturn and its far-reaching effects on people throughout the world seems never-ending.

Many individuals and families are suffering from the repercussions of the present economy, and responding to the sufferer can be challenging for each of us. Our tradition has much to teach us in this area.

The ancient story of Job, a man scrupulously moral, religious, one who has avoided evil, seems to characterize so many in 2009. Job loses everything. His flocks, his servants, even his children. In an instant, all of those safe investments disappear, seemingly into thin air. He sits in mourning, and three friends come to visit. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come from different locations and simply sit with Job until he is ready to speak.

Job mourns his losses. When he speaks, he curses his conception. He feels that if he had never existed, then perhaps none of these tragedies could have occurred and he would not have to experience such profound pain.

His friends present differing theologies that encourage Job to blame or curse God for the problems in his life. Job does not ask for his friends' advice, though they do not hesitate to offer it. Instead of actively listening, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar respond, perhaps trying to follow the way our tradition teaches us to comfort a mourner. There is no response to suffering, and it is challenging to find an adequate response to Job.

Job only gets frustrated and angry, however. He will not curse God, for this is not the theology by which he lives his life. Ultimately, in the course of dialogue, God communicates directly with Job from a whirling storm.

The lesson to take from Job is that the process of asking the questions and searching for meaning is perhaps most important. Job teaches us, when we are ready, to engage in theodicy, a vindication of God's justice in the face of evil, even as those closest to us pose challenges.

After moving through the process of grief, adjusting to the new way of life – perhaps forced upon us unwillingly – we are better able to work on our relationship with God instead of making the current moment function around a notion of God that no longer operates for us in the world.

The search for meaning in the madness is vital for each of us as individuals and as members of the Jewish community interested in supporting those in need.

There is no doubt that the current financial crisis is like a horror film for those who have lost and, unfortunately, will continue to lose. The hope is that when the lights come up and the movie ends, the Jewish community will remain a source of strength and support in the good times just as in the dark hours.

God's presence is steadfast. As it is written in Micah, "Though I have fallen, I rise again;/ Though I sit in darkness, the Eternal is my light."

Rabbi Eleanor Steinman is a rabbi at Temple Sinai Congregation in Toronto.

These were Jewish victims

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

Yom Hashoah is a time for us to take a day to remember the murdered victims of the Holocaust who died because they were Jewish. The events of the Holocaust are being recognized more and more throughout the western world, but only the first half of the previous sentence seems to have meaning in that context.

The murdered victims of the Holocaust teach the world about a terrible act of attempted genocide. It creates an unprecedented reference point of the evil to which humanity can sink. It still generates heated debates on the ethical use of Nazi scientific experimentation data. Governments take time to recognize the horror of the events, and laws are there to protect the denial of these events. The intent is to preserve the memory of the victims and to try to keep this moment in history as an anomaly. All of these things are essential and good. But the word "Jewish" rarely gets highlighted.

Holocaust education has been transformed into genocide education, and although there are certainly crucial and much-needed lessons for all human beings to take from this education, it doesn't include the foundational role of anti-Semitism in the Holocaust. Without making the clear connection between the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, the most fundamental Jewish lesson is never taught.

Shocking studies within secular western schools reveal that the average adolescent involved in Holocaust education believes that Jews really did control all the money and media in pre-Nazi Germany. Of course, this doesn't excuse genocide, but it means Jews were partly to blame, since they conspired to control the wealth. This is the result of Holocaust education without the anti-Semitic component.

As Jews, we hold the value of honouring others and preserving any life that is threatened as one of our highest priorities. We don't speak too much of ourselves, either, because it sounds prideful or because it builds the image of the Jew as victim. By not emphasizing that six million Jews died because they were Jewish and guilty of nothing, we aren't revealing or confronting the subtle acceptance of anti-Semitic myth that lies just beneath the surface of these discussions.

A recent paper delivered at Yale University discussed studies conducted within secular Holocaust education venues that revealed classical anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs among top students. The Holocaust education they received removed the Jewish component and left anti-Jewish myths unchallenged. By removing anything Jewish, the education was now multicultural.

Interestingly, ancient Jewish text touches on the question of warfare that includes the component of perception. The Torah describes the nation of Amalek as a nation that embodies evil for its own sake. Amalek launched an unprovoked attack against the Israelites in the desert. We're commanded to remember what this nation did and to erase its name from the world.

Tradition believes that Haman and Hitler were descendants of Amalek. According to the midrash, one of the most severe damages we endured from Amalek is that although they failed in an ultimate battle against us, they changed the perception of the other nations with regard to Israel. Henceforth, the fledgling nation had to fight the battle of perception as well. How chilling and parallel it is that while the Nazi regime was defeated, its legitimization of anti-Semitic views remains widespread and growing.

This year on Yom Hashoah, we must be certain to remember the words of the Sages who warned us of true evil. It's not only the number of victims that are to be remembered. It's also crucial to remember their innocence. True evil is clever enough to know that changing the perceptions of the world and convincing them of a lie is still a victory.

Jewish Life

Archeology and the birth of Israel

By ALEX GROPPER

Past Forward

The birth of Israel in 1948 marked the start of a flurry of archeological activity in the fledgling state. A number of reasons may account for this.

It may be because, as a new state, Israel was looking to a glorious and hallowed past to bond its diverse population together, as well as to inspire them for the formidable task of building a new nation. Archeology would provide tangible proof that there had been a Jewish presence in Israel for a long time before the establishment of the state in modern times. This common history was something that all Jews shared, regardless of where they came from in the Diaspora.

By as early as 1949, archeological excavations had begun in earnest in the new Jewish state. Benjamin Mazar led one of the first excavations at the site of Tel Qasile, which was located on the campus of Tel Aviv University.

Ironically, Tel Qasile was first settled by the Philistines, the archenemies of the Israelites, at the dawn of the conquest of Canaan, circa 1200 BCE. The Philistines were part of the Sea Peoples, who had close links with the Mycenaean Greeks. These Mycenaean Greeks were the same people whom many scholars think were responsible for the destruction of Troy.

It is an amazing coincidence that these two peoples, the Israelites and the Greeks, who would have such an enormous impact on western civilization, should meet in a life and death struggle at the dawn of both of their histories. It is one of the great ironies of history that the epic stories of these two groups, who provide the foundation of western civilization, were interwoven from such an early time.

But it was another site that would capture the imagination of the new nation and turn its already famous excavator into even more of a household name. The site was Hazor, and its renowned director was Yigael Yadin, who had gained fame as the young chief of staff of the Haganah during the War Of Independence. Afterward, Yadin would become even better known to the public when he managed to retrieve a number of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the State of Israel. These were scrolls that Yadin's father, Prof. Eliezer Sukenik of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, had helped bring to the attention of the world a few years earlier.

While excavating Hazor, Yadin ran across what he considered to be substantive proof for the conquest of Canaan by the ancient Israelites. Here was a site that showed how the ancestors of the modern Israelis had conquered the land that God had promised to Abraham. It was a task that would have to be repeated again by the citizens of the new Jewish state as they fought to preserve their country against hostile neighbours.

At Hazor, Yadin assembled a team that would dominate archeology in Israel for more than a generation. Furthermore, his team would also become the directors of most of the newly emergent institutes of archeology in the new state.

The team included Yohanan Aharoni, who would go on to direct the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University and would become Yadin's opponent on the key issue of the conquest of Canaan in the years to come. Also part of the Hazor team was Ruth Amiran, who would go on to write the definitive work on Israelite pottery titled Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land. Trude Dothan and her husband, Moshe, would become the pre-eminent authorities on the Philistines. They would also individually direct the excavations of a number of major archeological sites, including Ashdod, Acco and Ekron.

But it was another site that Yadin would excavate a few years later that not only captured the imagination of Israel, but captivated the world. That site was Masada. No wonder archeology had become a national pastime in the new nation.

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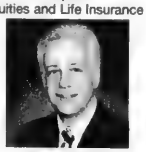

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CORRECTION

In an April 8 Passover greeting we misidentified the

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Canadian Region

The CJN regrets the error.

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Business ethics in tough times

Jewish law has a lot to say about observing Shabbat and eating kosher. But what about how to declare bankruptcy or the proper way to compete for a job? In these tough times, people are facing difficult decisions. Fortunately, Jewish law is able to able to adapt ancient principles to the most modern dilemmas.

Many of the sites that I point to have responses from several rabbis who may interpret sources in different ways. As with any religious questions, please consult a trusted rabbi who understands the details of your particular situation. Many of the halachot of proper business conduct are derived from the body of law called the Choshen Mishpat, which can be studied online in its original **[tinyurl.com/ethics01]**, as well as applied to contemporary situations. **[tinyurl.com/ethics02]** Following are some of the questions they address.

Can a corporation decide to close down an unprofitable business despite the effect it will have on its workers and the community?

Meir Tamari, founder of the Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem, says yes, "provided this is done without fraud, coercion or dishonesty. Judaism would uphold this right." However, Tamari adds, "There are also no rights without obligations… firms, faced with declining profits… are required to assist the workers affected by downsizing." Tamari calls this assistance a form of tzedakah and then adds one more "however": "One is not required to make oneself poor in order to give charity." **[tinyurl.com/ethics05]**

Is there a Jewish way to lay off workers?

A recent article in Forward tells the story of someone who had worked almost 25 years for a Jewish institution and was laid off two years short of retirement. Rabbi Elliot Dorff, feels that "it's just mean, frankly, to fire people at that stage." Rabbi Dorff says that Jewish texts and tradition are filled with discussion about the importance of work – and the responsibility that employers have to employees. When his own institution, the American Jewish University, faced cutbacks, staff elected to take salary cuts as a group rather than allowing any individuals to lose their jobs. **[tinyurl.com/ethics06]**

I came across a fascinating case heard by the beit din of Haifa about a school maintenance worker who was dismissed after 12 years service. The court ordered the employer to go beyond the letter of the law, to not only pay him an enhanced severance fee but also assist him in finding another job "in order 'to do that which is just and good." **[tinyurl.com/ethics07]**

Should I allow a needy person to take a job instead of me? The Talmud says it is also praiseworthy to give someone who is poor precedence in obtaining a benefit. "A poor person who is seeking after a piece of bread and someone else comes along and takes it… [that person] is considered wicked." (Kiddushin 59a) However, Rabbi Asher Meir points out that an "employer is not just giving out the jobs on a first-come, first-serve basis; rather, an employer is interested in selecting the most qualified candidates." As well, you usually can't be certain that person will get the job if you pull out. The bottom line: you are under no ethical obligation to drop your candidacy on behalf of someone who seems more needy. However, it would be a thoughtful act if it seems likely the job would go to them. **[tinyurl.com/ethics08]**

Although many of these laws may sound logical, you can't just wing it with Jewish business ethics and hope to get it right. That's where this anecdote comes in. A ritual slaughterer once approached Rabbi Yisroel Salanter with a dilemma. The shochet said that he was getting older and becoming fearful of making mistakes that may cause others to eat non-kosher meat. He wished to stop slaughtering and go into business instead. Rabbi Salanter asked if he was an expert in the Jewish laws of slaughtering. "Of course, rebbe."

Rabbi Salanter then asked, "Are you an expert in the Jewish laws of business?"

The student laughed. "Of course not. Very few people learn those laws."

Rabbi Salanter replied, "You are not making any sense. If you are prepared to stop slaughtering because of your fear of sinning, even though you are an expert in the laws, how much more so should you fear sinning in business, in which you have no expertise!" **[tinyurl.com/ethics04]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.

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New name reflects 'change of emphasis,' Farber

Continued from page 3

Farber acknowledged that CJC has received many e-mails and calls since the news broke just before Passover, but he said not all of them have been negative. He said CJC has also heard from Jewish and non-Jewish Quebecers who "can't understand what all the fuss is about… They say, 'What took you so long to do this?'"

He noted that the Quebec national assembly adopted a unanimous motion, spearheaded by its sole Jewish member, D'Arcy McGee's Lawrence Bergman, congratulating CJC on the new name. Premier Jean Charest is clearly federalist, he added, and would not likely support anything that suggested sympathy for separatism. (Bloc québécois leader Gilles Duceppe also reportedly commented favourably on the new moniker.)

Farber said all of the e-mails were answered, and when CJC's position was explained, he said many replied that they now understood better.

He said he wishes some of the people who have so passionately "come out of the woodwork" against the change would put some of that energy into working with CJC on what he thinks are far more pressing issues. He said the organization is looking for people to volunteer on its committees, and any Jew in good standing with the local federation is eligible to run for a CJC office.

"If there is a silver lining in all this, it's that it shows how people have embraced CJC, that they feel a sense of ownership toward it."

The sharp and immediate reaction is surprising given that CJC has a diminished profile in Quebec compared to even 10 years ago.

Farber, to whom questions on the issue were referred by QJC officials, admitted that "our biggest failure is, we ought to have judged that there would be some strong feedback and had a response readily in place."

Goldbloom, who steps down as regional chair on July 1, said the reaction to the name change was a little more heated than he expected.

"I thought more people would have a strategic understanding that it would be positively perceived in Quebec, where we live. I think the majority will come to understand that it was a good decision for the community."

On April 8, CJC national co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka of Ottawa and Sylvain Abitbol of Montreal issued a letter stating that the name change "emanated from a desire for both a closer association and a clearer identification with Quebec society, particularly French Quebec society."

They added that the discussions leading up to the decision "reflected all walks of Quebec Jewish life, including both anglophone and francophone Jews" and was consistent with the move by the Canada-Israel Committee to change the name of its Quebec region to the Quebec-Israel Committee a few years ago.

The CIC, a pro-Israel lobby that works largely behind the scenes with government and media, is quite a different entity, however, from the 90-year-old CJC, which claims to speak for the Jewish community and, in fact, to be its "parliament."

Rabbi Bulka and Abitbol observe that at neither the CJC regional level nor the national board level was there "any controversy or negativity expressed and, in fact, the comments made only reflected how this would be appreciative and illustrative of our two founding nations."

Lawrence Bergman

There was plenty of controversy, however, among the grassroots. Numerous irate calls were received at The CJN, and the issue became the subject of a popular call-in radio show and an informal television poll. The vast majority of respondents were against the change.

Côte St. Luc city councillor Glen Nashen wrote on his blog: "What were the CJC 'parliamentarians' thinking when they came up with this marketing nugget? Did they consider their constituents, the vast majority of whom would hardly ever associate with the politically charged term 'Québécois', since the notion of the Quebec nation is a political minefield?"

Seeking approval from the national assembly on "internal Jewish communal matters" is also problematic for Nashen and is "of little comfort" to the the province's Jews, who, he argues, have little faith in their legislators to represent their interests.

He faults CJC for not consulting the community beforehand. "A matter of such fundamental importance should have been well communicated in advance," he writes.

Typical of some comments made to The CJN is the opinion of Stanley Baker, who, in a letter to the editor, asks: "Where do the Quebec regional officers get the idea that Quebec Jews would welcome the change? Everyone I spoke to about it was ardently against the change. They feel they are Canadian Jews, who happen to live in the Province of Quebec… There is a hint of separatism in it."

CJC co-presidents, from left, Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol

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Hebrew School Open House | 1pm
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Israeli Movie Night: One Flight for Us | 7pm
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For more information about these events or to learn about membership opportunities please visit darcheinoam.ca or call 416.636.4663
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Ottawa caterer supported 'every Jewish cause'

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Jack Smith, Ottawa's best-known kosher caterer, died April 7 at age 77.

Because of the onset of Pesach and the great distances many of his family had to travel, his funeral was not held until April 12. People came from far and wide to pay their respects to a man who was larger than life. The funeral chapel was nearly filled to capacity an hour before the scheduled time of the funeral and was overflowing when the ceremony began.

Jack Smith

The second-youngest in a family of 13 siblings, Smith himself was the father of 10, grandfather of 12 and great-grandfather of one.

His son, Nathan, summarized his father's attributes, noting that he was "a loving husband, a father, a zaide, a great grand-dad, the preemie son of a shoemaker, one of 13 siblings, the go-to guy for any need at any time; a shul builder, a camp builder, a community builder, a stalwart supporter of every Jewish cause on earth, and my best friend."

His presence was known and felt throughout the community, as his business and philanthropy were always intertwined. Families, organizations and simchahs of every kind were the beneficiaries of Smith's business, Creative Kosher Catering, which is now run by his son, David.

Obituary

Stories abound in the Jewish community of Smith's largesse. Nathan spoke of the many notes that the family received telling of his father's kindness.

"Many of the notes spoke about the many a bris, bar mitzvah and wedding our dad catered, knowing the people could not pay him but telling them not to worry, that everyone should be able to have a simchah like a mensch."

Having worked seven days a week since childhood, Smith enjoyed a "forced retirement" caused by a near-death heart attack and stroke a dozen years ago. He was not expected to live but, to the amazement of all, he was able to have 12 more years with his family.

His eldest son, Moishe Smith, president of B'nai B'rith International, credited Linda, his father's wife for the past quarter century (first wife, Inez, died in a car accident in 1975) for keeping his father alive and happy, and for being a devoted and loving mother to them all.

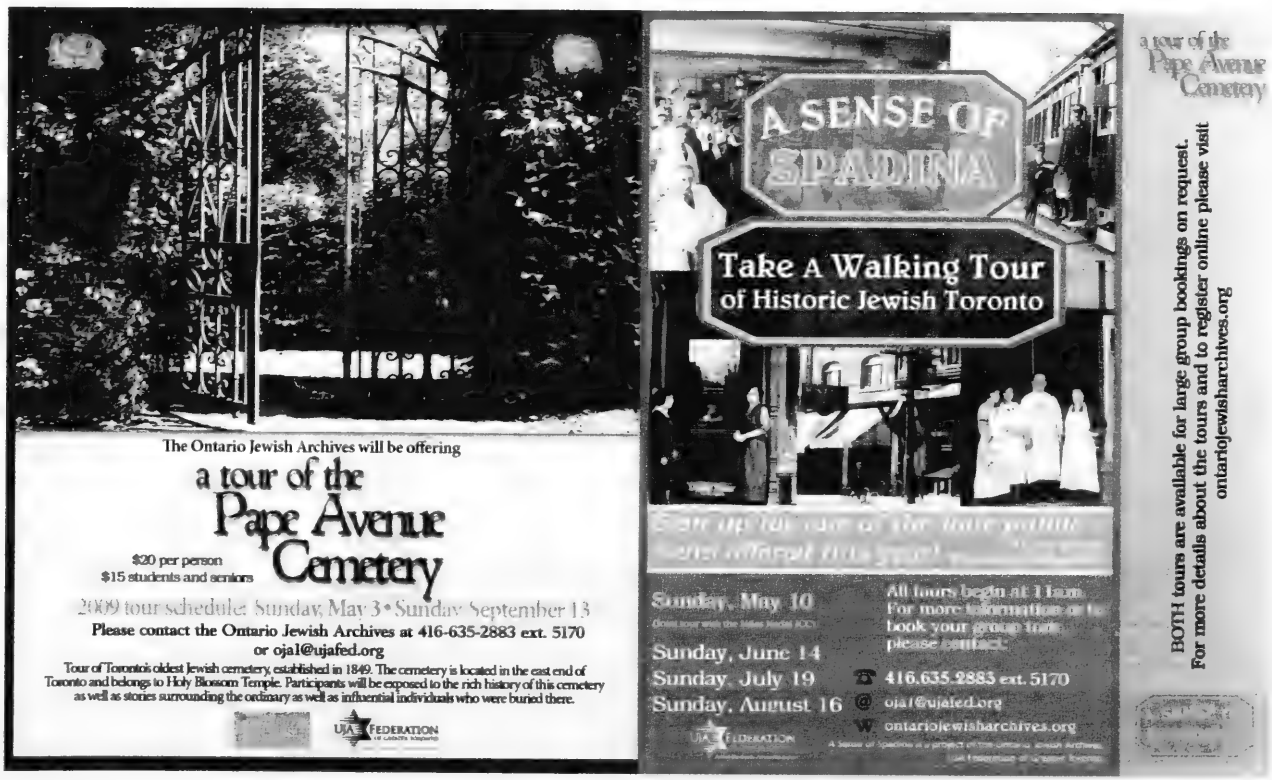
"I am going to tell all of you here, the unsung hero of the life of Jack Smith is our mom, Linda. Our family enjoyed 12 extra years of our dad because of her. She treated my dad like a prince, like the prince that he was, and none of us will ever forget her for that."

Smith was a volunteer fundraiser extraordinaire, lending his hand to more than 20 local community charities. He worked for State of Israel Bonds, B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and the Jewish National Fund, which honoured him at its 1988 dinner. He also served as president of Camp B'nai Brith, where all of his children spent happy summers, and he was a driving force behind the B'nai B'rith Millionaire's Night and Man of the Year Dinner, and was instrumental in raising great sums of money for Congregation Machzikei Hadas.

The shul's spiritual leader, Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, recalled how Smith had devised the idea of giving away a Rolls Royce as a raffle prize for the synagogue, intent on ensuring that his beloved shul would be able to carry on and not be in financial difficulty.

Bulka reminded the congregation that "the rules say you are not supposed to be sad on chol hamoed."

He concluded his eulogy by saying to Jack Smith, "Thank you for all that you did for our community, for our shul, for all of our families."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Israel ought to strike Iran soon: ex-envoy

'There are no non-military solutions that will stop Iran from going nuclear'

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Retired Israeli ambassador to the United States, Yoram Ettinger, believes that Israel ought to strike Iran militarily "not in a matter of months but hopefully in the next few days."

In an interview following his keynote address in Winnipeg on April 13, at a Passover luncheon sponsored by the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, Ettinger said: "Pre-emption is essential. There are no non-military solutions that will stop Iran from going nuclear."

Ettinger, who served from 1989 to '92 as minister of congressional affairs at Israel's Embassy in Washington, added that "every day Israel waits [to attack Iran] makes it more difficult to do."

Israel should not "delude itself" into thinking that the notion of retaliation would convince a nuclear Iran not to attack Israel militarily, he said. "Israel does not have an option of retaliation... If Iran goes nuclear, the mere threat of an attack on Israel will be enough to take the state down.

"The economy would slow down, foreign investment would slow down, aliyah would slow down, people in Israel would want to leave the country, and this would doom the Jewish state into gradual extinction."

Yoram Ettinger

He said the concept that Israel's option of retaliation would deter Iran, "ignores the reality that in 1980 to 1986, Iran proved itself willing to sacrifice two million of its people, including one million children, in its six-year war with Iraq."

He added: "Whatever the costs of an operation [in terms of human life or, political, military or economic consequences] would be dwarfed by the costs of Iran dropping a nuclear bomb on Israel."

Ettinger said that Israel has shown before that it will take action, notwithstanding world public opinion, when it has felt it had to.

"In 1981, [then-prime minister] Menachem Begin made the decision to destroy Iraq's nuclear reactor, in defiance of the U.S.'s threat to excommunicate him, in defiance of what the Europeans and the world wanted, in defiance of what the Mossad and military intelligence advised him... He did it even though his minister of defence Ezer Weitzman was against it, and though [then-Labor party leader] Shimon Peres opposed it and leaked it to the press... he did it for Israel's long term interests," Ettinger said

Ettinger, a former director of the Government Press Office in Jerusalem from 1988 to '89, said he believes that the "global atmosphere [against a military strike] is less problematic today than in 1981," adding that "1981 was before 9/11, before the terror attacks in London and Spain, before the war in Afghanistan."

When asked if he thought Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would decide to strike Iran militarily, he replied: "I don't know," adding that he hoped that Netanyahu and Defence Minister Ehud Barak would make the decision to do so.

He said he hoped that the reason Barak decided to join Netanyahu's government was that the two both understood that there ought to be a military strike on Iran.

"The question is, 'Are we headed by politicians or statesmen [such as Begin] who are willing to sacrifice short-term inconvenience for long-term interests?'" he said.

Ettinger said he voted for Likud in the recent election, not because he liked Netanyahu but to try to help more people at the bottom of Likud get into the Knesset, "because the bottom of Likud has better people than the top," he added.

Since retiring, Ettinger has been a consultant to Israeli cabinet members and legislators, and to the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee on U.S.-Israel bilateral projects, U.S. policy and Mideast politics.

When asked why he didn't vote for Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the Yisrael Beitenu party and now Israel's foreign minister, Ettinger said: "Because he has said he's committed to the 'road map' [peace plan], which will lead to a two-state solution." Ettinger said he doesn't believe in a two-state solution.

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Mumbai terrorism victim recalls horrific ordeal

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Mumbai terrorism survivor Michael Rudder believes education is the best way to eradicate the kind of fanaticism that led gunmen from Pakistan to pump four bullets into him, nearly claiming his life.

Rudder, 58, a Montreal-based actor, was among the more than 300 people injured in the at least 10 co-ordinated shooting and bombing attacks that took place in India's financial capital between Nov. 26 and 29. Two of his friends, an American man and the man's 13-year-old daughter, were among the 173 killed.

Rudder was sitting with these two friends and a few others, who had come to India to further their study of transcendental meditation, in the restaurant of the luxury Oberoi Trident Hotel when they were suddenly sprayed with gunfire. About 30 people died in that attack.

Rudder vividly recreated that horrifying scene in a talk at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, sponsored by the Men's Association. It was his first extensive public statement about what happened and how he is coping since he returned to Canada in December.

He did not express any bitterness towards his attackers nor did he say he forgave them. The worst he said of them is that they were "punks" and "pathetic", who were reared in poverty and ignorance. His strongest feelings are for those who trained them and masterminded the attacks, and he would like to talk to them directly.

"[The attackers] are guided like puppets, they are trained to hate. They spend two years lying in a field to become instruments of hatred," Rudder said. He believes that they were taken advantage of by those who can give them food in exchange for indoctrination.

The free world, he believes, must do all it can to promote education in disadvantaged parts of the world. Rudder believes the majority of people everywhere want a happy life for themselves and their families. "But they must have the knowledge of peace to have a thirst for it…If all they know is hate, that is how people respond to others.

"I'm not an expert in Islamic terrorism, but I think we have to do everything we can to break down that mindset."

Asked if the would be a witness for the prosecution in any trial connected to the Mumbai attacks, Rudder said "absolutely."

Rudder, a veteran film, stage and TV actor, credits his meditative practice to helping him to stay calm throughout the assault and to come to terms with what happened since then, as he continues to physically and psychologically heal.

Rudder was shot in the right arm, left thigh, the rectum and in the head, the bullet penetrating his skull but not touching his brain. He lost a huge amount of blood during the delay in getting medical treatment, and knows he was on the verge of death. Since returning to Montreal, he has undergone another series of surgeries.

Michael Rudder

Today, he says he is health is quite good, but he has not regained the strength and stamina he enjoyed beforehand.

Psychologically, he describes himself as still shaky, but continues to work at finding a balance between mind, body and soul, through exercise and reflection. "My response has been, 'can I become more loving to everyone I interact with?'"

He has had nightmares of being chased by terrorists, from which he wakes up in a cold sweat, or of having been able to save his friend and his daughter.

His practice of TM has given him serenity, and has taught him respect for others, he said.

Terrorism in a country he reveres for its spirituality and the gentleness of its people has been a terrible irony for him, as is the fact that his friends, who were so devoted to peace and harmony, were among its victims.

"The way I perceived the event was directly influenced by the state of consciousness, the elevated awareness, that I was in at the time," he said. "We were all in an exalted state."

His group of six were seated in the back of the restaurant on that day. If they had sat in the front as they usually did, Rudder thinks they probably all would have been slain.

All of a sudden, two men with automatic weapons blazing entered the room, and Rudder and the others dove under the table. It was soon a hellish scene of chaos and carnage, but somehow he was able to observe it all with an extraordinary detachment.

He looked upon his own bloodied body with an equanimity that surprises him now. In fact, his reaction was a kind of twisted humour. "I said to myself this is like Die Hard with a Vengeance."

Continued on page 22

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'I waited to be executed,' says Rudder

Continued from page 21

When he heard the blood gurgling in his throat as his friend lay dying, "I thought this is so unfair" but accepted it.

Another friend, shot in the back, had fallen on top of him and he could not move.

He lost consciousness for awhile, and when he awoke the survivors had been taken away. He apparently had been taken for dead.

What sounded like a grenade went off 30 feet away, and then another. He knew it wasn't over and as he recalled, "I waited to be executed."

Rudder said the reading he had done on the Holocaust (one of his roles was in the TV movie Varian's War) and how concentration camp inmates pretended to be dead in order to avoid being shot came to mind as he lay there face down in a pool of blood. He remained very still.

Then he heard liquid being poured in the lobby. It was gasoline and the terrorists were creating a smokescreen between them and the army.

Rudder knew if he coughed it would be over for him, so he crawled on the floor into the kitchen, and eventually to the exit doors only to be confronted by a police officer pointing a gun at him. When it was determined he was a victim, Rudder was bundled into a tiny taxi along with another man with a stomach wound and rushed to the hospital by a very frightened driver who had to make his way through the alarmed throngs on the street.

Victims of last fall's terror attack in Mumbai are returned to Ben-Gurion Airport. [Israel Sun photo]

He collapsed finally and spent weeks in intensive care in Mumbai. He has nothing but praise for his doctors and nurses for their kindness. The young staff called him "dear uncle," a term of affection and respect for an elder. "I cried when I left," Rudder said. He contrasted this solicitude with the sometimes brusque attention he has received since in Quebec hospitals.

Rudder said the love of friends and family and his ability to go inside himself through meditation have been a great comfort in the last few months.

But the enlightenment he experienced during his ordeal is already starting to dissipate, he admits. "Before coming here I cut myself shaving and I cursed like a baby because there was a bit of blood."

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  Shabbat, May 2, Service 8:45 a.m.
- Lecture following services:
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- During *Seudah-Shelisheet* – Lecture with text:
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Compiled by CJN Staff

Emunah Women of Toronto is honouring Monty and Eileen Kobrin at its annual Family-in-Israel dinner, set for May 13 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

The Kobrins are being recognized for their support of Emunah Women. Eileen Kobrin is co-president of the organization, and secretary of Emunah Canada.

Also at the dinner, longtime Emunah donors Alex and Rose Colchary will be presented with the community award for their fundraising efforts on behalf of Israel. Rose Colchary has spearheaded a number of events, raising money for the organizations projects in Israel.

Proceeds from the dinner will go to Emunah's new centre for teenage girls at risk in Neve Michael, as well as to the Ashkelon Daycare Centre, to provide psychological treatment and trauma relief for children and families affected by rocket attacks in their area during the recent fighting in Gaza.

Guest speaker is Barbara Crook, associate director and North American representative of Palestinian Media Watch, a Jerusalem-based organization that studies Palestinian society by monitoring and translating media.

An Ottawa resident, Crook has been active in a number of Jewish organizations including Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, Jewish Education Through Torah (JET), the Jewish Federation of Ottawa , and the Jewish National Fund.

For details, call Emunah Women at 416-636-0036 or e-mail emunah@kwik.net

YIDDISH CORNER

Edited by: ALEK SILVER

ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פון: אַלעק סילווער

דוד־מענדל הרדוף (1918-2009)

(צו זיינע שלושים)

פון שמחה סימכאָוויטש

שבת, דעם 28סטן מערזאָר איז אָרטאָדאָקס פון דער וועלט דער טאָראָנטער העברעישער לערער, מוכר־ספרים און בעל־לשון דוד־מענדל הרדוף. ער האָט פאַראייניקט אין זיך די אייגנשאפטן פון אַ אמאליקן תלמיד־חכם און אַ היינטצייטיקן געלערנטן.

געבוירן אין 1918 אין שידלאָווצע, פוילן, האָט ער עמיגרירט אין די דרייסיקער יאָרן פון אוועקגענאָמענע־נעם יאַדהונדערט קיין ענגלאַנד. אין לאָנדאָן האָט ער שטודירט אריפן אוניווערסיטעט, וווּ ער האָט נעקראָגן דעם מאַגיסטער־טיטול און אַ דאָקטאָראָט אין „דושוס קאָלעדזש" אין העברעישע, אראמישע לשונות און לי־טעראָטור. אין טאָראָנטא האָט ער בית זיין אָרויסגיין אויף פענסיע זיך פאַרנומען מיט לערערי און שפּעטער נעעפנט אַ קליינע ספרים־קראָם.

פון זיינע יונגע יאָרן אָן האָט דוד־מענדל הרדוף זיך אַרײַנגעטאָן אין דער קלאַסישער העברעישער־אַראַמישער ליטעראָטור — דעם תנ"ך, תלמוד און מדרשים בית חיים נחמן ביאַליק, ענגון און אַנדערע מיסטערס פון דער באַלייטער העברעישער ליטעראָטור. אַ דאָנק זיינע קענטניש אין די געביטן, ווי אויך זיין גרויסער און נע־דולדיקער אַרבעטאַמקייט, האָט הרדוף באַוויזן צו שאַפן אין משך פון די לעצטע פופציק יאָר אַ צאָל וויכטיקע לערנביכער און לעקסיקאָגראַפישע ווערק.

א וויכטיקער אויסטו פון דוד־מענדל הרדוף איז געווען דאָס אַרויסגעבן אין צוויי טיילן זיין דאָקטאָר־ארבעט „אוצר השמות" (תל־אביב, 1981), וואָס שליסט איין נישט בלויז די נעמען פון מענטשן, ערטער און בעלי־חיים, וואָס ווערן דערמאָנט אין תנ"ך, נאָר אויך אין דער משנה און גמרא. ביי דער זייט פון יעדן נאָמען זיינען נעגעבן פאַסיקע ציטאַטן און מראה־מקומות פון תנ"ך, תלמוד און די מדרשים. כדי דאָס צו באַווייזן האָט הרדוף געמוזט אַדורכגיין די תורה שבכתב און דעם ים פון דער תלמודישער און מדרש ליטעראָטור. וווּ אַ באַשטעטיקונג וועגן דער וויכטיקייט פון אָט דער אַר־בעט קאָן רײַנען דער פאַקט, וואָס דאָס ווערק איז אַרויס־גענעבן געווארן אויף סיניי (תל־אביב, 2002) אין אַ פאַרנעמיקער אויסגאָבע פון 362 זייטן, מיט אַ צוגאָב פון 48 זייטן אין ענגליש.

א באַוויז פון דוד־מענדל הרדופס פאַרליבטקייט אין דער העברעישער שפּראַך און ליטעראָטור איז זיין „שמואל־יוסף עגנון לעקסיקאָן" (טאָראָנטא, 1985 און 2006). אין דעם בוך זיינען איינגעזאַמלט געווארן אין אלף־בית סדר די נעמען פון עגנונס העלדן, שטעט, וווּ אויך זיינע אַרויסאָגונגען ווערן פאַרשיידענע ענינים און פראבלעמען.

הרדוף ווייזט אָן ווי עגנונס ווערק זיינען דורכ־געמוסן מיט אהבת־ישראל און ליבשאפט צו ארץ־ישראל, און ווי זיין לשון רעפלעקטירט אַלע רייכטימער פון העברעיש פון אַלע דורות. וועגן מקור פון עגנונס אינספיראַציע ברענגט הרדוף עגנונס פאַלגנדיקן זאָג: „וואָלט דער בית־המקדש געשטאַנען, וואָלט איך גע־וען צווישן מיינע בריידער, די לוויים, און בעזונגען דאָרטן יעדן טאָג די מזמורים פון תהילים. איצט, ווען דער בית־המקדש איז חרוב, ווען מיר האָבן מער נישט קיין כתנים און קיין לוויים, לערן איך תורה, נביאים, משנה, הלכה און אגדה און שרייב מיט ציטער מיינע ספורי־מעשׂיות, וווּ א זון וואָס איז פאַרטריבן געווארן פון זיין פאַטערס פאַלאַץ און דערציילט וועגן דער גרויסקייט פון זיין פאַטערס הויז".

(סוף אין קומענדיקן „וויקל")

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Coast to Coast

Anti-Semitism down in Quebec

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — B'nai Brith Canada legal counsel Steven Slimovitch thinks it's no coincidence that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Quebec that the organization recorded in 2008 is down from the previous year.

"Why? Because there was no Bouchard-Taylor commission. The public hearings were a free-for-all for those who wanted to express hateful views," Slimovitch said.

Last year, B'nai Brith claimed that the spike in reported incidents in 2007 could be attributed at least in part to the often bigoted opinions about Jews and other minorities expressed during the months of hearings held throughout the province by Bouchard-Taylor commission on reasonable accommodation.

B'nai Brith's latest audit documents 245 anti-Semitic incidents in Quebec in 2008, compared to 291 in 2007, a decrease of nearly 16 per cent, which contrasts with an increase by almost as much in Canada as a whole.

A quarter of the 245 incidents occurred during July and August alone.

The organization says many of these incidents were directed at haredi Jews who summer in the country, mainly the Laurentians, and is a continuation of a disturbing trend observed in 2007.

The view the Bouchard-Taylor was providing a platform for anti-Semitism and possibly encouraging it was disputed by the commission after the audit of 2007 was released by B'nai Brith. At that time, the commission's spokesperson Sylvain Leclerc pointed out that, according to B'nai Brith's own records, the rate in the rise of anti-Semitic incidents actually dropped after the commission was created in February 2007.

He noted that the B'nai Brith audit of 2006 showed that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the province had risen by 70 per cent over the year before. The 2007 audit found an increase of 29 per cent over the previous year.

Leclerc said it could be argued that the commission's existence had slowed an upward trend in incidents.

Besides Bouchard-Taylor's fading from the scene, Slimovitch believes the media coverage of the court appearances over the past couple of years of the two men convicted of the firebombings of an Outremont yeshiva in 2006 and the Ben Weider Jewish Community Centre in 2007 and the stiff sentences eventually handed down to them also had a deterrent effect.

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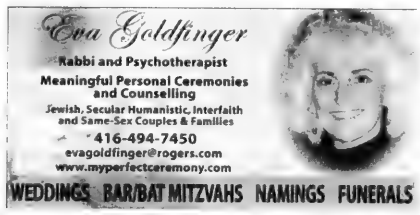

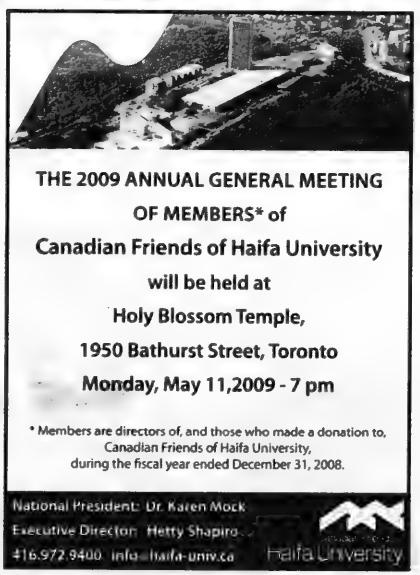
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חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

אני לא אומרת שהזמנים טובים במיוחד, אני גם לא אומרת ההיפך. בסך הכל, אני חיה במדינה שרציתי, עם האנשים שרציתי, אני אוהבת את עצמי (יחסית), אני חביבה לסובבים אותי (יחסית), אני מתנדבת הרבה, והולכת לישון כל לילה עם מצפון נקי.
זהו, שהמצפון שלי נקי. הבית שלי - לא.
זה לא שאני לא אוהבת לנקות, זה שאני שונאת לנקות. מריבות עקובות דם עם מאיר בנושא הניקיון, נחתמות בכך שאני מסתגרת בחדר השינה בעצבים, ומאיר משוטט בסלון עם סמרטוט ריצפה רטוב ומטליות אבק. בסוף, אני נאותה לצאת מהחדר, רק כדי לתת לו לאוורר מיטות ולקרצף את האמבטיה הפרטית.
לפני שלושה שבועות, מאיר קרא דרור, והתפטר ממני. כלומר, צילצל לדרור, חבר שלו, ושכר את שירותי עוזרת הבית שלו.
לא אפרתי מילה. שיבזבז את הכסף שאין לנו, אין בעייה.

הגברת עוזרת הניעה עם שחר, והעירה אותי משנתי הנעימה. פתחתי את הדלת לדמות תמירה וחמורת סבר (סוב, מי רוצה לחייך כשלפניו ארבע שעות עבודת כפיים?), שדרשה קפוצ'ינו חזק לפני שמתחילים. הראתי לה את המכונה, לא עזר, אז הכנתי לה בעצמי קפה, ופרשתי בשיא לחדר.
אחרי כחצי שעה, שלא שמעתי ירישרוש בבית, יצאתי על בהונות ומצאתי את חמורת הסבר מעלעלת בעיתוני הבוקר. בחורה חרוצה, אין מה לומר, את הקפוצ'ינו השני היא כבר עשתה לעמרי לבד.
הזזתי בחן את הדלי, הסמרטוטים וחומרי הניקוי שמאיר הציג לראווה במטבח (בחיים לא ידעתי שיש לנו ארון מיוחד בשביל זה!), ותליתי בה מבט ביישני.
קיבלתי בחזרה מבט שואל ומתריס, ושוב ברחתי לחדר. עשיתי מלא רעשים של כאילו אני עובדת או משהו, כדי להזין את מוסר העבודה הגלובלי בבית.

בסביבות עשר וחצי יצאתי שוב לסלון, כי פתאום באה לי מחשבה שזו בכלל לא העזרת החדשה. אולי זו סתם שכנה לא מוכרת שקפצה לביקור, ומתפלאת למה אני לא מצטרפת אליה לקפה? אז ליתר בטחון, הצטרפתי אליה לקפה.
מסתבר, שזו בכל זאת הייתה העוזרת, כי שמעתי רחש מוכר שאני מייחסת למכונת הכביסה. חמורת הסבר גם הזיזה את הספה ממקומה, והייתה שקועה בעניין באחורות שהיא מצאה מאחוריה (כל כך שמחתי שהיא מצאה את הצמיד שלי, שאפילו לא הוכחתי אותה כשצפיתי בה מכניסה אותו לכיס הסינר החינני שמאיר קנה לה). רציתי להגיד לה שיותר חוף הכלים, הסירים והשטיחים, אבל, האמת, די פחדתי ממנה.
לא דיברנו הרבה באותו יום, חוץ מאותו משפט שנאמר בנימה מקפיאה דם, בו היא הוכיחה אותי על כך שאני מסתגרת בחדר ולא נותנת לה לנקות אותו.
תבינו, צמיד וטבעת ליום זה הרבה, לא! והחדר שלי מלא בדברים כייפים שאני עדין רוצה!
בתום יום העבודה המתיש לשתינו (יש לכם מושג כמה אנרגיה מתבזבזת על נסיות להיראות עסוקה ולא לעשות כלום! כי עכשיו כשהתקבלה ההוראה לפתוח דלתות, אני לא יכולה סתם להישתרע על המיטה שלי ולבהות בתיקרה, בעוד היא עובדת בפרך. לא נעים). אם כן, בתום יום העבודה, הושטתי לה את השטרות וניפרדנו בידידות.

הבית נראה נורא, אז ברחתי לקפה השכונתי עם ידידה, והרגשתי נורא בורגנית ועם זאת איכית, כזו שמתלוננת באזני החברות על העוזרת שלה.

מאיר חזר הביתה, וניקה תוך שלוש שעות את הבלגן, אבל הוא לא העז להתלונן. רצה עוזרת! יש עוזרת.
כלומר, אמרתי לה לא לבוא יותר, ואמרתי לו שהיא כן ממשיכה לבוא. במשכורת שלה אני קונה לי קישקושים והולכת למספרת.
מאיר לא מרגיש בהבדל.
אני עדיין הולכת לישון בבית לא נקי, אבל לעומת זאת, כרגע גם המצפון שלי לא כל כך נקי...

היי חברים, רבים מכם כתבתם לי באימייל שהייתם רוצים שגם המשפחה והידידים שלכם, שלא קוראים עברית, יקראו אותי, ושאלתם מה דעתי לנסות לכתוב באנגלית. קודם כל - תודה, ושנית, החלטתי להרים את הכפפה. מעכשיו, הטור יפורסם אחת לחודש, ובאנגלית. סי יו!

לתגובות באנגלית או בעברית: nina.shenhav@gmail.com

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Wow, you're 40! The big Four-O! Fifty minus 10, 39 plus one! Happy 40th Harold! With hugs and kisses, Adina, Jordan, Samantha, Lauren and Opus.

Mazel tov to Jack Cooper on his 90th birthday with love and best wishes from his wife Sybil, their children, family and friends.

Mazel tov to Roz & Syd Ticker on your 60th wedding anniversary! Love, Chuck, Susan, Joanna, Sari and Ghita, Wayne, Melanie and Jennifer.

Mazel tov to Miriam Allman (Wisebrod) & John Syrtash on their recent engagement.

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Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Tova Natalie Mesika & Alex Mesicca.

Mazel tov to Jonathan Weissman & Eva Erlich on their recent wedding.

Mazel tov to Devora Jacobowitz & Yoni Cohen on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov to Yocheved & Eli Guterman on the birth of twins.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!
Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com**
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click the **Family Moments button!**

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What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
• Features • Heebonics
• Breaking News • Contests
• Past Issues and much more!

What's New deadlines: Monday, April 27 is the deadline for the May 7 issue and Monday, May 4 is the deadline for the May 14 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, April 23

EMUNAH ROSH CHODESH

Emunah Women's next "Rosh Chodesh Lunch 'n Learn Program" hosts **Rebbetzin Sarah Stern** discussing "Shir Hashirim: An Overview." 12:30 p.m. at 4300 Bathurst St. Lecture and light lunch, $10, non members $15. Reservations required, 416-636-0036.

HEROES AND HEART

Temple Har Zion presents **Janet Matthew**, co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Canadian Soul*, on "Heroes and Heart." 1 p.m. Non-members $5.

TEMPLE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Temple Sinai Nursery School hosts its annual boutique night with products and services not readily available in stores including women's and children's clothing and accessories, party favours, jewellery, original artwork, beauty and wellness, kitchen wares, photography professionals, and more. 4 p.m.-9 p.m. Free. 416-487-3281

JEWISH ANIMATED FILMS

The Barbara Frum Library hosts "A Showcase of Jewish Animated Films," eight short animated films on Jewish themes followed by a discussion. One of the animated films will be chosen as the subject of a mosaic mural to be installed on Bathurst St. at Lawrence Ave. 6:30 p.m. 416-698-7995 or www.muralroutes.com.

THE HAFTOROT OF ISAIAH

Beth David Synagogue continues the study of Devarim with **Shayna Kravitz** on "The Haftorot of Isaiah," 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The Beth Sholom Music Series hosts an evening featuring members of the Beth Sholom professional choir performing "Up Close and Personal." 8 p.m. Tickets, $18, 416-783-6103.

GREAT SYNAGOGUES

National Council of Jewish Woman hosts "Great Synagogues of Europe" with **Corey Keeble**, curator of decorative arts, Royal Ontario Museum. 7:30 p.m. at 4700 Bathurst St. Non-members $5. Info and RSVP, 416-633-5100

Saturday, April 25

DARCHEI NOAM EVENTS

Following 10 a.m. services and kiddush, **Baruch Sienna** will discuss "The Place of Space in Jewish Tradition" and the Darchei Noam Hebrew School will hold an open house offering an opportunity to meet other Hebrew school parents and hear a short presentation from the director of youth education. At 7 p.m. watch the film One Flight for Us, a documentary commemorating Yom Hashoah. Discussion and refreshments follow the movie. 416-638-4783, www.darcheinoam.on.ca

Sunday, April 26

BONE MARROW DRIVE

Jonathan Grossman was recently diagnosed with a rare bone marrow disorder called Myelofibrosis. His only chance of survival and a cure is a bone marrow transplant. If you are in good health and between the ages of 18 and 60, you can become a donor. All that is required is a swab of cells from inside your cheek. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Adath Israel Synagogue. www.giftoflife.org or www.one-match.ca

OPEN HOUSE

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism host a children's open house at St. Andrew's Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. 10:15 a.m. 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org.

Continued on page 27

בס"ד
mizrachi canada presents
YOM HA'ZIKARON
YOM HA'ATZMAUT
Annual Commemorative Services and Celebrations
TUESDAY APRIL 28, 2009
ה' אייר, יום העצמאות תשס"ט
7:30 PM
BAYT Congregation, 613 Clark Ave. West
Continue to demonstrate your support for Israel @ the COMMUNITY CELEBRATION on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2008. For announcements and more details of the April 29th event, watch their internet site at www.jewishtoronto.com
CHECK IT OUT!

Continued from page 26

END OF LIFE ISSUES

The Shaar Shalom Adult Education Committee presents **Dr. John Peto**, gerontologist, and **Dr. Lea Velsher**, geneticist, discussing "Practical Steps to Deal With the Beginning and End of Life Issues." Sunday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 905-889-4975

THOSE WHO STRAY

Join **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, of Jews For Judaism, for a wake-up call to our community, "Learning From Those Who Stray," an exploration of a growing trend in the Jewish community of Jews seeking spiritual nourishment in foreign pastures. 8 p.m. at the Markham Street Shul, 397 Markham St. Free. 416-789-0020

Monday, April 27

THE BITTERMANS

Join Beth Tikvah Synagogue to commemorate the lives of **Frances** and **Morris Bitterman**, two exemplary Jews who were an integral part of the Beth Tikvah community and to hear their compelling stories. 8 p.m. 416-221-3433, ext. 303

Tuesday, April 28

LUNCH AND LEARN

Dr. Jacques Gauthier discusses sovereignty over Jerusalem. Lunch 12:15 p.m. Learn 12:45 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $20. By reservation only, 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

REMEMBER & CELEBRATE

Join Mizrachi, Emunah Women, Yavneh, and Bnei Akiva in conjunction with BAYT, NCSY, OU, Yeshiva University and Camp Moshava for commemorative services and celebration of Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut. Followed by dancing and live music. 7:30 p.m. at BAYT Congregation. 416-630-9266.

YOM HA'ATZMA'UT

Celebrate Israel Independence Day, screen the Israeli film Like a Fish out of Water, eat delicious Israeli snacks and dance a horah. 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. $3, non members $5. RSVP by April 24, 905-889-2252 ext. 5

Wednesday, April 29

GENEALOGICAL MEETING

Margaret Ann Wilkinson, of The University of Western Ontario will speak on "Who Controls the Information in Your Family Tree" at the Jewish Genealogical Society meeting. Wilkinson will discuss issues of access, privacy, personal data protection and intellectual property including copyright and moral rights. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Non-members $5. www.jgstoronto.ca

Other News

PHILOSOPHY CLASSES

Mekorot offers two mini courses: **Prof. Paul Franks** of the University of Toronto, explores "Responses to Modernity: The Philosophies of **Breuer** and **Rosenzweig**," two of the most important Jewish thinkers of the 20th century. Mondays, April 27, May 11, May 25 9:30-11 a.m. and **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, of Jews For Judaism, explores "Understanding Suffering," why bad things happen to good people, a perplexing and painful question for believing individuals. Explore passages from the Bible, Talmud, Maimonides, the Piacezner Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph Y. Soloveitchik. Thursdays, April 30-May 21, 9:45-11:00 a.m. Both at Ulpanat Orot School, 45 Canyon Ave. Register, 416-877-2050 or ww.mekorot.ca

HADASSAH FUNDRAISER

Hadassah WIZO Chapter Lev Zahav hosts **Dr. Anthony Wolfe**, Globe and Mail columnist, and author of Get Out of My Life But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall, Thursday April 30, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Blossom Temple. Tickets $36, include a dessert reception. Reserve, 416-630-8373.

HEBREW EDUCATION TODAY

Beth David Synagogue presents "Modern Hebrew Education: Not My Zaidy's Cheder" with **Dr. Mark Smiley**, of Associated Hebrew Day Schools. Thursday, April 30, 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500

RABBI'S MANY ROLES

Beth Tzedec Congregation presents "Rabbis as Poets, Storytellers and Interpreters," with **David M. Stern**, of University of Pennsylvania, May 1-2. Shabbat dinner and lecture on "Midrash and the Secrets of the Jewish Imagination." Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 p.m. Shabbat morning services 8:45 a.m. where he will speak from the pulpit on "Rabbinic Reactions to Catastrophes." Lecture following services, "Fictions of the Rabbis." Mincha, 7:45 p.m. Lecture during seudah shlishit "Modern Midrash: Re-Imagining the Akedah." Pay for dinner by Tuesday, April 28, 416-781-3511.

AUDITION FOR WOMEN ONLY

Westmount Shul will be holding auditions for its upcoming musical on Sunday, May 3. Details, liora.oppenheimer@sympatico.ca.

BBYO SPRING CONVENTION

May 22-24 at Camp Northland $149 early bird price if registered by April 29. Call **Kevin Goodman**, 416-398-2004 or kgoodman@bbyo.org

OTTAWA CONFERENCE

The Canadian Jewish Studies and the University of Ottawa's Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program will host a community day highlighting different aspects of the Jewish Canadian experience. The free event kicks off the ACJS annual conference, a gathering of scholars. Topics include Yiddish politics, Jewish Canadiana, ethnicity and intercultural encounters, and the Holocaust and the Canadian experience. No prior registration required. Sunday, May 24 at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private. www.acjs-aejc.ca.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215 for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell The Kids, a workshop for parents about to separate. Tuesday, April 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at The Promenade Mall, suite #313.

Widow/Widower 65+ Bereavement. Six session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 1- 2:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Today's Woman. A 6-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Dating In Mid Life. A workshop for men and women in midlife (40+) who are single for two years or more and are looking for information on how to nurture a lasting relationship. Topics include: dating myths and facts, the five stages of dating, the difference between the dating behaviours of men and women. Tuesday, April 28, 7-9:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. $36, registration required.

Parenting Speaker Series: "Raising Children with Resilience and Self-Esteem," a workshop for parents of children of school age to help identify and harness the strengths of their children. Tuesday May 5, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. Free, registration required.

Looking Ahead. A six-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals who are dealing with the initial feelings of loss, anger, loneliness and wanting to let go of the past and move forward. begins Wednesday, May 6, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Thursday, April 30. Other programs, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC. Celebrate Israel Independence Day with a talk on "Israel in the 21st Century" by **Dov Altman**. Thursday, April 30, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Chai Society Group at Beth Sholom Synagogue hosts a Lunch and a Movie followed by a discussion with **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich**. Wednesday, April 29, noon. $8. Reserve, 416-783-6103.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Mix & Mingle, Wednesday, April, 22, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Holocaust Remembrance and Yom Hashoah, Tuesday, April 21, 3-5 p.m.

The CCAC at Bernard Betel, helping seniors live longer in their homes, Wednesday, April 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free.

Book Club Short Stories with **Shirley Karbin**, Tuesdays through June 23. $3/week, non members $6.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Toronto Jewish Film Festival, through April 26, over 90 films from 23 countries in 10 days. Screenings at the Bloor Cinema, the Sheppard Grande and The Al Green Theatre. Tickets, evenings $12, day $7, senior/student discounts available. 416-967-1528 or www.tjff.com.

Never/Again: Photos of Terezin and Rwanda by **Jeremy Mimnagh** and **Shannon Scully** closing reception April 23, 7:30 p.m. visualart@mnjcc.org

Hop Stitch & Jump, a performance in support of children affected by poverty and AIDS, April 30, 7:30 p.m. $25. Ext. 0.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Join "Shabbat in the Atrium" every Friday at 11:30 a.m. for songs, stories, challah, a 15-minute celebration of Shabbat for all ages.

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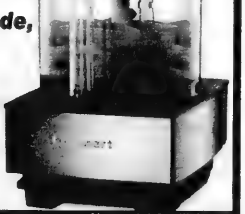

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Mary Cassels	Apr 7/09	3560 Bathurst St.
Jules Moranis	Apr 5/09	3 Colvstone Road
Leon Blumental	Apr 9/09	68 Townsgate Drive
Cyril Rotenberg	Apr 10/09	111 Avenue Road
Stephie Swadron	Apr 10/09	3560 Bathurst Street
Bebe Ciglen	Apr 10/09	130 Dunn Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Sischy, Benzion	March 26/09	Private
Senderovich, Rose	March 27/09	105 Tanjoe Cres
Shalmiev, Naima	March 27/09	12 Goldfinch Crt
Cooper, Bella Dorothy	March 28/09	3560 Bathurst St
Czutrin, Valerie	March 31/09	
Levy, Fay	March 31/09	205 Hilda Ave
Cohn, Samuel	March 31/09	1121 Steeles Ave. W.
Ehrentreu, Solomon	March 31/09	59 Corwin Cres
Gruz, Leonid	April 2/09	6171 Bathurst St
Kerr, Chane	April 2/09	331 Brighton Ave
Ettedgui, Perla	April 4/09	3560 Bathurst St
Bergida, Irene	April 4/09	
Fiks, Perel	April 5/09	Private
Shapira, Emanuel	April 6/09	Private
Serebriany, Aron	April 6/09	Private

HEBREW BASIC

Aaron Romanovsky	Apr 5/09	2108 - 25 St. Mary's St
Charlotte Weissman	Apr 10/09	40 Harding Blvd

IN MEMORIAM

JASON EINSTOSS ז"ל

In loving memory of our beloved son, brother and uncle. It has been 9 years since you left us, Jason. You are in our hearts, thoughts, prayers always. We miss you and love you.

Dad, Mom, Philip, Allan, Karen, Jake

The unveiling of a monument honouring the memory of

NETY COPELOVICI ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, Apr. 26TH
11:00 a.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
Shaarei Shomayim Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late

ELISABETH BRENNER DEJONG ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, Apr. 26TH
1:00 p.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Forresters Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument honouring the memory of

FELA PATOKA ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 3rd at 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Apter Society Section

Please join us in remembering our wonderful wife, mother, bubbie and sister. Luncheon served after services.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument honouring the memory of

SAM TANENBAUM ז"ל

loving husband, father and grandfather, will take place

Sunday, May 3rd at 2:00 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Community Section Phase III AAA

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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Coast to Coast

Federation faces campaign shortfall

By ABIGAIL CUKIER
Special to the CJN

HAMILTON — UJA Federation of Hamilton fears it will have to reduce funding to its beneficiary agencies at a time when they need help more than ever.

Like Jewish federations across Canada and the United States, Hamilton has experienced a decrease in campaign contributions this year. And even prior to the current economic downturn, almost one in five Jews in Hamilton, about 800 people, were living in poverty – among the highest of any Jewish community in Canada. As well, 22 per cent of Jewish children in the community were poor.

Incoming Hamilton UJA president Larry Levin says donations are down about 10 per cent this year.

"The general economic climate made it difficult for a lot of people to have it business as usual," Levin said, adding that interest on investments has also been lower than expected.

Last year, the UJA campaign raised $1.14 million, and organizers had been hoping to raise $1.5 million this year, an 18 per cent increase that was set before the scale of the downturn became evident.

But the campaign has only raised about $1 million so far, and organizers are seeking to raise an additional $150,000 in a top-up drive, said Christine Nusca, assistant campaign director.

"Some donors went above and beyond, and some weren't able to. We understand," Levin said. "But we expect more families to be in need this year, and we want to be prepared to offer our support at their time of need."

Carol Krames, director of Hamilton Jewish Social Services, says more people are using the kosher food bank and unemployment is rising.

"I keep careful records of the people I have resettled over the past 32 years. Of the newcomers from Israel, South America, Europe and the former Soviet Union, between one-third to one-quarter have at least one member of the family who has lost their job. In some families, it is both husband and wife. This is not just in Hamilton, but in many of the smaller cities across Canada," she said.

"We also have an increase in people coming from other countries claiming refugee status, which tells us that things are so difficult in their native country they are hoping for a better life here. Let's all hope they are not disappointed."

Locally, the federation supports Jewish Social Services, including the food bank, as well as the Jewish Community Centre, Hamilton's Jewish day and afternoon schools, the Midrasha High School, McMaster University Jewish Students Association and the Hamilton Jewish News.

The campaign committee is asking anyone who has not donated to consider doing so, and for those who have to give an additional 10 per cent.

"For some of us, this is small, but it will make an enormous difference to those who need it," Levin said. "What a wonderful opportunity to be able to share our good fortune with those less fortunate."

To donate, call Nusca at 905-648-0605, ext. 306.

The Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers of
Jews for Judaism
wish to extend sincere condolences to
Rabbi Michael Skobac
on the loss of his beloved father
William Skobac ז"ל
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

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בס"ד

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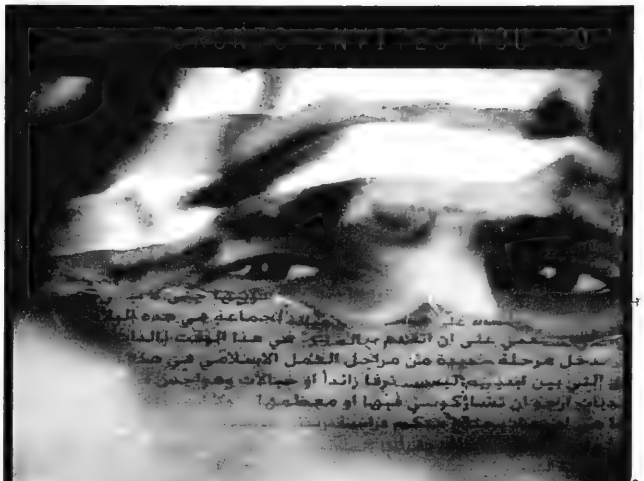

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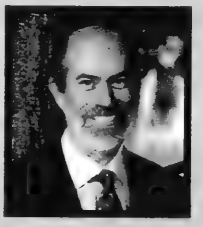

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Obituary

Former editor of Winnipeg newspaper dies suddenly

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Matt Bellan, who had been the longtime editor and co-owner of the Jewish Post & News, died suddenly last week at age 58 after having retired a little more than four months ago.

"Matt was found dead in the swimming pool of his apartment building Tuesday morning [April 13]... he used to swim regularly, and his body had been in the pool overnight before he was found," said his brother Bernie Bellan, business manager and co-owner of the Jewish Post & News.

Bellan was notified of his brother Matt's "shocking" death by police on the morning of April 14.

Matt Bellan had been diagnosed with diabetes early in life.

"He had a history of diabetic seizures, and he died most likely of a heart attack or a diabetic seizure," said his brother, who noted that an autopsy was performed.

"The coroner's office has told us [the family] that he had a 75 per cent blockage in an artery," Bernie Bellan said.

On the day he died, Bellan, who continued as an occasional writer for the Jewish Post & News, attended a Passover luncheon put on by the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University and appeared to be well.

Bellan, who especially liked to read, had been enjoying the newfound time he had to do so since his retirement as editor.

Bellan began editing the Jewish Post & News in 1982 after working for the Regina Leader-Post.

Tove Silver, office manager at the Jewish Post & News since 1989, remembers Bellan as a "very generous" man.

"My son-in-law had a liver transplant in 2007 when he was 30 years old. Matt kept asking about him and even gave them [him and her daughter] a little money to help them out," Silver said.

"Matt also used to help a blind women out by giving her rides and helping her regularly," she said.

But she noted that Bellan had not been well. "It was difficult for him [Matt] to control his diabetes," Silver said.

"He was very devoted to the newspaper when he was editor... and he used to like covering the arts, including many plays and concerts in the [Jewish] community," she added.

"Matt will be remembered for his distinguished service to our local Jewish community," Alan Yusim, midwest region director of B'nai Brith Canada, wrote to Bernie Bellan and the Jewish Post & News on learning of Matt's death.

Matt Bellan

"He was a passionate and valuable contributor to the Jewish and greater communities," wrote Jeff Morry, senior programmer for the Asper Foundation.

Matt, who was born and raised in Winnipeg, was openly gay and left behind his partner of more than 30 years, Guy Frobisher.

Bernie Bellan said Frobisher "was quite shaken up by Matt's death when notified on Tuesday morning."

Bellan said his brother was determined to give the Jewish Post & News an online presence, and he took courses in web design and singlehandedly created and maintained the paper's website.

"Matt would do this every Wednesday afternoon when the paper was published, and it's something I will have to take over," Bellan said. He added that his brother will also be remembered as a "very talented reporter" and observer of Jewish life.

In addition to brother Bernie, Bellan is survived by two sisters, Judi Waldman in Winnipeg and Ruth Cooperstock in Victoria.

MINI MENSCHES:

Students from Associated Hebrew Schools' Mini Mensch and Beyond pre-nursery program at the Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill have fun learning about animals through movement, music and play.

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Ahmadinejad addresses Durban II opening

Continued from page 1

"What were the root causes of the U.S. attacks against Iraq or invasion of Afghanistan? The Iraqi people have suffered enormous losses," the Iranian president said. "Wasn't the military action against Iraq planned by the Zionists… in the U.S. administration, in complicity with the arms manufacturing companies?

"The Security Council made it possible for that illegitimate government to be set up," Ahmadinejad said. "For 60 years, this government was supported by the world. Many western countries say they are fighting racism, but in fact support it with occupation, bombings and crimes committed in Gaza. These countries support the criminals."

A wigged protester shouting, "Racist! racist!" threw a soft red object, which may have been a clown's nose, at Ahmadinejad, hitting the podium and interrupting his speech.

Ahmadinejad's speech came as Israel prepared to mark Yom Hashoah, its own Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Iranian leader has repeatedly claimed the Holocaust never happened and has called for Israel's destruction.

Swiss President Hans-Rudolf Merz met Ahmadinejad upon the latter's arrival in Geneva on Sunday, a day before the Durban II conference was to convene. Merz had declared he planned to challenge the Iranian leader about his views on the Holocaust and Israel.

U.S. President Barack Obama

Merz also described the presence of Ahmadinejad as a good chance to discuss ways to mature bilateral ties, as well as regional and international co-operation, according to the Iranian Student News Agency.

Israel said it was recalling its ambassador to Switzerland on Monday in protest.

Israeli President Shimon Peres said in a statement he was "deeply hurt and ashamed" that Ahmadinejad was invited to speak precisely on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

"There must be a limit, even to the neutrality of Switzerland. Today is the day? This is the man to speak? This is the outlook for the future?" Peres said. "I don't want to speak too much about Iran. But in Iran, people are hanged because they are suspected of God knows what – nothing. There is a centre of hate, of blood, of terror."

Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama explained the decision to keep the United States away from the review conference as not wishing to put "an imprimatur on something we just don't believe."

A statement issued Saturday by the State Department said it was too late to address critical problems with the anti-racism forum, and its decision not to attend was final. The statement commended conference organizers for additional improvements to a draft outcome document that removed explicit criticisms of Israel, but said the document remained unacceptable because it endorsed the 2001 Durban Conference, which singled out Israel for criticism.

The new document's inclusion of the endorsement, which does not specify Israel or the Palestinians, "has the same effect as inserting that original text into the current document and re-adopting it."

Answering a question at a news conference in Trinidad & Tobago about the U.S. decision to boycott the Durban review conference, Obama noted that the initial Durban conference in 2001, which was supposed to be about racism, instead "became a session through which folks expressed antagonism toward Israel in ways that were oftentimes completely hypocritical and counterproductive.

"We expressed in the run-up to this conference our concerns that if you adopted all the language from 2001, that's not something we could sign up for," Obama said. "If you're incorporating a previous conference we weren't involved with that raised a whole set of objectionable provisions, it wouldn't be worth it to participate because we couldn't get past that previous issue."

He added that if there had been a "clean start, fresh start," the United States would have been "happy to go."

Obama said he does believe in the United Nations and its ability to be an "effective forum" to deal with transnational conflicts, noting that the United States is pursuing a seat on the UN Human Rights Council for the first time. He also said he told UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon he would be happy to work with the organization after the Durban conference "to see if we can move forward on some of these steps" and "partner with other countries to reduce discrimination."

Irwin Cotler

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) applauded the decision by the United States not to attend.

"President Obama's decision not to send U.S. representation to the event is the right thing to do and underscores America's unstinting commitment to combating intolerance and racism in all its forms and in all settings," AIPAC said in a statement.

However, Ban Ki-moon criticized western nations for boycotting the conference, saying he was "profoundly disappointed."

"Some nations, who by rights should be helping to forge a path to a better future, are not here," the secretary general said as he opened the five-day meeting.

"I deeply regret that some have chosen to stand aside. I hope they will not do so for long," Ban added, before holding his own meeting with Ahmadinejad.

Navi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said in a news release Sunday she deeply regretted the decision by the United States not to attend the anti-racism review conference. She urged other states to maintain their commitment to the draft outcome document that was completed last Friday.

"I am shocked and deeply disappointed by the United States' decision not to attend a conference that aims to combat racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance worldwide," Pillay said. "A handful of states have permitted one or two issues to dominate their approach to this issue, allowing them to outweigh the concerns of numerous groups of people that suffer racism and similar forms of intolerance to a pernicious and life-damaging degree on a daily basis all across the world, in both developed and developing countries. These are truly global issues, and it is essential that they are discussed at a global level, however sensitive and difficult they may be.

"Some media have interpreted the U.S. withdrawal as based on the continued retention of language on defamation of religion and anti-Semitism in the outcome document, when, in fact, no such language exists in the text adopted last week," Pillay noted. "In addition, the draft outcome document clearly states that 'the Holocaust must never be forgotten' and deplores all forms of racism including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism."

She pointed out that in this respect it reflects the original 2001 Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

"I fail to see why, given that the Middle East is not mentioned in this document, politics related to the Middle East continue to intrude into the process," she said.

Responding to U.S. concerns that the draft document incorporates the final document from the 2001 Durban conference, Pillay said, "I believe that difficulty could have been overcome. It would have been possible to make it clear in a footnote that the United States had not affirmed the original document and therefore is not in a position to reaffirm it, which is a routine practice in multilateral negotiations to enable consensus-building while allowing for individual positions to be expressed.

"And then we could have all moved on together and put the problems of 2001 behind us."

Israel sent a delegation to Geneva to publicly protest Durban II. As part of their campaign, the Israelis planned to organize demonstrations and distribute materials on human rights violations in Iran – with particular emphasis on public executions and violence against women.

The campaign was overseen by Israel ambassador to Geneva Ronnie Lashno-Yaar, assisted by Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, Nobel Prize laureate Elie Weisel and film actor Jon Voight. A special media room is providing immediate responses to anti-Israeli statements.

On Sunday, Dershowitz was escorted by Swiss federal agents away from the hotel where Ahmadinejad and Merz were meeting, after he declared plans to challenge the Iranian leader about his views on the Holocaust and Israel.

In other developments, Canadian MP Irwin Cotler, the former minister of justice and attorney general, denounced Ahmadinejad's presence at the Durban review conference.

"It makes a mockery of the case and cause of human rights for the review conference – which is supposed to be dedicated to the struggle against racism and for human rights – to be welcoming President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who shames the cause of human rights as he shames the great civilization of Iran and its people."

Cotler said Ahmadinejad incites hatred and genocide in violation of the Genocide Convention's prohibition; is engaged in the massive repression of the rights of his own people – particularly the Baha'i religious minority; pursues the most destructive of weaponry in violation of UN Security Council resolutions; is complicit in crimes against humanity through genocidal terrorist proxies; and has used the podium of the UN General Assembly to invoke classic anti-Semitic tropes reminiscent of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

"A person who shames the cause of human rights does not deserve to be a welcome guest at a human rights conference," Cotler continued.

Continued on page 32

For further coverage of Durban II, please go to cjnews.com

Natan Sharansky gets nod to head Jewish Agency

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JERUSALEM — Prime Minster Benjamin Netanyahu named former minister Natan Sharansky as his candidate for chairman of the Jewish Agency, the prime minister's office said Saturday.

Natan Sharansky

Netanyahu intends to recommend Sharansky for the position to the Jewish Agency's board of trustees. Until a few months ago, the job was filled by Zeev Bielsky, currently a Kadima MK.

A former Soviet Refusenik, the 61-year-old Sharansky founded the Yisrael Baaliyah party and served as trade and industry minister during Netanyahu's first stint as prime minister. Sharansky was also minister of the interior in Ehud Barak's government and deputy prime minister and housing minister under Ariel Sharon.

In the 2006 elections, Sharansky ran as part of the Likud party, but withdrew from political life a few months after being elected.

Sharansky, considered a confidante of Netanyahu, has won the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom for his struggles for human rights and has headed the Institute for Strategic Studies at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem.

Italian Jews lend hand after quake

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ROME — Italian Jews and Holocaust survivors are rushing to aid communities that sheltered them during World War II and were hit by last week's devastating earthquake.

A delegation of some 20 elderly survivors and their descendants, as well as Jewish community leaders, roamed the shattered countryside of central Italy on Monday, looking for their former saviours, who are now living in tent camps.

They offered everything from gym shoes to summer camps for children.

"I wouldn't be here if it weren't for these people," said Alberto Di Consiglio, whose parents were sheltered in the small hamlet of Fossa during the war. "We have to help them."

More than 100 tent cities have been built around L'Aquila and the 26 towns and villages affected by the 6.3-magnitude quake that struck central Italy on April 6. The temblor killed 294 people and displaced another 55,000.

In the chaos of the relief efforts, Jews who had been sheltered in the area during the war lost touch with their one-time rescuers, many of whom are simple farmers with no cellphones.

At least five Jewish families – about 30 people – took shelter in the small mountainside hamlets of Fossa and Casentino from mid-1943 until the arrival of the Allies a year later, survivors said.

In one tent, Di Consiglio managed to find Nello De Bernardinis, 74, the son of the couple who sheltered Di Consiglio's father and eight other relatives during the war.

"It was a great emotion, It's so painful that such righteous people should suffer like this and live in a tent," Di Consiglio said.

De Bernardinis said he was fine for the moment and greatly appreciated the Jewish community's checking in on him and his family. He said, however, that it would be useful to have help during harvest time, and Di Consiglio promised his whole family would come.

Riccardo Pacifici, the head of Rome's Jewish community, said he was working to get recognition from Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust museum and memorial for people like De Bernardinis and others who sheltered Roman Jews. The memorial bestows a special honour on those who saved Jews during World War II.

Irena Steinfeldt, director of the Righteous Among the Nations department at Yad Vashem, said the museum was not familiar with the stories of Fossa and Casentino. She urged the Jewish families involved to come forward so that the people who saved them could be recognized.

"We have not heard these stories, and we want to hear these stories," Steinfeldt said. "There are still people who haven't approached us and haven't spoken, and I would be happy if the families contacted Yad Vashem and told us."

Other stories of Jews being saved in the same area were recorded, she said, usually involving Jews who fled from Rome to nearby villages. In one town, Tagliacozzo Alto, a priest named Don Gaetano Tantalo took in the Orvieto family in the spring of 1944, even preparing a traditional Passover meal for them, she said. He was recognized by Yad Vashem in 1978.

Jews of Europe had great growth potential

Continued from page 1

he writes: "This was the destruction of a generation, and what we are lacking now is not only that generation, it is their children and their children."

According to Della Pergola, while the birth rate of the Jewish population outside Israel is relatively low, the young Jewish population of eastern Europe had great potential for growth.

"What would happen if there were another 10 million Jews in eastern Europe? It raises questions that are like science fiction – for example, would the State of Israel have come into being?"

Della Pergola says another demographic outcome of the Holocaust has been the lower relative number of Jews in the world. "At present, the percentage of Jews in the world is constantly in decline. Before the Holocaust, the rate was eight Jews per 1,000 people in the world. Today it is two per 1,000."

Della Pergola also notes in the article that various estimates put the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust at between 5.6 and 5.9 million, and that part of the problem in pinpointing the number lies in the question of "who is a Jew," since some of those killed converted to Christianity before the Holocaust or were partly Jewish.

Counter-conference held in New York

Continued from page 31

"Rather, such a person – who massively oppresses the rights of his own people – belongs in the docket of the accused."

The Jerusalem-based NGO Monitor, which publicizes material on distortions of human rights issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict, said Ahmadinejad's participation at an anti-racism conference "will further expose the failure of Durban II as a genuine human rights conference."

Gerald Steinberg, NGO Monitor's executive director, said: "The voices of morality which have worked to prevent another human rights disaster in the Durban framework have had a significant impact. In contrast, biased NGOs that promote this demonization have lost influence. The presence of Ahmadinejad and the focus on Iran's gross violations of human rights will further expose the moral bankruptcy of those working for a repeat of the Durban Conference in 2001."

In other developments, Canadian Senator Jerry Grafstein said a "counter-conference" in New York City, which will coincide with the Geneva-based review conference, could serve as "a corrective to Durban II and the UN conference that appears to be a rerun of the distorted anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism of the 2001 meeting."

Grafstein said the counter-conference on racism and discrimination could also provide an intellectual launching pad to a completely new organization that would bring together democracies outside the UN framework.

U.S. president Ronald Reagan suggested an association of democracies, and president Bill Clinton built on that, but work toward a council of democracies is being done incrementally and in small steps, Grafstein said.

The United Nations has failed in one of its missions, that of promoting human rights, Grafstein added. This can be seen in the Durban II conference, which was organized in part by such human rights violators as Iran, Cuba and Libya. A council of democracies would share a common set of principles that current UN member do not share, he said.

The Durban II counter-conference is sponsored by the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, along with about two dozen other, mostly Jewish, organizations.

The five-day Durban Review Conference in Geneva is intended to take stock of international efforts to combat intolerance since the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, which saw the United States and Israel walk out over claims of anti-Semitism.

A draft declaration circulated earlier this year blamed Israel for the entire Middle East conflict, while human rights violations in Muslim countries were largely ignored. Negotiators in Geneva said on Friday that most western and Muslim states had agreed to a revised declaration removing all references to Israel and the Middle East. But diplomats say Middle Eastern nations insisted that a clause about the incitement of religious hatred remain in the text, which many western countries see as a curtailment of free speech.

With files from JTA and Paul Lungen

The Staff of
The Canadian Jewish News
mourn the passing of
our friend and colleague
Alek Silver ז"ל
and extend sincere condolences
to his family

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Mossad tip led to capture of Hezbollah cell in Sinai

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JERUSALEM — Foreign intelligence services – including Israel's Mossad – have provided Egyptian authorities with intelligence that contributed to the uncovering of a Hezbollah-run terrorist ring and led to the arrest of dozens of suspects.

Meanwhile, Egyptian sources upped the tone of the charges against Hezbollah on April 13 by claiming that the aim of the underground activity was not limited to plans for terrorist attacks against tourist areas frequented by foreigners, but also against targets in the Suez canal.

Foreign intelligence services, including the Mossad and the CIA, contributed information to Egypt that led to the uncovering of the Hezbollah terror cell in that country, Philippe Vasset, editor of Intelligence Online told Ha'aretz.

The online biweekly reported that the Egyptian security forces operated on the basis of intelligence "provided to them by several foreign intelligence services."

According to the report, the head of the ring operating in Egypt, Lebanese citizen Sami Shihab, had been in touch for some time with a special branch of Hezbollah. The report also states that following the assassination of Hezbollah's terrorist mastermind Imad Mughniyeh more than a year ago in Damascus, the special branch has been led jointly by three senior operatives: Nawaf al-Mussawi, Wafic Safa and Sheikh Ali Dugmush. The three operate in co-ordination with General Faisal Bagherzadeh, head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard mission to Lebanon.

Western sources told Ha'aretz that in recent years, co-operation between the intelligence services of a number of western countries has intensified with regard to Iran. Israel is a leading player in this co-operation.

Tehran's nuclear program and its role in international terrorism are both concerns of the intelligence services.

Iran's intelligence and security service, and Al-Quds, an elite unit of the Revolutionary Guard whose mission is to assist Shiite militias and organizations throughout the world, have deployed "sleeper cells" of agents, who are activated according to need. In some cases, the cells were activated directly by Iranian agents, while in other cases Hezbollah was used, especially through a special branch originally set up by Mughniyeh.

The CIA, Mossad, Britain's MI6, the German BND and other intelligence services – like those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan who have suffered attacks by terrorist cells operated by Iran – have stepped up collaboration, information sharing and joint assessments. Egypt's chief of intelligence, General Omar Suleiman, is a frequent visitor to Israel and the doors of his counterparts in Israel are always open, as are those of the Prime Minister's Bureau.

Security sources in Israel have issued warnings on a number of occasions that Hezbollah will try to avenge the killing of Mughniyeh, which it blames on Mossad agents, thereby fulfilling a promise made publicly by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. In response to these concerns, Israeli diplomatic missions were placed on high alert on a number of occasions, and the London Times reported that several weeks ago an attempt against an Israeli target in Baku, Azerbaijan, was foiled.

Meanwhile, Egyptian security sources said that the Hezbollah agents arrested in Egypt had planned a series of terrorist attacks against tourist sites in Sinai where Israeli and western tourists vacation. However, the Egyptian sources also noted that the Suez Canal was a target of the ring – possibly one of the larger ships passing through the strategic waterway.

> ***Terrorists had planned attacks against tourists***

Incapacitating a large ship in the canal would have had a serious impact on the country's economy, as the canal is a major source of revenues for the local economy, worth several billion dollars a year. An attack on the Suez Canal and tourist sites in the country would have undermined the Egyptian economy sufficiently to destabilize the standing of the regime in the Arab world.

A senior Egyptian source told Ha'aretz that "Egypt will take active measures against anyone who threatens its national security. We will not allow anyone to do this: Hezbollah, Iran or others. They sought to strike at the national security of Egypt, but luckily we stopped them and uncovered their plot."

The same source also said that "it is not unlikely that Hezbollah sought to strike at the Egyptian regime. They wanted to undermine our position in the region, and harm our economy and our ties with countries in the area."

Senior Israeli security sources said yesterday that Hezbollah appears to have been aiming to strike at the regime of Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak. They note that the tourist sites where Israelis visit were a secondary target for the group. The same sources assessed that Mubarak is now fully aware of the severity of the threat posed to Egypt's security. "Mubarak understands that Iran has turned Egypt and Sinai into a forward base of operations. It is no wonder he is concerned," a senior source said.

The uncovering of the ring will result in greater understanding in Egypt of Israel's considerations, however, no one should expect an immediate improvement in Egyptian efforts to counter arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip, the same source said.

Israel always the enemy

Hamas leaders made their first appearances at public events since Israel's Gaza war on Friday, signalling defiance of rival Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as he discussed peace prospects with a U.S. envoy. "We cannot, we will not, and we will never recognize the enemy in any way, shape or form," Mahmoud Zahar, one of the two leaders, said in a mosque sermon broadcast on the Islamist movement's radio station.

Recognize Israel, first: Bibi

The Palestinians should recognize Israel as a Jewish state before Israel commits to peace talks, Benjamin Netanyahu said. "Israel expects the Palestinians to first recognize Israel as a Jewish state before talking about two states for two peoples," Israel's prime minister told George Mitchell, U.S. President Barack Obama's Mideast envoy, during an April 16 meeting in Jerusalem, a senior official in Netanyahu's office told Israeli media. In meetings with Israeli officials, Mitchell said U.S. policy favours the creation of a Palestinian state. Mitchell met Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman on April 16 after a meeting with President Shimon Peres and an April 15 meeting with Defence Minister Ehud Barak. Mitchell also met opposition leader Tzipi Livni.

No talking to Lieberman

Egypt's foreign minister said his country won't deal with Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman. Ahmed Abul Gheit said in an interview with Russia Today television that his country would work with Israel and any of its proposals, but not through Lieberman. "Of course he will not visit Cairo as long as his positions remain unchanged," Gheit added. Last year during a Knesset session, Lieberman said Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak could "go to hell" if he was not interested in visiting Israel. Lieberman backtracked during a speech at a ceremony earlier this month marking the start of his tenure in office, when he said he would like to visit Egypt and welcomed its leaders to Israel, saying Egypt is key to achieving regional stability.

Peres dismisses Iran speculation

President Shimon Peres on April 16 dismissed speculations that Israel is planning to attack Iran over its contentious nuclear program. Peres told visiting U.S. special Mideast envoy George Mitchell that the key to containing Iran's nuclear ambitions would not be found in a military realm. "All the talk about a possible attack by Israel on Iran is not true," Peres said. "The solution in Iran is not military." He said that progress with Iran depended on international co-operation and exploring whether dialogue presented a real opportunity or if Tehran was just stalling, according to a statement from Peres' office.

IAF strikes in Gaza

The Israeli Air Force hit a house in Gaza that was rigged with explosives a day after a Qassam rocket was fired on southern Israel. The attack took place April 16 as U.S. President Barack Obama's Mideast envoy, George Mitchell, was meeting with Israeli military Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. It was Israel's first strike on Gaza in more than a month. The Qassam fired April 15 was the first attack on southern Israel in two weeks.

– files from JTA and Ha'aretz

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Novel draws on author's legal background

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Toronto Mayor David Miller and Robert Rotenberg at Toronto City Hall in March. [David Israelson photo]

How fitting that Robert Rotenberg's first book, Old City Hall (Touchstone, 2009), a legal thriller set in Toronto, was released the very week the city marked its 175th anniversary.

Old City Hall celebrates Toronto. Its colourful characters are cut from Toronto's multicultural fabric. And iconic city landmarks like Nathan Phillips Square, the Don Jail and, of course, Old City Hall, are interwoven into an intricate whodunit yarn.

The prominence of Toronto in this book may explain why Rotenberg, a criminal lawyer, was included in the city's 175th anniversary festivities in early March. He was invited to read at the library at City Hall. Turns out Mayor David Miller is a big fan.

"I finished the reading," Rotenberg recounts, "and suddenly I heard Mayor Miller yelling to the crowd, 'You got to read this book!' It was a magical moment."

Within weeks of its release in March, the book made Maclean's magazine's and the Globe and Mail's lists of the top 10 bestselling books in the country.

It's being translated into eight languages, audio book and large print format rights have been sold and Rotenberg just finished the sequel.

The Toronto-born author says it's all very exciting, but his proudest moment was at the book launch, sharing his literary success with his father, Dr. Cyril Rotenberg, who, sadly, died a few weeks after this interview.

"I said, 'Dad, our name will be known all around the world.' To put the book in his hand was the best part of the whole thing."

This filial sensitivity is paralleled in the character of Detective Ari Greene, the fictional Jewish protagonist of Old City Hall. Greene is also very attentive to his father, but Rotenberg says there's no autobiographical connection. "I'm enjoying getting to know him."

Greene is the son of a Holocaust survivor, which is not the writer's background. However, Rotenberg says many of his childhood friends' parents were survivors. Greene's father is a composite of these people. "Although he's experienced enormous tragedy, he's not a tragic person. He's funny. He's sarcastic. He's not a one-dimensional character."

Continued on page 39

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Inside Hana's Suitcase director brings a message of hope

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Inside Hana's Suitcase, the Holocaust documentary by director/producer Larry Weinstein, makes its world première on the opening night of Toronto's Hot Docs Festival.

Based on Karen Levine's award-winning book Hana's Suitcase, Weinstein's film, to be screened April 30, tells the remarkable story of how a suitcase left by young Auschwitz victim Hana Brady forever changes the lives of her brother, George Brady, in Toronto, and Holocaust educator Fumiko Ishioka in Tokyo.

At the Victoria Film Festival, where the documentary screened as a work in progress and won the Canwest Award for best documentary, the response to it and to Brady's guest appearance was overwhelming.

"The audience broke into a spontaneous standing ovation for George and his daughter, Lara," Weinstein said in an interview at his downtown Rhombus Media office. "One can't help but fall in love with George in watching the film, and feeling incredible empathy for him. When he's sad, it's heart-breaking because he's a brave person who doesn't wallow in sadness. They adored him, and Lara too."

Jindriška Hanušová as young Hana and Daniel Hájek as George in Larry Weinstein's new film Inside Hana's Suitcase.

Weinstein is known for creating award-winning, avant-garde documentaries about prolific composer-musicians, including September Songs: The Music of Kurt Weill, Ravel's Brain, Beethoven's Hair, Mozartballs and Toscanini: In His Own Words. This is his first non-music film in 25 years.

"I hadn't thought about making a film devoted to the Holocaust theme, but Hana's Suitcase was such a moving book," Weinstein said. "I knew that George and Fumiko were living, real characters, and I became interested in creating another cross between documentary and drama."

What makes this film inspiring are the heroes – Ishioka who used the suitcase to educate children in Tokyo about religious tolerance and George and Lara Brady who travel the world with the same goal of educating children about the Holocaust.

But "the film's not just about educating people on the Holocaust, which is always important," Weinstein said. "It's about a bigger subject – we have to have empathy for each other as human beings or there will be nothing left in the end."

Brady's story first appeared in a CJN article in 2001. It immediately caught the imagination of author Karen Levine, who made it into an award-winning radio documentary and then wrote the book. Since then, the suitcase story has spawned Joe Schlesinger's documentary Odyssey of Hope: Hana's Suitcase, and Emil Sher's play, Hana's Suitcase, also both award-winners.

Through dream-like dramatic recreations, Weinstein presents George Brady's life in his small Czech town and the Theresienstadt and Auschwitz concentration camps. The story unfolds as child storytellers from Canada, the Czech Republic and Japan express Brady's emotions and compassionately relate his situation to theirs.

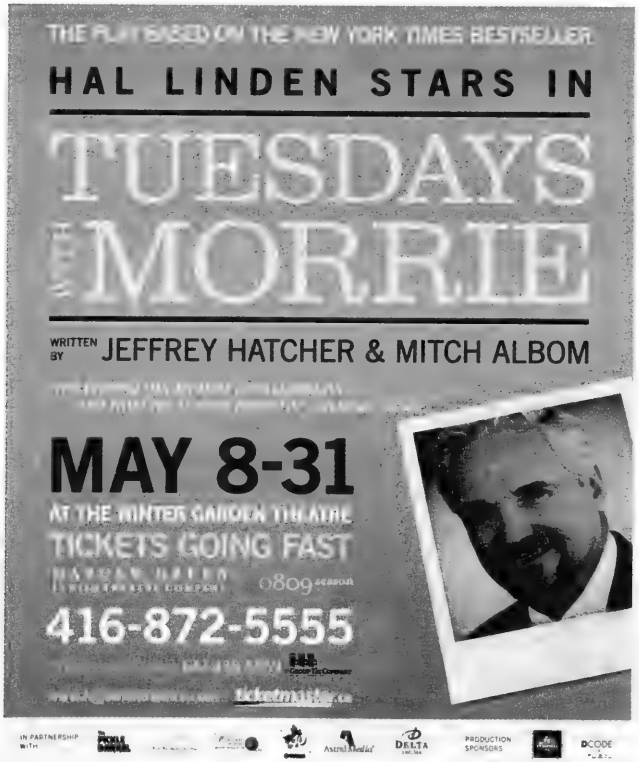
Creatively, Weinstein weaves in interviews, animation and photos hidden by Brady during the war, taking viewers back to Brady's earlier days and forward to Tokyo for Ishioka's quest to find the suitcase's owner.

Spiritual and moving, the music was written by people who had similar experiences to those of Hana and George – three from Terezin: Hans Krasa, Gideon Klein and Pavel Haas; and two others: anti-fascist Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu and German composer Karl Amadeus Hartmann, the only musician Weinstein knows of who was actively anti-fascist under Adolf Hitler.

Plans for the film include a theatrical release and CBC broadcasts.

The April 30 screening is at the Winter Garden Theatre at 9:30 p.m. It screens again on May 3 at 1:30 p.m.at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

For tickets: Hot Docs Documentary Box Office, Hazelton Lanes – Lower Level, 55 Avenue Rd. 416- 637-5150. boxoffice@hotdocs.ca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Hot Docs film festival has something for everybody

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The world's biggest documentary film festival, Hot Docs, has something for everybody at this year's edition, the 16th, which runs in Toronto from April 30 to May 10. [www.hotdocs.ca]

A preview:

Larry Weinstein's Inside Hana's Suitcase, blending factual narrative with dramatizations, is a story of heartbreak and hope.

Czech-born Jew George Brady and his younger sister, Hana, form the core of this movie, which is co-presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

George and Hana, from the town of Nove Mesto, had what seems like an idyllic childhood. But after Germany occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939, their parents were arrested and eventually murdered by the Nazis. Shorn of a mother and a father, they were taken care of by relatives.

In 1942, they were deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, near Prague. He was 13 and she was 10. They were then shipped to Auschwitz, where he survived, but she perished.

This touching 90-minute movie, set in the Czech Republic, Japan and Canada, fleshes out their lives through the prism of Canadian and Japanese school projects and raises awareness of the dangers of intolerance and hatred.

Hana's life, tragically cut so short, unfolds as the director of the Holocaust Education and Resource Centre in Tokyo – a sensitive woman dedicated to fighting racism and promoting understanding – helps pupils solve a mystery about the ownership of a battered suitcase from Auschwitz.

By turns sombre and uplifting, Inside Hana's Suitcase is a well told tale. It will be screened on Thursday, April 30, at 9:30 p.m. at the Winter Garden Theatre and on Sunday, May 3, at 1:30 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

* * *

Two Israeli soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, were kidnapped by Hezbollah as they patrolled the Lebanese border on July 12, 2006. In response, Israel attacked Lebanon, precipitating a 34-day war.

Chronicle of a Kidnap, by Nurit Kedar, focuses on efforts by Goldwasser's wife, Karnit, to rally Israeli and international support for his release.

Unfortunately, her work was in vain, since Goldwasser was probably killed when his armoured personnel carrier was ambushed. His remains were returned to Israel in July 2008 in an Israel-Hezbollah prisoner exchange, thus closing a circle of despair.

Kedar's 55-minute film is a portrait of a determined woman who is initially hopeful that she and her beloved husband will be reunited.

She lobbies the Israeli and Russian governments, as well as French President Nicholas Sarkozy. She also travels to the United States to present her case.

Israel's president, Shimon Peres, shrugs his shoulders and is uncharacteristically at a loss for words. Sarkozy briskly pledges to help. A Russian official claims that Goldwasser is still alive.

It is left to a former deputy director of the Mossad to deliver the bad news. He warns Karnit not to be sanguine. He also believes that Israel was not aggressive enough in trying to gain his freedom.

In addition to mining information from a whole host of officials, Kedar talks to Goldwasser's parents and Karnit's father, who all offer different perspectives on the situation.

Chronicle of a Kidnap, a film steeped in sorrow, will be screened on Monday, May 4, at 7:15 p.m. and on Wednesday, May 6, at 12 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum and on Sunday, May 10, at 7:15 p.m. at the Cumberland 3 Theatre.

* * *

City of Borders, directed by Yun Suh, examines the gay/lesbian scene in Jerusalem through the medium of the Shushan, a bar where Jews and Palestinian Arabs can mingle freely without fear.

Suh interviews the proprietor of the Shushan, who happens to be the first openly gay city councilman in Jerusalem; a drag queen from Ramallah, where homosexuality is strictly frowned upon; a Jewish and Arab lesbian couple who live together; and a gay from a settlement on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

He discovers that the Shushan, teetering on the edge of insolvency, is a place where you can be yourself, and that Jews and Arabs, particularly those from traditional and religious backgrounds, revile homosexuals and lesbians.

"We have to kick them," says a Jewish woman.

An Arab woman adds, "They mar the beauty of Ramallah."

City of Borders will be screened on Sunday, May 3, at 3:45 p.m. at the Cumberland 3 Theatre and on Monday, May 4, at 9:30 p.m. at the Cumberland 2 Theatre.

***

Worlds collide in Samantha Buck's 21 Below.

Sharon, 28, returns to her mother's middle-class home in Buffalo, N.Y., after learning that her younger sister, Karen, is pregnant yet again.

City of Borders examines the gay/lesbian scene in Jerusalem.

Karen, 21, is the black sheep of the family. Her previous children have been born out of wedlock, and the man who fathered her latest child is an African-American drug dealer.

The plot thickens when Karen finds out that her previous baby, still a toddler, has Tay-Sachs disease – a genetic ailment common to Ashkenazi Jews – and that the child will die before she is three years old.

There is potential in this story, but the script leaves much to be desired and the characters are surprisingly bland.

21 Below will be screened on Wednesday, May 6, at 9:15 p.m. at the Cumberland 3 Theatre and on Friday, May 8, at 4 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum.

* * *

Simon El Habre's Lebanese film, The One Man Village, is about an unusual man who tends to a herd of dairy cows and a flock of chickens in a bleak, deserted village high in the mountains. It was virtually destroyed during the civil war in Lebanon.

"I love it here," says the man, who awakens to the call of a rooster.

Scheduled to be screened on Friday, May 1, at 9:30 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum and on Monday, May 4, at 11:30 a.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre, The One Man Village observes not only a man who goes against the grain, but a fractured society with an uncertain past and present.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Student filmmaker's web TV parody viewed more than a million times

By VICKY TOBIANAH
Special to The CJN

Richard Stark's dream to tell quirky, character-driven stories led him to Hollywood, where he has pursued his dream to become a director and writer.

Although his career is only beginning, he already has a major success to boast about.

His film The Legend of Neil, a web TV parody based on the video game The Legend of Zelda, was nominated for a 2009 Streamy Award (the web television version of the Academy Awards) for best cinematography.

Stark, 33, was raised in Toronto. He started making short films when he was 11 years old and had made more than 30 by the time he graduated high school.

He recalls playing with his father's large, clunky VHS camera and trying to convince his family and friends to "star" in his movies – family and friends who would later become inspirations for many of the characters in his films.

Despite his passion for storytelling, Stark's interest in science led him to study biology at the University of Toronto.

He figured he would become "another Jewish doctor, a good Jewish professional," Stark said with a laugh. But he soon realized he would not be satisfied unless he was making films.

Devoted to studying "the psychology and dynamics of humans in their relationships," Stark said that his films star people who can bring the truth out of characters and create compelling performances.

"I'm simply fascinated by human behaviour, and this fascination enables me to create worlds the audience has not experienced," he said.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in science and doing a lot of soul searching, he decided to apply to the University of Southern California's School of Cinema Television master's program.

He got accepted, and without hesitation, he set off for Hollywood on a mission to fulfil his lifelong dream.

He said that he hoped he could become part of the rich tradition of Jewish filmmakers.

The Legend of Neil, about a drunken man who finds himself magically transported into the 1980s video game The Legend of Zelda, was viewed more than one million times.

Stark said he was stunned by the response. It earned the series a permanent spot airing on Atom TV on Comedy Central.

Stark's latest film, My Son's Big Bris, is about a neurotic father dealing with his son's circumcision. The film is a graduate-level thesis that's being produced at the USC film school.

Inspired by Stark's second cousin's brit milah, the film shows the humour and love that can emerge at such big events.

Stark said that Jewish life-cycle events can create drama due to participants who may have strong personalities, but his goal was to portray the way in which a cultural event can unite a family and erode conflicts.

The father in the film, Eugene, is a typical first-time father with some fears. By the end of the film, he has learned that all he needs is confidence in himself and that giving the utmost love to his children will be enough.

Stark has observed the dynamics of family interactions at important events. My Son's Big Bris points to the ways a family can raise a child to help "change the world," he said, despite different beliefs on how that can be accomplished.

During a particularly moving scene, Eugene names his son Chaim, the Hebrew word for life, to emphasize the continuation of the Jewish family. This is an especially poignant moment, since most of Eugene's family perished in the Holocaust.

One of Stark's mentors, Canadian filmmaker George Bloomfield, taught him to create naturalistic performances and encouraged him to discover the one visual moment in his latest film that truly captures the heart of the story.

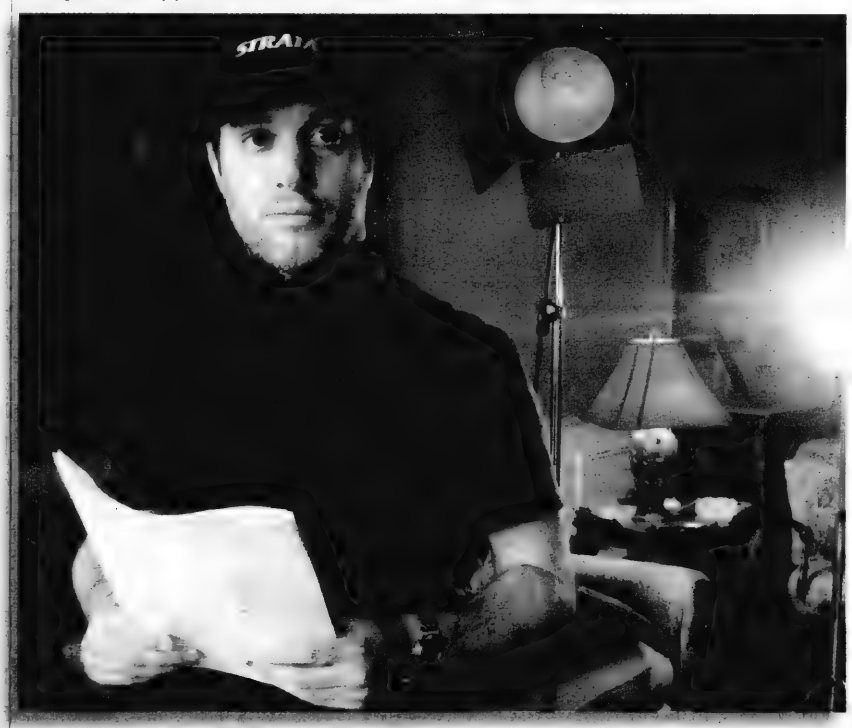
Stark said that moment occurs in My Son's Big Bris when a look that captures the strong bond between them is exchanged between Eugene and his new son.

Although he had to cover the costs of making the film, Stark counts himself lucky to be able to create stories that are meaningful to him.

Stark emphasized the "incredible experience" he undergoes while watching the audience's reactions to his work. It is the most "satisfactory feeling in the world," he said.

Stark added that he wants to continue telling stories that affect people and give them an enlightening perspective on their lives.

For more information about Stark's work, e-mail him at richardestark@live.com.



Toronto native Richard Stark said that his fascination with human behaviour enables him to "create worlds the audience has not experienced" through film.

Books & Authors

Soviet project in Birobidzhan 'a sandcastle,' historian says

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Birobidzhan, a remote, sparsely populated area of 36,490 square kilometres in Siberia near the Chinese border, was proclaimed a Jewish national district by the Soviet Union in 1928. Six years later, amid rising anti-Semitism in Germany, it was officially designated as the Jewish Autonomous Region.

The establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Soviet Union was intended to achieve several overlapping objectives: to help safeguard its easternmost borders from Chinese or Japanese aggression, to tap Birobidzhan's bountiful natural resources, to move Jews away from the rampant anti-Semitic violence of Ukraine, Belarus and Crimea, to transform Soviet Jewry into a kind of Russian peasantry and to counter the allure of Zionism in Palestine.

Henry Srebrnik

The Canadian Jewish Communist movement, a key ideological component of Canada's left, supported the formation and growth of Birobidzhan and played a role in nurturing its development through an organization known as the Association for Jewish Colonization in the Soviet Union (ICOR).

Founded in the United States in 1924 and popular among first- and second-generation Yiddish-speaking immigrant and working class Jews of eastern European origin, ICOR had a following in Canada as well, mainly in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. Fired up by the idea of a Jewish socialist homeland in the Soviet Union, ICOR's Canadian branches became a separate organization in 1935 under the name the Canadian Birobidzhan Committee.

This pro-Soviet Jewish group and its sister organization, the American Committee for the Settlement of Jews in Birobidjan (Ambijan), which catered to native-born, middle-class Jews, have been virtually ignored by historians.

Henry Felix Srebrnik, a professor of political studies at the University of Prince Edward Island and the author of London Jews and British Communism, 1935-1945, has deftly filled that gap with Jerusalem on the Amur: Birobidzhan and the Canadian Jewish Communist Movement, 1924-1951 (McGill-Queen's University Press).

Srebrnik's book, an impressive work of scholarship based on oral interviews, newspapers, pamphlets, belles lettres, poems, and organizational notices and advertisements, is part and parcel of the McGill-Queen's series in ethnic history, edited by John Zucchi.

Meticulously researched and lucidly written, Jerusalem on the Amur is balanced and objective insofar as its narrative is concerned. Yet Srebrnik is hardly a detached observer.

As he puts it in the preface: "This book, I hope, will serve as a cautionary tale, for it illustrates how otherwise intelligent, critical people can be misled by an unscrupulous, indeed murderous, regime and place their hopes for a better world in the hands of people who turn out to be political criminals, even sociopaths. It is the story of people who accepted as truth the lies and fantasies spun by cynical propagandists and who put their trust in those who were building not socialism but gulags."

Birobidzhan and the Canadian Jewish Communist Movement, 1924–1951

Srebrnik defines Jewish communists as Jews who wished to combine their ethnic identity with their internationalist, class-based politics. Blending elements of Marxist universalism with Jewish territorial nationalism, they were active mainly between 1917, the year of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and 1956, the year in which Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, in a speech to the Communist party, exposed Joseph Stalin's crimes against Soviet Jews.

Hardly confined to North America, the Jewish communist galaxy also sparkled in Europe, South Africa, Latin America and Australia.

As Srebrnik notes, the rise of the Soviet Union was hailed as the harbinger of a new age, heralding the end of czarist marginalization and persecution.

The Soviet Union, Jewish communists theorized, would fight anti-Semitism and foster Yidddish culture. No more pogroms or economic, political and residential restrictions on Jewish life.

"The Jewish settlement in Birobidzhan would arouse widespread interest among those who sought in Jewish territorialism and colonization a solution to statelessness, including many who were otherwise not enamoured of the Soviet state or communist ideology," he writes in summarizing its appeal.

Having recognized Jews as a legitimate nationality, the Soviet Union had no qualms about backing the Birobidzhan project, he adds. "Jewish projects would thus be portrayed and ideologically justified as being in the interests of the building of socialism and Soviet power and as part of the larger solution to the national question and the resultant fraternity of the Soviet peoples."

When Jewish settlement in Birobidzhan began, the region was already inhabited by 28,000 Russians, Ukrainians and Koreans and 1,300 Jews. In 1929, a commission of experts, headed by an American, concluded that agriculture could flourish in Birobidjhan and that valuable minerals could be extracted from its soil. The commissioners cautioned that the new territory would require overseas assistance to survive.

ICOR, which opposed Zionism, portrayed itself as a non-partisan organization in which Jews from all political orientations and social ranks could find a comfortable place.

Mindful of Birobidzhan's needs, ICOR initially presented it with two electric stations, an incubator capable of producing 32,000 eggs, machinery to fell timber, trench-digging equipment, a printing press and cars and trucks.

In addition, thousands of Jews from the Diaspora settled in Birobidzhan.

Having achieved independence from the U.S. branch, the Canadian operation, directed by Abraham Shek, held its first national convention in Toronto in March 1935. Fifty-one delegates from nine cities attended. Among the members of ICOR's national executive was J.B. Salsberg, a communist who later left the party and wrote a weekly column for The Canadian Jewish News. ICOR applied for membership in Canadian Jewish Congress, but was not admitted.

Birobidzhan, trotted out by Moscow as proof that anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union had been eliminated, was not the haven it was trumped up to be. Stalin purged its Jewish leadership, and immigration to Birobidzhan dried up. In the aftermath of World War II, state anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and its eastern Europe satellites surged.

"Perhaps the coup de grâce for Birobidzhan was the creation of the State of Israel," Srebrnik observes, adding that Moscow's resolutely pro-Arab line in the Middle East also alienated Jews.

"Yet another factor in the decline of Jewish communism in Canada was the large influx of Holocaust survivors into the country," he writes, explaining that the majority were traditional Jews who had no illusions about communism and the Soviet Union.

"The demise of ICOR and the Canadian Birobidzhan Committee was a part of the passing of an entire era in Jewish life," Srebrnik surmises. "As the State of Israel became the central and most important feature of postwar Jewish life, Birobidjhan receded into the mists of history."

By the last count, only some 4,000 Jews, comprising five per cent of its population, lived in Birobidzhan.

To Srebrnik, Birobidzhan was nothing more than a "sandcastle" or a Potemkin construct.

Harsh words, these. But Srebrnik is correct.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

NEWISH PLAY BY JONATHAN GARFINKEL, COMBINES SEX AND MIDEAST POLITICS

House of Many Tongues, an almost-new play by Toronto poet-playwright **Jonathan Garfinkel**, opens next week in Toronto.

The plot focuses on a former Israeli general (played by **Howard Jerome**) and his 15-year-old son (**Daniel Karasik**) who wants no part in his father's life as he tries to bring peace to the Middle East through improved sexual techniques. "When a Palestinian named Abu Dalo (**Hrant Alianak**) shows up, after a nearly 40-year absence, and lays claim to the general's house, things start to heat up." They heat up even more when the general's son becomes involved with the Palestinian's daughter.

Garfinkel is the author of two earlier plays, a book of poetry and a non-fiction book, Ambivalence, about his experiences in Israel and the West Bank. House of Many Tongues has already been staged in Germany and plans call for it to be translated into Hebrew. Directed by **Richard Rose**, it previews in the Mainspace at Tarragon Theatre on Wednesday, April 29 and opens May 6. Tickets $32 - $10. 416-531-1827, tickets. tarragontheatre.com

* * *

Names in the News: Michelle Obama was given a copy of the award-winning Canadian children's book Hana's Suitcase on a visit to Prague last week with her husband, U.S. **President Barack Obama**. The bestselling book was written by CBC publisher **Karen Levine** and was published by Toronto's Second Story Press. It tells the story of **Hana Brady**, a young Czech girl killed in Auschwitz. Michelle Obama was taking a tour of Prague's old Jewish ghetto and Jewish Museum when she was given the book and several others.

Inspired by a news story that appeared originally in The CJN, Levine wrote Hana's Suitcase about 2002; a subsequent stage adaptation has toured Canada, United States, Israel and Japan. As well, two film versions have been made, including the new documentary Inside Hana's Suitcase. The documentary received a glowing review after a recent screening in Vancouver and is slated for two showings, April 30 and May 3, in the upcoming Hot Docs Festival in Toronto. For details, see the website at schedule.hotdocs.ca.

* * *

Novel About Jews of India: Shalom India Housing Society is a new novel by **Esther David** about the Jewish Bene Israel community of India. Published by the Feminist Press as part of a series on Jewish women writers, the novel examines the lives of the Indian Jews who are believed to be one of Judaism's "lost tribes." The author was born into a Bene Israel family in Ahmedabad, India, and grew up in a zoo created by her father. She is also a columnist for the the Times of India. feministpress.org

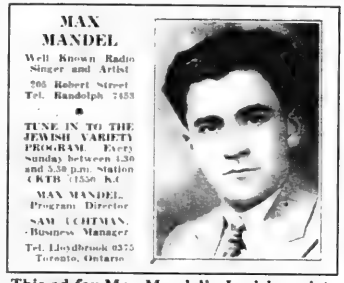
* * *

New Agency for Israeli Bands: The Israel Artist Agency is a one-stop booking agency for Israeli artists performing abroad. It was created to provide professional, convenient and cost-effective services to Diaspora Jewish communities seeking to hire Israeli musicians for a wide range of venues. The agency's 34-band lineup includes some of the most successful acts in Israel (**Berry Saharof**, **Hadag Nahash**, **Meir Banai**) and popular up-and-coming alternative acts (**Useless ID**, **Midnight Peacocks**). Website: israelartistagency.com.

* * *

Names in the News II: Michael Kalmar, the owner of The Old Mill, has inaugurated an ambitious new series of live concerts featuring classical, jazz, folk and other musical styles to complement the cuisine. Musicians include **Kerry Stratton** and orchestra, soprano **Mary Lou Fallis**, pianist **Peter Tiefenbach** and the Amaro String Quartet, pianist **Gene DiNovi**, clarinettist **James Campbell** and bassist **Dave Young**, and others.

"Music and dancing are fabulous social activities that have a wonderful ability to make you feel great," Kalmar says. "I like to add the element of dining in an up-close and personal experience that is hard to find today." The concerts begin this month. The Old Mill Inn and Spa, 21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641, www.oldmilltoronto.com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This ad for Max Mandel's Jewish variety radio program dates from 1944.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Dov Altman**, director of Canadian Friends of Bar Ilan University, presents a dynamic talk on "Israel in the 21st Century" in celebration of Israel Independence Day. Active Seniors, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Thursday April 30, 1:30 p.m. 416-924 6211, ext. 155

•Hop Stitch & Jump, a performance in support of children affected by poverty and AIDS. $25. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. April 30, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

• **Prof. Michael Mandel**, son of one-time Yiddish radio host **Max Mandel**, offers an entertaining presentation – "The Golden Age of Yiddish Radio in Canada: Max Mandel's the Jewish Hour" – featuring anecdotes and excerpts from old programs. Share your reminiscences with Michael, who is writing a book about his late father. Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC. $2; refreshments. Thursday, May 7, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

Toronto lawyer says writing is his first love

Continued from page 34

Rotenberg says he was very gratified when an old friend, the child of survivors, told him: "Your book brought me back to a place of my childhood."

Gryfe's bagels have a prominent place in the narrative, because Rotenberg, who grew up in the Lawrence Avenue and Bathurst Street area, was a bakery regular.

In fact, one scene is taken from a true boyhood experience, he says. "We used to go up to Gryfe's with winter gloves. They would give us the bagels the moment they came out of the oven."

Rotenberg's literary success has been almost 20 years in the making. He says he started writing his first novel in 1991. "It's still sitting in a drawer. There was no interest in the book."

But this failure had a silver lining. As Rotenberg puts it. "My first book taught me how to write the second book."

In Old City Hall, he has drawn on his legal experience to expose the seedier side of the justice system. It's evident that he's navigating familiar territory when he describes the Don Jail or the lock-up in the courthouse.

And while Rotenberg finds law rewarding, he says writing is first love.

He spent 10 years after law school as a magazine editor. He was the managing editor of Passion, an English magazine published in Paris. Later, he was the owner/editor of T.O. the Magazine of Toronto.

The father of three opened his law office 18 years ago out of financial necessity. "I had kids and a mortgage."

He completed his second novel in 2001, but finding a New York agent was tough, he recalls. "I was rejected by many agents."

In 2007, a friend encouraged him to contact Victoria Skurnick, a top literary agent. "I called her expecting nothing. I told her, 'I'm very serious about writing. I sent my first story to New York when I was 15.'"

The two soon discovered they shared the same taste in literature, and by the end of that first conversation, Skurnick asked him to e-mail her the book.

He says she called him back two days later. "She said, 'I'm going to get everyone in New York to read your book and I'm going to sell the book around the world. I know what sells.'"

That summer, Skurnick sent the book to 20 American editors and a bidding war ensued. Farrar Straus & Giroux, the publisher of such prestigious writers as Tom Wolfe and Scott Turow, bought the North American rights, Rotenberg says. "They sign very few writers."

Of course, there's the obvious question to put to Rotenberg: now that he's hit the literary jackpot, will he be throwing in the legal towel?

"I always want to practise law. I'm committed to it," he says. "But I won't be doing a big six-month murder trial anytime soon."

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Israeli tennis stars triumph on and off court

By MARVIN GLASSMAN
Special to The CJN

MIAMI — Israeli tennis stars Shahar Peer and Andy Ram were cheered by Florida tennis fans watching them compete recently at the Sony Ericsson Open – and not just for their excellence on the court.

Both Israelis won support from fans, media, major Jewish organizations and tennis players after Peer was a victim of discrimination. In February, Peer was denied entry into the United Arab Emirates and banned from the Dubai women's tennis tournament because she holds an Israeli passport.

Women's Tennis Association (WTA) president Larry Scott fined the Dubai tournament $300,000 (all figures US), awarded Peer $44,250 as a result of the actions of the UAE, and she and other Israelis will be now accepted into future Dubai tournaments. Ram benefitted from the WTA ruling and international condemnation of the incident by being accepted into the men's tournament on Feb. 20 as the first Israeli ever to compete in Dubai. Had Ram not been accepted into the tournament, the men's Dubai tournament likely would have been boycotted by the men's pro tennis circuit.

"I was very disappointed and angry too because I don't think sports and politics should mix," Peer said following her 6-1, 7-6 victory at the Sony Ericsson Open over Tamaryn Hendler, a Jewish player from Belgium.

"I was happy with what was achieved and having so much support from around the world. It does not matter if a person is Jewish, Israeli, Muslim, black or white. Nobody will be discriminated against in sport in the future."

"Shahar was stoic in taking the high road challenging an unjust policy and forcing the UAE to accept Israelis in the future," Scott said. "The tennis tour will not tolerate discrimination of any kind in the future."

Had the UAE not permitted Ram to play, tennis tournaments around the world, including the Rogers Cup, held annually in Toronto, may have been put at risk. Emirates Airlines – the official sponsor of the Rogers Cup Toronto tournament, as well as other tournaments worldwide – would have been dropped as part of the sanctions against the UAE, which owns the carrier.

"They [the UAE] knew that they were morally wrong in denying Peer a visa, and we told them what would happen had they not reversed their actions immediately. Tennis Canada would not be allowed to have Emirates as one of their sponsors," said Stacey Allaster, a past Rogers Cup Toronto tournament director who is now president of the WTA.

Shahar Peer meets former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Despite Peer's view of "sports not mixing with politics," Swedish tennis officials in Malmo barred spectators from watching the Davis Cup tie between Sweden and Israel, held March 6 to 8, fearing security would not be able to handle anti-Israel protesters.

"It was disgusting to see the anti-Israel sentiment as our team went to the arena in Malmo. I have never personally seen hate until we were in Malmo," said Ram, one of four members of the Israeli team.

Trailing 2-1, Israeli Davis Cup players Dudi Sela and Harel Levy rallied with two five-set victories to emerge victorious, winning the tie 3-2 and leading Israel to host the Davis Cup quarter-finals, versus Russia, for the first time since 1988.

"It was a wonderful moment of feeling such pride in what we accomplished. Not having spectators really hurt the Swedish team who could not rally behind their fans. But all of us would have preferred for the matches to have fans and not played behind closed doors," Ram said.

On April 2, the International Tennis Federation fined the Swedish Tennis Federation $25,000 and the city of Malmo was barred from hosting any Davis Cup matches for five years.

"Peer, Ram and the other Israeli tennis players are outstanding athletes and leaders. They will always be praised and remembered for their courage against unjust acts," said Andrew Rosenkrantz, Florida director of the Anti-Defamation League. He was speaking at a reception at Miami's Beth David Congregation for Shahar or Israeli and Jewish tennis players competing at the Sony Ericsson Open.

Andy Ram prepares to serve. [Henk Abbink photo]

Peer and Ram have played well since the Dubai and Malmo incidents. Peer finished as doubles finalist in the Indian Wells tournament in March, as did Ram at the same event.

Ram continued his outstanding run by winning the Sony Ericsson Open men's doubles championship, marking the first time an Israeli has won the doubles title in the 25-year history of the tournament.

Teamed with Max Mirnyi of Belarus, Ram triumphed over five opponents, including a dramatic come-from-behind 6-7 (4-7), 6-2, (10-7) victory over Australians Ashley Fisher and Stephen Huss in the final on April 5. A jubilant Ram waved the Israeli flag and thanked his many fans at the podium following his victory, with many fans also waving Israeli flags during his matches.

"It's nice to know I made history again for Israel, making headlines there. I'm very patriotic. I feel really proud when I get a big result like today. Playing with Max made it easier to win the tournament. I hope from now on we [Israelis] make headlines for what we do on the court, not off," said Ram.

Barring injuries, Peer and Ram are expected to compete at the Rogers Cup women's and men's tournaments this summer in Toronto and Montreal respectively. For further information, visit www.rogerscup.com.

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The creative cycle

ALMOST FAMOUS

By Jacob Medjuck

Beverly Hills. 11 a.m. I'm waiting in the office of Jim Carrey's manager, staring at a giant wall-photo of lava pouring into the ocean. It's explosive. Violent. Steam, smoke and sparks. The image is larger than my rented car.

In walks Eric Gold, industry genie.

"What do you think of this picture?" He asks me.

I realize that there's only one correct answer: "What do you think of it Mr. Gold?"

He smiles. "You'll do fine." Sitting, he shares: "Most people see this volcano and think destruction. I've been asked to take it down."

While we're talking, someone actually comes in and asks when he'll take it down.

"I see creation," he continues. "It's fierce, and messy, but constructive, and natural."

During our meeting, Gold takes a 45-minute call from Mike Myers in front of me to tweak the plot of a project. I find myself casually volunteering suggestions, most of which get discarded glances. And then I realize, after all this time, I'm still a failure. But, I'm failing at the highest level. Fantastic!

I look at the wall volcano. Destruction. This town is taking my ideas and burning me alive. I'm also trying to get a release for my completed film while the distribution landscape collapses around me. Even studios are perplexed by new technologies and what models they'll yield. The sky is falling, ground crumbling beneath me. Every established pipeline for distribution is in chaos. I wonder what will become of my celebrated opus, Summerhood? Or new projects even?

Evolution has the worst timing. But it's a certainty. Every so often, a technology comes along that uproots the patterns of standard business. Shattering paradigms and crashing titans.

I recall the celebrated times of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. A golden era of film. An era of "silent" film. The biggest stars working lost their jobs when "talkies" came about and it unfolded that many great "faces" had disappointingly shrill voices.

Families used to huddle around the radio until television ended that. Tape cassettes drove records into the ground, and then CDs buried both. The VHS business was decimated by DVDs, now being replaced by Blu-ray. Of course, the Internet destroyed everything. Everything.

But then I remember: theatre predates electricity. And before that, we had the Coliseum. Storytelling will always exist. Only the venues change. Grasping that, I feel secure to daydream again. To imagine. To write – knowing it will find a way to you.

Volcanic rock is coarse and unstable, but it's the most fertile. I look at the photo again. This time I see creation. If I can weather the disaster, I'll be the first to plant in rich soils.

Now is the time of the ant. Be steadfast and have patience. The winner will be the last person standing, not necessarily the most qualified; on those terms, I submit myself.

My film has won awards across North America, been invited to PIXAR, and this summer will play in Italy at the most prestigious children's festival on the planet. Summerhood has earned a proper release. Meanwhile, the mechanics of new distribution models are still cooling. I derive patience from having seen the film enjoyed by thousands. It's youthful without pander; it's pioneering. It's honest, hopeful, heartfelt and filthy, but has a great message.

I just wanted to teach little boys to be a little better to little girls. This includes little boys I know in their 60s. (Narration by John Cusack helps plenty.)

As the venues of storytelling transition, I end my final CJN column so:

Thank you for reading.

I thank The CJN for publishing.

You'll all be character witnesses at my trial.

You can find me on the film's website.

Cue the cartoon pig: "Th- Th- Th-That's all folks."

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A short time before serving, mash avocado and add lemon juice. Season with pepper and a dash of salt. Split bagels and spread each half with avocado. Top with lox. Put onion, tomato, and capers (if using) on bottom half, then set top half of sandwich in place. Serve at once.

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Exercise can help arthritis sufferers

FITNESS CORNER

By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Living with arthritis is hard and sometimes very frustrating, but it can be managed.

There are many different types of arthritis, but anyone who has it knows it doesn't matter what kind you have, the end result is the same: pain. Many recent studies have been done on the effects of exercise on arthritic pain, and they all say the same thing. Exercise – modified to your level and condition – in most cases (80 to 90 per cent) relieves arthritic pain and is essential to sustaining functional joint movement.

Aerobic and strength training was once thought to promote the deterioration of the joints, but we now know that low-impact strength and aerobic exercise is not only very safe, it's actually beneficial for arthritis sufferers. Daily exercise has been found to stabilize joints, improve joint function and flexibility, decrease pain, and improve cardiovascular health and balance.

Aquatics, as well as light, controlled weight training such as machine-based exercises (for instance, leg curls, lat pull-downs and the chest press), are recommended exercises that prevent de-conditioning of muscle tissue, which is important for joint support and function.

The use of a treadmill – or, even better, an elliptical trainer or stationary bike – will improve blood circulation and cardiovascular health while having little or no impact on your joints. Exercises such as yoga or stretch classes have been found to increase tendon and ligament flexibility. This increases range of motion in joints, which is important for continued mobility.

Exercises should be monitored by a professional and consist of three different factors: stretching, muscle conditioning and low-impact aerobic activity for cardiovascular and circulatory health. Exercise done safely within an individual's pain comfort zone can reduce joint pain and improve endurance for physical activity, which in turn helps support independent living.

We all know that exercise promotes health and wellness, but now more and more studies are finding that daily exercise not only promotes healthy weight management, it also controls pain, improves your quality of life and inhibits disease.

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Happy Birthday, Israel

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

On May 14, 1948, the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, publicly read the Declaration of Independence. It was the fifth day of Iyar, the eighth month of the year, in 5708. The anniversary of this date on the Hebrew calendar is known as Yom Ha'atzmaut. This year, we celebrate it on Wednesday, April 29.

This is a wondrous holiday for many. Did you know that the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has declared Yom Ha'atzmaut one of the Jewish holidays in which Hallel should be recited? Hallel is an added prayer that is sung on joyous occasions such as Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Chanukah and Rosh Chodesh.

Religious Zionists have created a group of prayers for the holiday, which includes psalms and a Haftorah portion from the Prophets on the holiday morning. There are groups that add the prayer Al Hanisim (for the miracles; it is commonly read on Chanukah and Purim), as the establishment of the State of Israel is seen as a miraculous moment. Some Jews blow the shofar on Yom Ha'atzmaut.

The Conservative Movement reads a Torah portion for the day and includes a version of Al Hanisim. Some places read the Haftorah, Isaiah 10:32-12:6, which is also read on the last day of Pesach. The Reform Movement includes the special prayer, Ya'leh V'yavo, an addition to the Amidah (the 18 blessings we recite standing) that is also included on Rosh Chodesh, the pilgrimage festivals, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur.

Well, we are the Jewish people; therefore a room of five will ensure opinions from six.

Most Chassidim and haredim do not make any changes to their daily prayers. There are those who see Yom Ha'aztmaut as a sad day and wave black flags and wear sackcloth as a sign of mourning. Members of such chassidic groups as Satmar fast to atone for what they view as the sin of having created the State of Israel. They see this as a transgression, because to them, Israel was created as a secular state. They believe that God promised that the Jewish people would return to Israel by means of the actions of the Messiah, who would be sent if the Jewish people merited his arrival.

Some Arab citizens of Israel celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. Others see it as a tragic day and refer to it as as the nakba (the catastrophe).

Mostly, Yom Ha'atzmaut is an exciting day in Israel and the Diaspora. Thousands of Israelis have picnics and barbecues (known in Israeli slang as "mangal" – from the Arabic word meaning "stove"). On the night before Yom Ha'atzmaut, people sing and dance in the streets and balconies are decorated with Israeli flags.

We are blessed to live in this time when the State of Israel was established and has grown in 61 short years to be a modern, progressive and spiritual environment. The State of Israel and its citizens are responsible for the creation of dozens of technological and medical advancements. There are more learning environments in Israel than ever before, and it is home to millions of refugees – both Jewish and non-Jewish – who otherwise would have been homeless.

There is no need to write about the complexities and controversies surrounding Israel. We all know about those. What is important on Israel's birthday is simply that we light a candle, wish for peace and health, and then throw off all our troubles and dance in the street in celebration. Happy Yom Ha'atzmaut. Am Yisrael Chai. The nation of Israel shall live. Next year we should celebrate with Gilad Schalit.

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Pastor's widow attends Ottawa Yom Hashoah event.

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Israel supporters leave mark on Durban II

By ADENA PHILIPS
Special to The CJN

GENEVA — While last week's UN-led World Conference Against Racism made headlines with walkouts by delegates during Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's anti-Israel inaugural speech and for its general anti-Zionist timbre, a separate conference across Lake Geneva proclaimed Israel's right to statehood.

The concurrent Conference Against Racism, Discrimination and Persecution – hosted by UN Watch and sponsored by a host of NGOs, including the Darfur Peace and Development Organization, the International Day Against Homophobia, the American Jewish Committee and the World Students Christian Federation – attracted more than 700 registrants, Canadian UN Watch intern Alexis Levy told The CJN.

Representing Canada at the protest gathering in Geneva were Pierre Poilievre, parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Liberal MP and noted human rights advocate Irwin Cotler.

Other notable speakers at the event included French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, former Soviet refusenik and Israeli MK Natan Sharansky and Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz.

Poilievre said it was an honour to represent his government at the counter-conference and a privilege to be able to speak alongside Sharansky, Cotler and Dershowitz, whom he termed three of his "heroes."

Continued on page 32

Students from the European Union of Jewish Students attended the anti-racism counter-conference last week in Geneva. [*Oliver O'hanlon photo*]

'We shall not die, but live'

These words of the Hallel prayer, as always, were the animating force of the annual March of the Living. Some 9,000 people from around the world joined the three-kilometre march from Auschwitz to Birkenau. Participants this year also drew attention to the exploitation by Holocaust deniers of the UN anti-racism review conference in Geneva (known as Durban II), which began on Holocaust Remembrance Day. Israeli Vice-Prime Minister Silvan Shalom, centre, wearing a blue jacket, led the march. Former chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Israel, Yisrael Meir Lau, is immediately to Shalom's left. Canadian MP Irwin Cotler, third from the left, was also in the vanguard of the march. [*Photo Moshe Milner/GPO/Flash90*]

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Israel's population now stands at 7.4 million – see page 31

The News in Brief

CANADA

PM Invites Bibi

OTTAWA — Prime Minister Stephen Harper has invited new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit Canada. A statement issued April 16 by Harper's office said a "congratulatory" phone call from Harper to Netanyahu also included talks "focused on the impact of the economic crisis, regional dynamics in the Middle East and the peace process." It added that both men "agreed to meet at the earliest opportunity." No date had been set as of last week.

Natives Give Gift

WINNIPEG — The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) gave $1 million to the Canadian Museum of Human Rights last week, leaving it just $1 million shy of its fundraising goal as construction on it began in the Manitoba capital. The donation came from profits from the South Beach Casino Resort, the Winnipeg Sun reported. Three levels of governments have pledged $160 million toward the $265-million cost. This latest gift brings total private donations to $104 million, said fundraising chair Gail Asper, whose late father, Izzy Asper, founder of Canwest Global Communications, conceived of the museum.

Borovoy Honoured

TORONTO — Alan Borovoy, longtime general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), was honoured April 28 at a gala dinner in Toronto to mark his retirement. The CCLA was formed in 1964 and Borovoy, 77, has headed it since 1968. He's being succeeded by law professor Nathalie Des Rosiers.

Paisley Park Named

TORONTO — A portion of Windfields Park at York Mills Road and Bayview Avenue was formally renamed April 23 in honour of Irving Paisley, a longtime politician in the old city of North York. For more than 30 years, Paisley served on the council of the old township, borough and cities of North York as a councillor, controller and finally as deputy mayor. He was also founding chair of York Finch General Hospital and a founding member of Temple Sinai and the Reena Foundation.

WORLD

Exports To Be Probed

LONDON — The United Kingdom will review all arms exports to Israel, its foreign secretary said. During Israel's recent incursion into Gaza, British lawmakers demanded the government ensure its weapons parts weren't used against Palestinians. At the time, Foreign Secretary David Miliband promised to look into the issue, and on April 21, he issued a statement detailing all direct and indirect arms exports to Israel. He promised that all current and future Israeli arms exports would be reviewed "in light of recent events in Gaza." He said Britain's military exports to Israel are less than one per cent of Israel's military imports.

Campuses May Close

LOS ANGELES — The Reform movement's rabbinical school might close two of its three U.S. campuses. The board of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion will meet next month to find ways of dealing with HUC's financial problems, including whether to keep open just one of three branches in Cincinnati, Los Angeles and New York, the Los Angeles Times reported. Other options include merging programs while keeping more than one campus open. HUC faces a $3-million (US) deficit due to declines in congregational dues and its endowment.

Israel Event Nixed

LONDON — A London theatre cancelled a Yom Ha'atzmaut event after pressure from pro-Palestinian groups who objected to Israel's Gaza incursion. The Bloomsbury Theatre told the Zionist Federation of Britain of its decision April 21. The event, slated for this week, was to take place at another venue that wasn't immediately disclosed. The annual event was to feature an Israel Defence Forces choir at the main memorial to Israeli soldiers. Some of those objecting say they'd protest at the new venue. The controversy boosted ticket sales.

Canada, Israel Finalizing Diplomatic Deal

CARACAS — Canada and Israel are close to completing an agreement on how Canada will represent Israel's diplomatic and consular interests in Venezuela, according to the Canadian embassy in Caracas.

Venezuela severed diplomatic ties with Israel in January in the wake of Israel's military incursion into Gaza.

"The Canadian Embassy has encouraged and continues to encourage the Venezuelan government to follow through on its commitment to reject and combat anti-Semitism and to do its utmost to ensure the security of the Jewish community and its religious and cultural centres," Virginie Levesque, an official at the Canadian Embassy in Caracas, told JTA last week.

Canada will convey messages between the Venezuelan and Israeli governments. The two governments are also close to finalizing which services the Canadian Embassy will provide Israeli citizens in Venezuela, Levesque said.

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez was among the most strident critics of Israel during its Gaza incursion, which precipitated an outpouring of anti-Semitism unusual for this Latin American country. Following Chavez's calling Israel a "genocidal state," media outlets closely aligned with his government not only criticized Israel but demanded that the local Jewish community do the same. The city's main shul was attacked, though local authorities have since said it was a robbery made to look like a hate crime.

Levesque said she didn't know why Israel approached Canada to represent its interests in Venezuela. Officials at Israel's embassy in Ottawa were unavailable for comment.

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Recession hits people across the spectrum: JF&C

Richard Cummings

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

People you would least expect are being affected by the current economic downturn, says Richard Cummings, executive director of Jewish Family and Child.

"Demand for our services is increasing, and it is among people across [the spectrum]," he said.

Monica Auerbach, JF&C's director of York Region services, said that a number of families in Thornhill Woods took out large mortgages and subsequently lost their jobs or have had their hours decreased.

"They're having trouble keeping up their payments, they're stressed, and the whole family is being affected. Kids are sensing their parents anxiety, and they're having issues at school," she said.

"Some families lose their homes, are forced to move in with the grandparents and they in turn become anxious. This recession is affecting the whole community."

Wendy Wolfman, the agency's director of family and community services, added that the full impact of the recession has yet to be seen.

"Those who lost their jobs are still getting employment insurance. Our concern is that demand will spike when these [benefits] end. More and more people will come in for financial support. That is when we will see people [who were in a higher economic bracket] coming to our door."

Clients are coming in at all stages, she said. "They could be looking for support from our financial assistance program – they must be on Ontario Works before they are eligible – for help with their kids, or for help dealing with the tension at home. When stress builds, there is an increase in domestic violence. We also see an increase in alcohol abuse and gambling. Some use gambling as a dream."

One client was evicted from his apartment because he was unable to pay the rent, she said, and not only did he have to deal with downsizing, he needed to find an available and affordable apartment that was close to the Jewish community.

In another case, a woman came into the York Region office with her three children, Auerbach said, "and told us that she was still on maternity leave and her husband had lost his job. Winter was approaching and the kids needed boots, coats and pajamas. I was able to refer her to intake for financial assistance. She was embarrassed to ask for help, but she had no other support."

She said that more and more middle class families are making use of the clothing depot at JF&C's family resource centre inside the Promenade Shopping Centre. "For $10 a season, families can take part in a clothing exchange. They donate what their kids have outgrown, and they choose whatever other clothing is available. I don't think this service would have been necessary two or three years ago."

The agency has seen an increase of referrals to its women abuse program, Cummings said, because some men become abusive when they are under stress. "Money is the root of many problems, and poverty [brings about] a vulnerability in women and children."

Continued on page 22

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Understanding Israel

From the editor's desk...

In the years before the Yom Kippur War, when Israel was known for reasons other than its conflict with the Palestinians, there were many symbols and images that expressed the unique sparkle, exuberance and determination of this amazing, plucky, little country to the outside world: the kibbutznik wearing khaki shorts and a khaki cap; the dramatic, awesome force of Masada; the Jaffa orange; the sabra and many, many more.

Each of these icons, for its own many-layered reasons, conveyed a simplified, even romanticized aspect of Israel's complicated reality that fit with the experiences of the welcomed tourist and a proud Diaspora family dispersed to the four corners of the world.

Today, by contrast, after 3-1/2 decades of relentless vilification and demonization of the Jewish state by its enemies, the predominant, if not in some places, the only icon that accompanies the name "Israel" is its conflict with the Palestinian Arabs.

Of course, it is a false icon, both in the manner that it is depicted and as the determinative image of the state.

Cleverly cultivated, it has become the commanding image of the Jewish state, a devil's maypole around which so many people, trance-like, dance and chant and perform their various works in service of a hateful idolatry: the removal of Israel from the world map.

But to really understand the essence of the people of Israel, to really plumb the depths of the spiritual attachment of the people to this ancient-modern place, to really grasp the connection between the place as a sovereign home for the Jewish people and that home as a refuge for all Jews of the world, one should reflect upon an image of Israel little seen by the outside: the country on Yom Hazikaron (Remembrance Day for the fallen soldiers).

Yom Hazikaron is commemorated the day preceding Yom Ha'atzmaut. (This in itself is a profound testimony to the moral underpinning of the country.) This year, Yom Hazikaron began at sundown on Monday night, three nights ago, this week. A one-minute, mournful siren sounded across the country at 8 p.m. to signal the start of national remembrance.

Accompanied by the chief of staff, Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, and representatives of parents who have lost soldier children, President Shimon Peres inaugurated the official remembrance ceremony at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

The next morning, Tuesday, the entire country came to a halt at 11 a.m., with the sounding of a two-minute siren. For those who have not been part of the remembrance, or witnessed it, it is a powerful sight to behold. Cars come to a stop on highways and city streets. People alight from their cars to stand respectfully in silence attention.

The central national service takes place at the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem. But public ceremonies and private observances are conducted throughout the country at 43 other cemeteries.

No one usually intrudes into the private space around the visitors to the cemeteries. No one makes small talk. No one seeks comfort. Everyone seeks simply that quiet moment of seeing, once again and for the smallest fraction of time, into the past.

Visitors hold hands or place a hand upon a stooped shoulder. They brush away the dust of the surrounding soil and garden from the headstone, place a flower, or, as the woman seen in the accompanying photo, touch the stone that marks the final place of a loved one.

Everyone understands that there are certain wounds that time cannot fully heal. For everyone is in one way or another, literally or figuratively, wounded.

To honour the volunteers from overseas who fought and died during the War of Independence, a special ceremony is held at the Machal (an acronym standing for volunteers from overseas) memorial near the Sha'ar Hagai Junction on the western approaches to Jerusalem.

In the past 12 months, 133 soldiers and security personnel were killed in the line of duty. These numbers are added to the new total of 22,570 servicemen and women who have fallen in defence of the land of Israel since 1860, the year that Jews moved out beyond the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem to live in other parts of the country.

Israel's national day of remembrance is a day of melancholy and tenderness. There are no rabid demonstrations of anger, no inciteful remonstrations of hatred against the enemy. People set aside profound or petty political differences to recall, grieve and mourn together. To see and feel this day is to forever cherish and embrace an image of Israel that is truer to its essence: of private, quiet weeping and unbending national resolve.

– MBD

SeeJN

STUDENTS TAKE 'WALKING' SCHOOL BUS ON EARTH DAY: Toronto Heschel School parents, students and staff organized a "walking" school bus for Earth Day, April 22. About 150 walkers participated. A second "walking" bus was organized for Yom Ha'atzmaut, April 29. From left are Catherine Birken holding Peri Leibovich, Malka Lebi, Maureen Gottesman, Elana Segal, Gabrielle and Micha Maerov.

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New documentary makes the case for Israel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Harvard University law professor, author and pro-Israel advocate Alan Dershowitz is at the centre of a new documentary, The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost, which defends Israel as a democratic state coping with threats in a hostile environment.

The film, which has been making the rounds of synagogues and Jewish organizations in the United States, was screened in Toronto recently at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue.

Although Dershowitz receives top billing in it in terms of air time, the film also features the comments of, among others, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's new prime minister; Dan Gillerman, Israel's former ambassador to the United Nations; Michael Oren, an Israeli historian, and Dennis Ross, adviser to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Persian Gulf affairs and former U.S. special envoy to the Middle East.

The 77-minute film, which was made before last winter's Israeli election and Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip, is a slick exercise in public relations on behalf of an embattled state that has been singled out for demonization.

Dershowitz, a persuasive speaker, makes the case for Israel's legitimacy and right to self-defence.

Describing himself as both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian, he supports a two-state solution to resolve Israel's long-standing conflict with the Palestinians.

He argues that they could have had a state by now had their leadership accepted Israel's proposals at the Camp David summit in July 2000. Dershowitz adds that a two-state solution will only be possible when the Palestinians desire self-determination more than Israel's destruction.

His comment should be treated with a note of caution. Hamas has not reconciled itself to Israel's existence, but the Palestinian Authority, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, seeks to resume talks with Israel on the basis of a two-state solution.

Gerald Steinberg, an Israeli academic whose opinions overlap with the Likud party, says that most Israelis accept a two-state solution. But Netanyahu is an exception to the rule, having refused to commit himself to the concept, which the Obama administration is currently promoting.

Dershowitz condemns former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, saying that he "misrepresents facts." Carter's recent book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, touched off a storm of criticism.

Alan Dershowitz

Ross agrees with Dershowitz's assessment, noting that Carter has embraced a revisionist view of Middle East events. In this respect, Oren castigates Carter for unfairly linking Israel with the apartheid smear.

More harshly, Dershowitz charges that Carter has "blood on his hands." How so? Dershowitz claims that, since Carter supposedly advised the former Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, to reject Israel's Camp David offer, Carter is at least partially responsible for the outbreak of the second intifadah, which has claimed many Jewish and Arab lives since September 2000.

In a further comment, Dershowitz blames the Arabs for having caused the Palestinian refugee problem, though he admits that Israel expelled Palestinian civilians during the 1948 war, a point that Israeli historian Benny Morris amplifies.

Defending Israel's policy of erecting checkpoints in the West Bank to control the movement of Palestinians, Dershowitz says that they will disappear when Palestinian terrorism ceases.

Dershowitz observes that major issues in Israel are sometimes referred to the Supreme Court, citing the building of the controversial security fence.

The former chief justice, Aharon Barak, believes the barrier is legally valid if it protects Israelis from suicide bombers. But if the barrier is used for political purposes, such as the acquisition of land in the West Bank, its legality is questionable, he suggests.

The film glosses over the fact that the route of the barrier cuts into the West Bank and does not usually follow the international border. It also ignores an Israeli government admission that the route of the fence will determine Israel's boundary with the West Bank.

Strangely enough, too, the film omits the reason why Israel wants to move the border further into the West Bank – the Jewish settlements. This is a key issue and cannot be swept under the rug.

Dershowitz is on firmer ground when he states that Israel is unfairly singled out for condemnation, while countries that routinely violate human rights, such as Saudi Arabia, are given a free ride.

Concurring with this argument, Irwin Cotler, a Canadian parliamentarian, former justice minister and law professor, excoriates the United Nations' Human Rights Council for its single-minded focus on Israel.

Cotler's colleague, Anne Bayefsky, says that the United Nations' "apparatus" is structurally anti-Israel.

Dershowitz expresses puzzlement why people who support democracy, feminism and gay rights, which are protected in Israel but not in the Muslim world, are anti-Israel.

Calling Israel "an island of sanity" and "an outpost of democracy" in an Arab totalitarian sea, Gillerman says that today's wave of "anti-Israelism" is the "new anti-Semitism."

By inference, he compares Iran's quest for a nuclear arsenal and its denunciation of Israel's right to exist with the policies of Nazi Germany.

Netanyahu observes that Israel's legitimacy in the region is confirmed by the weight of history.

And indeed it is. Jerusalem is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible 667 times, but not even once in the Qur'an.

Facts like this are important, particularly in a week when, in the Jewish calendar, Israel is marking its 61st anniversary of statehood.

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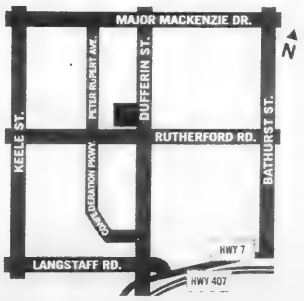

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Israel is 61!

It is an irony of their ignorance, a myopia of their malice, that many, if not most of the "let's-boycott-apartheid-Israel" crowd probably use cellphones to speak to each other. On occasion, they undoubtedly leave voice mail messages for each other as well. But if their earnest honesty were not subordinated to their hyper-zealous hypocrisy, they would use neither the cellphone nor voice mail. They would boycott the technologies, since both high-tech devices were developed in Israel.

Indeed, prospective boycotters of Israel would have to surrender many modern devices and live a more retrograde life, shall we say, that more closely matches the nature of their worldview. For countless Israeli high-tech, medical, electronic and engineering inventions are used around the world to the betterment and advancement of the quality and standard of life.

Israel's population is about 7.4 million people, comprising approximately 1/1000th of the world's population. In terms of the number of its people, it is one of the smallest countries in the world. But in terms of the nature and sheer scale of its contributions to science, medicine, technology, scholarship and culture, it is one of the largest countries in the world.

This inverse achievement ratio of the Jewish state is one of the most exciting and compelling stories of the modern era. It gives pride to all of the tiny country's supporters.

Yet, it inflames and baffles Israel's enemies. They cannot fathom – other than through portraits of self-pity, constant iterations of victimhood or fierce exhortations of hatred and loathing – that the Jewish people, too, are at home in the Land of Israel. They cannot grasp that there is a palpable sense of history and collective Jewish purpose that fuse and come alive in Israel. Alas, they cannot abide that the Jewish return will be for the benefit of all nations in the region.

Yesterday, the fifth day of Iyar in the Hebrew calendar, we celebrated that story. We sang hope-filled, grateful choruses of Hallelujah. It was the 61st anniversary of the founding of the young state, truly an epochal moment for the Jewish people, and indeed for the entire world.

The sliver of land along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean has not known a single day of peace since its birth. Yet it has prevailed through war and terror and boycott in pursuing its millennial mission of repairing its imperfections, mending its societal deficiencies and joining with all humanity in trying to make our world the very best it can be. The cellphone, voice mail, instant messaging, the cherry tomato, drip irrigation, the Pentium computer chip and so on are but small steps on the much larger journey to building a better world.

The State of Israel has just turned 61.

It was a day that God made for us. Let us celebrate.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israel rejected a suggestion by Pope John Paul II for a "special internationally guaranteed status" for Jerusalem "so that one side or the other cannot place it under discrimination." The Pope made the call in an apostolic letter released before Good Friday to Catholics and all people in the Middle East.

Dry Bones
OBAMA'S IMAGE...
HE SMILES AT CHAVEZ AND WANTS TO TALK WITH CASTRO ?!!
HE BOWS TO THE SAUDIS AND OFFERS HIS HAND TO IRAN?!
WHEN WILL OBAMA SHOW THAT HE CAN BE TOUGH ?!!
REAL SOON
NETANYAHU IS COMING TO WASHINGTON.
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Editorial Advisory Board: Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ropson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Telem, Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Nelson Wiseman.

CJC Quebec region name change (1)

I would like to acknowledge the foresight of the name change of Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, to the Quebec Jewish Congress. Such a change, in my opinion, was a long time due – and for positive reasons ("CJC Quebec Region changes its name," CJN Montreal; "CJC changes its name in Quebec," CJN Toronto, April 8).

As a Jewish Quebecer, I know intuitively that the region that I have decided to make my home is distinct in all of the North American continent. Our region has a special history, civil law system, public institutions and linguistic reality. This unique heritage was acknowledged by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper last year.

Quebec's Jewish community has been a vital part of this strong and special fabric for nearly 250 years. Parliamentarian Louis-Joseph Papineau secured the legal emancipation of our community in the 1830s. Hitherto, this had only been a dream. To the present, our day schools are among the few within North America that receive subsidies. As an educator of young people and an advocate of teachers within Jewish day schools, I am proud to be part of this unique fabric called "Quebec."

In light of the above, I don't feel better than or inferior to other Canadians. I do, however, feel different and have several tangibles to hang these sentiments on. I, therefore, celebrate the renaming of our organization, which has always been a trailblazer in developing a democratic, gentle, enlightened and special Quebec.

Jeff Itcush
Montreal

* * *

CJC Quebec region name change (2)

When did being Canadian somehow become a matter of opinion? Opinions change, facts don't – or shouldn't until they no longer pass the test of truth. I served as executive director of Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, for six years. As it approaches its 90th anniversary, the organization has evidently changed its opinion about being Canadian. On July 1, it will officially change its name to Congrès juif québécois, Section québécoise du Congrès juif canadien or, in English, Quebec Jewish Congress, the Quebec division of Canadian Jewish Congress ("CJC Quebec Region changes its name," CJN Montreal; "CJC changes its name in Quebec," CJN Toronto, April 8).

I have no polemics to propose about federalism, sovereignty, nationalism or any other constitutional option in between, just a suggestion regarding mutual respect and common sense. Mutual respect: there are deep and intertwining roots linking Quebec's Jewish community with its francophone majority. Those roots can be nurtured and deepened by meaningful actions and gestures, not by hastily considered cosmetic name surgery. Mutual respect is based on honesty and sincerity. This name change bears little evidence of either. Common sense: how can an organization that has built its valued legacy on democratic values and transparency swap those values for expediency, without much evidence that it asked its constituents first?

David Birnbaum
Montreal

* * *

CJC Quebec region name change (3)

The article "CJC Quebec Region changes its name" (CJN Montreal, April 8); "CJC changes its name in Quebec" (CJN Toronto, April 8) states that the reason for the change of name to Congrès juif québécois, Section québécoise du Congrès juif canadien or, in English, Quebec Jewish Congress, the Quebec division of Canadian Jewish Congress "is that we should be more explicitly identified with Quebec, that such a move would be positively perceived."

CJC Quebec region is clearly and explicitly identified with Quebec. It is not clear to me that the name change, which substitutes the word "québécois" for Quebec in the French version and eliminates the word "Canadian" in the first part of the name, but retains it in the last part, makes that identification any clearer.

The article implies that because Jews have lived in Quebec for 249 years and have been an integral part of its society, that the change of name will bring this to the attention of the people of Quebec and make us more welcome. History has taught us that whether we have been in a place for 249 years or are more recent arrivals, the views of xenophobes and racists persist. Changing names, whether personal or organizational, will not protect us. This name change only panders to those who hate and feeds into their prejudices.

We should be proud to tell all who will listen that we in Quebec still are the Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, a staunch supporter of human rights for all Quebeckers.

Manuel Shacter
Montreal

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Perspectives

'We will not allow Holocaust deniers to carry out another Jewish Holocaust'

The following is excerpted from the remarks made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Yad Vashem on Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah on April 20.

"In every generation they rise against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand." He saves us through the living spirit in our people and its representatives – judges, prophets, kings, Maccabim.

However, in the case of the Holocaust, the rescue came late, too late for six million of our people, and a new flame was rekindled in our remaining survivors only with the establishment of the State of Israel in the Land of Israel.

Anti-Semitism is an age-old historic phenomenon. However, if anyone thought that after the horrors of the Holocaust, this malignant phenomenon would vanish from the world, today it is clear that they were, unfortunately, mistaken. Concurrently with human progress and enlightenment, the dark shadows of hatred are again invading our people and state.

In our generation, only a few dozen years after the Holocaust, new forces arise, clearly and openly stating their intention to wipe the Jewish state off the face of the Earth.

And the response of the civilized world? Instead of a firm denunciation, at best, we hear a faint voice.

The unfortunate fact is that while we are marking the events of the Holocaust here at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, there are those who chose to participate in a spectacle of hatred of Israel, conducted at this very hour in the heart of Europe.

From here I turn to you, President of Switzerland, and I ask you: how can you, as a head of an enlightened state, meet with those who deny the Holocaust and strive for another one?

In opposition to this, we express our appreciation to those important countries which chose to boycott this demonstration of hatred – including the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy, Holland, Poland, Australia and New Zealand, as well as representatives who left the hall during the hateful words of the Iranian president.

We must awaken the nations' conscience, we must form alliances and make connections, but above all, we must remember that our ability to repel the threats to our people's existence stems from the strength of our state, from our unity and our cohesion in times of trial.

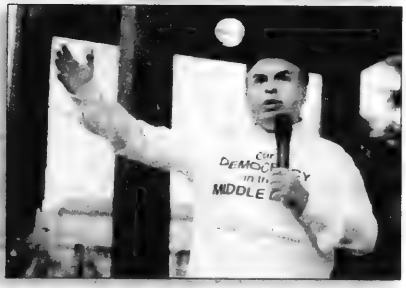
We will not allow Holocaust deniers to carry out another Jewish Holocaust. This is the supreme commitment of the State of Israel, and it is my supreme commitment as Prime Minister of Israel.

The State of Israel is the shield; it is the comfort and hope of the Jewish people. It is where we gather our exiles, where we build new cities in the land of our forefathers, where we create, for the glory of our people and for all mankind.

Israel's achievements in all fields – culture, technology, science, agriculture, medicine and security – are groundbreaking. Our people may be small in number, but of great strength.

The government of Israel has a deep commitment to you, Holocaust survivors. In past years, the state did not always meet your special needs. Over the past several years, things have changed. Today, I guarantee you that we will continue to properly address your needs. You are clear evidence of the transcendence of the Jewish spirit, that spirit which held the power to rise up from the valley of death, return to our homeland and build our lives here.

In the words of Prophet Zachariah: "Thus said HaShem, Master of Legions: My cities will once again spread out with bounty. HaShem will have mercy on Zion once again and He will choose Jerusalem once again."



Thousands of individuals went to Geneva last week to oppose what Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu referred to in his Yad Vashem remarks as "the spectacle of hatred" and to show their support of Israel. Some of the people who spoke and attended a counter-conference last Thursday to the official UN anti-racism gathering in Geneva are seen in the accompanying photos. Clockwise from left are Gil Troy, Alan Dershowitz, Natan Sharansky, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Irwin Cotler and countless supporters of the Jewish state. [Oliver O'hanlon photos]

Opinions

Usurping Jewish history

Rejecting Jewish history and expunging Jewish connectedness to the Land of Israel are cornerstones of the Palestinian Authority's agenda of indoctrination, both past and present. Such contrivance plays itself out in a variety of ways with a focus, in particular, on denying Israel's rights to Jerusalem and Jewish ties to the Temple Mount.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

Just a few months ago, Ahmed Qureia, the chief Palestinian negotiator at the 2007 Annapolis Peace Summit, was quoted as saying that "the Jewish Temples never existed, and Israel has been working to 'invent' a Jewish historical connection to Jerusalem." He went on to remark that "the world must be mobilized against all of these Israeli attempts to change the symbols and signs on Jerusalem." And this comes from someone who is regarded as a "moderate" by the United States and Israel.

But when exploring some of the broader premises that the PA uses to distort Israel's link to its past – and thereby to question its very right to exist – Itamar Marcus, director of Palestinian Media Watch, has noted a list of themes articulated by the PA in one of its television programs. These include the notions that the Hebrews of the Bible have no connection to the Jews of today; the Hebrews of the Bible were Arabs; the Prophets of the Bible were Muslims; Solomon's Temple was not built by Israelites but by Arab Canaanites (who were the forefathers of the Palestinians); the Bible is made up of legends based on what Jews imagined and not on history; the Jews of today are descendants of a 13th-century Khazar tribe with no history in the Land of Israel, and Zionism is racism.

The perfidy in all of this is abundantly clear: dissociate Jews from their history and create a fog of unfounded linkages between Palestinian Arabs and an ancient tribe that roamed the Mediterranean coast and Jordan Valley some 5,000 years ago and what you end up with is the absolute fallacy that the Palestinians, and not the Jews, are the legitimate inheritors of modern-day Israel.

And though the motives may not be quite the same, the recent dispute that has erupted over ownership of the Dead Sea Scrolls – which promises to provide a flashpoint when the scrolls arrive at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum in July – speaks similarly to an undisguised attempt by the PA to usurp an essential and irrefutable testament not only to Jewish origins but to a geographic localization that confers presence and possession to the Jews of that era. How outrageous it is that the PA is demanding custody of these treasures.

Three special days

Almost immediately after Pesach, we mark three important dates here in Israel that are delicately intertwined. Yom Hashoah is commemorated exactly a week before Yom Hazikaron, which is observed the day before Yom Ha'atzmaut. The theme of the three is "from Holocaust to resurrection." The subtext is that independence would not have been achieved without the calamity of the Holocaust or the sacrifices of our war dead.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

With Israel-bashers equating the Israel Defence Forces with the Nazis and anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic fervour increasingly prevalent around the globe, it's worth dwelling on these three days.

Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron are sombre occasions. On the eve of both, all restaurants, cafes, theatres and like institutions are closed. All music broadcasted is sober. At specific hours on both days, sirens wail throughout the country, traffic stops and everyone stands in silence, remembering the victims and the fallen.

Yom Hashoah commemorations are held in schools and public places, most notably at Yad Vashem and in two kibbutzim – Yad Mordechai, named after the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Mordechai Anilevitch, and Lochamei HaGhetta'ot, founded in 1949 by surviving rebels of the Warsaw Ghetto, partisans, concentration camp survivors and other who hid during those terrible years.

During the day, the media airs Holocaust-related movies and documentaries and interviews with survivors.

Yom Hazikaron is similar in its gravity, if not its universality. It, too, is very solemn, with observances at educational institutions and military cemeteries. On radio and TV, we learn of battles, some that went wrong, and of heroics told by comrades-in-arms, parents, widows and children.

When I commanded military units, I took my soldiers to battle sites and particular graveyards on Yom Hazikaron. The most moving and beautiful cemetery I visited is in Kiryat Anavim, a kibbutz in the corridor leading from the coast to Jerusalem. The common graves of dozens of soldiers, some literally just off the boat from the inferno of Europe, all killed on successive days of the War of Independence, tell of the warriors' bravery and of the enormity of the sacrifice.

For some Israelis, Yom Hazikaron hits much closer to home than Yom Hashoah. Almost everyone knows someone killed or injured in action.

Despite this, I have often felt the order of the two days should be reversed, with Yom Hashoah observed on the day before Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron a week earlier. That might not jive chronologically, but it would substantively.

Notwithstanding the unthinkable pain of the deaths of loved ones in Israel's wars and battles, it's dwarfed by the magnitude of the suffering, both personal and collective, caused by the Holocaust. The latter was Israel's constitutive event. Without it, the nations of the world would never have voted at the United Nations for the creation of a Jewish state. As such, its commemoration should have been more closely linked to the celebration of Israel's birth, with the loss of our soldiers, albeit terribly heartbreaking, receiving a less central role.

Don't misunderstand. We must also remember each of our fallen soldiers and support their families. Their supreme sacrifice enabled us to realize the dream of statehood and maintain that achievement since 1948.

The order of things won't be reversed. Holocaust remembrance is given its rightful place in Israel's being. The IDF, the country's most integrative and unifying organization, recognizes its importance. Each year, it sends thousands of soldiers to Poland to partake in a project aptly named "Uniformed Witnesses." This year on Yom Hashoah, 10,000 soldiers and officers visited the homes of Holocaust survivors, giving each flowers and a certificate.

Grotesque comparisons between Nazi evils and IDF actions abound. Those who brand us demons desire Israel's eradication. The ongoing debate about the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism becomes moot. Jews are blamed for Israel's actions. And what would they be blamed for if there were no Israel? For being Jews?

A strong, independent Israel, with men and women willing to die to ensure it stays that way, is not always right, nor always pretty. But it occupies the moral high ground. It's accountable for its acts and omissions and always soul-searching. This is a lesson of the Holocaust, and this is what Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut are all about.

Durban II: Canada did the right thing

In early 2008, Canada was the first – and for many months – the only country to say that it would not participate in another UN-sponsored anti-Israel and anti-Semitic conference under the façade of opposing racism. In April 2009, that decision proved to be the right one.

It wasn't prophetic, it was just that the Canadian government – Prime Minister Stephen Harper, along with opposition leaders who joined in this extraordinary bipartisan decision – understood the realities of international politics. Canada had a major role in, and responsibility for, the catastrophic 2001 UN anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, which singled out Israel for attack and took place in an atmosphere of vicious anti-Semitism and hatred. But the lessons were learned, and this wasn't going to be repeated.

Gerald Steinberg in Geneva

When Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad opened this year's Durban Review Conference, dubbed Durban II, by making claims that Jewish suffering in the Holocaust has been exaggerated and referring to Israel with terms such as "racist" and "apartheid," Canadian officials didn't have to walk out – they were never there. Neither were representatives from Israel, the United States, Italy, Germany, Australia and four other countries. While not the massive show of disdain for the Durban process that should have taken place had all the democracies joined, the empty seats in the conference room were quite visible.

Even without Ahmadinejad, the conference was doomed to failure. From the beginning, with Libya as chair and Iran as vice-chair, the tone was set – this was going to be another platform for Israel-bashing and attacks on free speech and democracy. It was only in the past month that UN officials realized that they might have made a mistake and tried to remove some of the worst poison from the conference's draft declaration. By this time, U.S. President Barack Obama had followed Canada and Israel in deciding not to take part, after two negotiators sent to try to change the text came back empty-handed.

Ottawa came under attack for its position on Durban II from a variety of non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International, that claim to speak on behalf of oppressed minorities and victims of discrimination. Ken Roth, the head of the powerful Human Rights Watch (HRW), came to Ottawa recently and in media interviews, he arrogantly rebuked the government for its principled position. HRW was also guilty of involvement in the 2001 Durban conference, but it learned no lessons. In a statement issued the day after Ahmadinejad's appearance – which took place on Holocaust Memorial Day – HRW again condemned the countries that refused to give this absurd conference the legitimacy of their participation, but HRW didn't even mention Ahmadinejad's speech.

The Canadian policy of not providing funds for NGOs to participate in the 2009 conference also marked an important and principled departure. In 2001 at Durban, thousands of NGO members, ostensibly sent to contribute to action plans against racism, turned into racists themselves, carrying signs and chanting that "Zionism is racism." In addition to the decision by Canada regarding NGO funding, the powerful Ford Foundation adopted the same policy, and the presence of radical NGOs in the streets of Geneva during the review conference was greatly reduced. These activities were primarily led by groups such as North South 21, which is linked to the Libyan government and has little credibility.

In contrast, having learned the lessons from 2001, this time, Jewish pro-Israel and pro-human rights activists came in large numbers and made sure that Ahmadinejad was not made to feel welcome when he came and left the building. In addition, speeches by Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, Canadian Liberal MP Irwin Cotler and Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, as well as a very moving Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony opposite the UN building in Geneva, served to offset the bitterness of events inside.

While one success doesn't mean that the entire mechanism of anti-Israel boycotts, lawsuits and NGO campaigns under the façade of fighting racism has been defeated, this is an important precedent. It's now possible to at least visualize and work toward a new beginning for these moral principles, which would help the real victims of racism – in Darfur, Rwanda, and many other places. Canada has marked the path, and for this, we are all grateful.

The Kirshner File

The missile threat to Israel

Prior to last winter's war in the Gaza Strip, residents of Israeli cities who had never experienced the terror of Qassam missiles were warned that such rockets might soon reach them as well.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

On Dec. 12, two weeks before the war erupted, the Israeli army advised the people of Ashdod to prepare themselves for that possibility. Eleven days later, when Ashdod and neighbouring Kiryat Gat held their first ever rocket attack drills, Yuval Diskin, the director of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal intelligence service, observed that Palestinian missiles could hit major communities in both the southern coastal plain and the northern Negev, including Be'er Sheva.

True to his sombre prediction, Israeli cities and towns that had never borne the brunt of Qassam attacks took hits during the war.

Israel launched its three-week land, air and sea offensive, dubbed Operation Cast Lead, to silence the missile threat from Gaza, from which Israel withdrew unilaterally in 2005.

The air force initiated the assault, bombing strategic targets in Gaza, but the missile barrage continued unabated.

The army then sent in an invading force, hoping to batter Hamas' military infrastructure, but to no avail. Even after hostilities ceased, Hamas kept firing missiles into Israel, underscoring the fact that Israel has no credible defence against short-range enemy rockets.

Israel has begun to develop a missile defence system, the Iron Dome. But as Israel's state comptroller, Micha Lindenstrauss, wrote recently in a scathing report, the Iron Dome is still in its development stage.

Israel's vulnerability to rocket attack, highlighted by the inconclusive war in Gaza, is actually an old story.

During the 1950s and 1960s, kibbutzim in the Jordan Valley were shelled periodically by Syria from bases on the Golan Heights.

On the eve of the Six Day War, Jordan fired artillery and mortar rounds into western Jerusalem.

Subsequently, Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley and the Hula Valley were struck by the PLO.

Syrian gunners hit kibbutzim in the Galilee as the Yom Kippur War raged. Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, citing the need to stop the PLO from firing Katyushas at communities near the Lebanese border.

In 1991, Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq, ordered his forces to target Israel. Thirty nine Iraqi Scud missiles crashed into Israel, causing fairly serious property damage in Tel Aviv and leading thousands of its inhabitants to flee to safer ground.

In deference to a U.S. request to stay out of the Gulf War, Israel exercised restraint. Washington rushed Patriot air defence batteries to Israel, but they were largely ineffective.

Shortly after the outbreak of the second intifadah, when Gaza was still occupied by Israel, Hamas began firing Qassam rockets and mortars into the town of Sderot and nearby communities.

The Israeli army conducted retaliatory incursions into Gazan towns and refugee camps, but the rocket attacks continued unabated.

By that point, Hamas, thanks to Iran's help, had refined the range and potency of its homegrown Qassams.

The 2006 war in Lebanon was a striking example of the clear and present threat that rockets pose to Israel's security today.

Despite Israeli air power, and a brief Israeli ground assault into southern Lebanon, Hezbollah managed to launch almost 4,000 rockets into Israel. They hit towns, such as Haifa and Hadera, that had previously been immune to such attacks.

Israel had no effective response, and still does not.

Last year, Ehud Olmert, then Israel's prime minister, issued a stern warning that Israel's next war with Hezbollah would involve the home front. He warned that Hezbollah missiles "will reach the cities and homes of Israel's citizens."

Meir Dagan, director of the Mossad, Israel's external intelligence service, sounded a similar theme in a reference to Hezbollah's capabilities. As he put it, "The risk of damage to home front targets is very high."

Matan Vilnai, the deputy defence minister, was even more emphatic. Asked last October what the next war will look like, he replied, "The home front will be the main front of the war, whether it is missiles from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria or Iran." In an ominous postscript, he added, "We can get hit and be weakened. They can try to hit us hard."

Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, a cabinet minister in the present Israeli government, said last summer that "hundreds of missiles will strike Israel" in the opening phase of a future war. "There will be no place in the country which is not within range of Syria and Hezbollah rockets," he noted. And referring to the possibility that Hamas may yet succeed in smuggling rockets into the West Bank and firing them at central Israel, he said, "We're going to start getting rockets in Ramle."

Be'er Sheva, the largest town in the Negev, was struck by Qassam missiles during the recent war in Gaza [Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Taking these variables into consideration, Yossi Alpher, an Israeli analyst and former Mossad agent, has written, "Militarily, Israel has already entered an era in which wars and conflict are characterized increasingly by enemy missile… attacks aimed at terrorizing the civilian rear. Iran, Syria, Al Qaeda and both Lebanese and Palestinian extremist groups linked with Iran are all likely to step up their efforts to attack Israel [with] missiles."

For the past few years, Israel has been trying to develop an answer to the threat posed by short-range, medium-range and long-range missiles. The Iron Dome, which can intercept short-range missiles, is being developed by the Israeli company Rafael Advanced Defence Systems. It was tested successfully last summer and is due to come online in the summer of 2010.

An Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank may well hinge on its deployment. Ehud Barak, the defence minister, has said that an Iron Dome system is a prerequisite for such a pullout.

Alongside the Iron Dome, Rafael and an American firm, Raytheon, are working on the Laser Air Defence System (LADS), which may be the last word in short-range missile interception. In addition, Israel is developing two systems to counter medium-range missiles, the Stunner and David's Sling, both of which may be ready by 2013.

Israel has already introduced the Arrow system, which is designed to intercept long-range missiles from Iran and works in tandem with the Green Pine radar system.

Co-developed with the United States, the Arrow was first deployed in 2000. Israel is currently working on an upgraded version, the Arrow-3, which is supposedly capable of downing Iran's Shihab-3 ballistic missile.

In the meantime, the United States has deployed a high-powered radar system in the Negev, manned by 120 U.S. soldiers, which can detect a missile shortly after launch.

Although Israel has begun to reinforce buildings within Arab missile range, the former deputy defence minister, Ephraim Sneh, has charged that the Home Front Command receives inadequate funding. "The most elementary aspects of the home front are neglected," he claimed two years ago. The state comptroller, Micha Lindenstrauss, has also been critical. Two years ago, he wrote, "Israel's administrations – the political and executive echelons – have not carried out their duties [on] the home front."

Last year, Raanan Dinur, the director-general of the prime minister's office, had to admit that, due to budgetary reasons, buildings in communities near Gaza still remain unprotected. Israel is thus still vulnerable to hostile missile fire.

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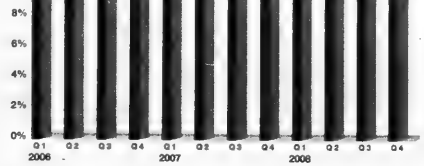

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'Morah Yoga' brings kinesthetic learning to kids

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Kinneret Dubowitz is sometimes called "Morah Yoga" by her little students at Torah Tots Preschool. The name is probably even more unusual than Dubowitz's area of expertise, at least in the context of an Orthodox school.

For the past four years, the 35-year-old dance therapist has been teaching yoga and creative movement once a week at the preschool, housed at Chabad of Markham.

She teaches the same type of class once a week at Netivot HaTorah Day School, where she is known as Morah Kinneret, and has also taught at Gan Shalom Preschool and Mesorah Montessori, another Orthodox school. In the summer, she works at Chabad Lubavitch Day Camp and Neshama Theatre Troupe's summer program. She also teaches yoga to women in private classes and runs Jewish-focused wellness retreats.

In an interview at her home – over a cup of organic kukicha tea, a type of green tea derived from twigs – Dubowitz discussed her work and the journey that led her to integrate yoga and Orthodox Judaism.

A dancer and competitive gymnast as a youngster growing up in Toronto, the South African-born Dubowitz became more religiously observant after participating at age 19 in Livnot U'Lehibanot, a year-long volunteer program in Israel, and studying comparative religion studies at the University of Toronto.

She was certified as a yoga teacher in 1996 by the Toronto School of Flow Yoga, and she received her master's in creative arts and dance movement therapy in 2000 from Lesley College in Boston.

Dubowitz worked as a dance therapist in the United States before returning to Toronto at age 28 with her American-born husband, Menachem Feuer, who teaches at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

For Orthodox yoga students, Dubowitz believes "it's important to have a religious person teaching them." Chanting, for example, can be an issue if names of Hindu gods are used, she noted.

Yoga per se is not incompatible with Orthodoxy, "as long as it's done with boundaries," Dubowitz said.

At Torah Tots, the mother of two boys, ages five and seven, integrates school themes into creative movement, often coming up with new yoga poses or adapting existing ones to fit the themes.

"On Purim, we become the *shalach manos* baskets," she said. "We become the licorice that bends, the pretzels that cross our legs, the popcorn that pops."

Dubowitz, who wrote a thesis about the integration of Jewish education and kinesthetic learning, said that she was the type of kid who "had a lot of trouble sitting at a desk."

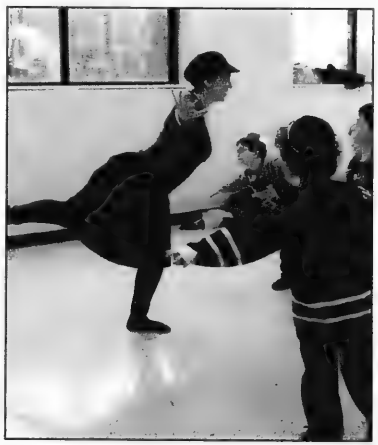
Although she did well in school, she found it frustrating, she said.

In addition to providing kinesthetic learning, Dubowitz believes she is helping to break stereotypes. "I think it's important for kids to see Orthodox Jewish women who are connected to their bodies."

She said that the long skirt she wears does not restrict her movement or prevent her from "crawling around with the kids."

She hopes that because the children have fun in her class, they will associate body movement with fun and will also have positive memories of their Jewish schooling.

Yoga is "an incredible balance between structure and expression," Dubowitz said. "There's a lot of containment and a lot of freedom."



Kinneret Dubowitz demonstrates an "airplane" pose at Torah Tots Preschool to tie in with the theme of going on a trip. [Frances Kraft photo]

A lesson from the teacher: ***"The body has wisdom, and not every child learns just cerebrally. Many children need to use the wisdom of the body in order to engage with the world around them. Exposure to a variety of motor experiences is really important."***

Greater Toronto Area

CIPP leader honoured for humanitarian work

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

When members of the Jewish and Somali communities held a press conference last year to announce a mentorship program, Mark Persaud was there to lend his support.

Though neither Jewish nor Somali, Persaud was instrumental in bringing the two sides together in an effort to promote goodwill between two communities that, at first blush, might not be considered the most natural of allies.

Mark Persaud

Persaud, president of the Canadian International Peace Project (CIPP), an organization that fosters pluralism and inter-community relationships, said that ever since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, he had "looked for an opportunity to bring Jews and Muslims together and build relationships at the organizational level."

His efforts to promote inter-community goodwill will be recognized at a tribute dinner May 7, as CIPP and Friends of Mark Persaud "celebrate 25 years of exceptional contributions and public service to Canada."

At the joint news conference, held at a west-end public school, Canadian Jewish Congress and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto joined the Canadian Somali Congress to announce the mentoring program, which will see Jewish professionals help young Somalis – potential community leaders – as they enter the workforce.

Somalis are the largest diaspora African community in Canada and they practise a moderate form of Islam, Persaud explained. Many Somalis have had contact with Jews – especially those in the legal profession – as they try to establish themselves in the country, he added.

Persaud credited Ed Morgan, former president of Canadian Jewish Congress, and James Morton, past president of the Ontario Bar Association, for laying the groundwork for the program's ultimate success. Both are honorary patrons of the Somali Congress board.

"This is a beaker for a very interesting social experiment in seeing how far we can go to build bridges," Persaud said. "The whole thing is cutting edge. I'm very proud of it. It shows what can happen if you bring together people of goodwill."

One immediate spinoff of the mentoring project, which is supported by Canadian Heritage, is the desire by several Somali women and young people to give something back to the Jewish community. CIPP staff is working on a proposed project for June that would see Somalis visit seniors at the Baycrest Centre and share their foods, culture and songs. At the same time, the Somalis will hear about Jewish culture, religion and immigration experience, Persaud said.

While actual mentoring hasn't yet begun, the program has the potential to expand to other communities. Persaud has received feelers from two influential Pakistani businessmen interested in introducing it to their community, and non-Muslims have also expressed an interest, he said.

Persaud believes building personal relationships is the key to establishing inter-community ties. Doing so seems to come easily to the Guyanese-born activist, Morgan said. "The force of his personality" is an ingredient in Persaud's success. "He's a very likeable guy. He's been outspoken on the plight of visible minorities in the federal civil service," and that drew the attention of minority groups.

"He makes a point of befriending community leaders" and he has extensive contacts in numerous cultural communities, Morgan added.

Businessman Nathan Jacobson, who hosted Persaud on a trip to Ukraine and Israel, said, "Mark Persaud is a well-intentioned, selfless and principled person. He is trying to work out of the box. He is a big supporter of Israel."

As a youth growing up in Guyana, Persaud didn't know any Jews. Raised in the Hindu faith, he was taught to have an open mind and to be tolerant of other religions and races.

In 1983, when he was 19, his family fled political and civil upheaval in Guyana. He came to Canada as a refugee with the equivalent of $80 in his pocket.

He attended Osgoode Hall law school and worked as a federal prosecutor for 10 years. He also served as legal counsel to the RCMP for two years, and along the way, worked in community outreach projects.

He left law and "decided to come back to this. I believe I bring a perspective and understanding that are needed in terms of building relationships to move our communities together."

A teenage convert to Christianity, Persaud boasts a family of such diversity he could be a poster boy for multiculturalism. One of his sisters married an American and is a Protestant, another married a Muslim and is raising her children in that faith, and a third sister married an American Roman Catholic and is raising their children as Catholics.

A brother married an African-American Christian, and Persaud is so close to several American Jews, he considers them his siblings.

"In my family we have Hindus, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, blacks, whites and browns," he said.

"The fluff of multiculturalism" – the songs and dances – doesn't interest him so much as its substance, which means "bringing friends, family, together with a deeper appreciation of other peoples."

The legal aspects of multiculturalism – the laws which mandate it – "have their usefulness, but we're reached the point where we have to move beyond the traditional role of multiculturalism to integration and communities working together to build a stronger Canada," he said.

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Poland's chief rabbi set to visit

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Since the fall of Communism 20 years ago, thousands of people in Poland who were brought up as Catholics have discovered their Jewish ancestry, says the country's chief rabbi.

"Thousands of Poles who did not know they had Jewish roots have found them," said Rabbi Michael Schudrich, who will deliver a speech in Toronto on Poland's Jewish revival on May 11 at Congregation Habonim.

Invited here by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, the rabbi said that such Poles have voiced an interest in "learning about their Jewish heritage and expressing it in some positive manner."

Rabbi Schudrich, who has played a pivotal role in Poland's Jewish renaissance, said that Jews who were once afraid to tell their children or grandchildren about their Jewish origins have spoken up since the advent of democracy in Poland.

"We have only begun to reach out to those who are now discovering their true Jewish identity," he said in an interview.

And much remains to be done in consolidating the ongoing Jewish revival. As he put it, "We need more rabbis and teachers to teach and share [Jewish knowledge] with more people."

He singled out the Ronald Lauder Foundation for having supported this revival. Funded by American businessman Ronald Lauder, the foundation has built Jewish schools, community centres and summer camps throughout Poland and eastern Europe.

Rabbi Schudrich added that the major funder of Poland's Jewish renaissance today is the U.S.-based Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture.

In his judgment, the Polish Jewish community is dependent on philanthropy.

"It is essential for two reasons. First, it provides material help that is so necessary. Second, it shows we are not forgotten."

Rabbi Michael Schudrich

Rabbi Schudrich, an American of Polish Jewish descent, praised the Polish government for supporting the revival.

"There is an understanding that Jews have lived in Poland for almost 1,000 years, have been part of this country for centuries and have contributed. The desire is not to let this die out."

Rabbi Schudrich, who was appointed to his position by the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland, said there are no firm figures as to the number of Jews living in Poland today.

"The estimate is usually somewhere around 30,000 to 40,000, but no one really knows, since people are still discovering their Jewish roots."

Asked what challenges face the community at present, he replied, "The main ones are to help Poles of Jewish descent return to their Jewish identity, to build a Jewish community with people who were not brought up as Jews and to balance the needs of the present with the memory of the past."

Asked if anti-Semitism is a serious problem, he said, "Anti-Semitism exists in Poland, as it tragically exists throughout Europe. There is little physical anti-Semitism in Poland, and it is certainly a lot less problematic than in places like Paris. Having said that, now is the time to fight anti-Semitism before it grows."

The rabbi added that both the Polish government and the president have been "very, very strong" in fighting it.

In closing, he said the Polish government has yet to resolve the Jewish private property issue.

Jewish community property seized by the Nazis and Communists has been returned, but not so private Jewish property.

Urging Poland to act on this matter, he said, "The government has a responsibility to all those who lost property. They should receive something for their properties."

Rabbi Schudrich, born in New York City in 1955, is a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Yeshiva University.

From 1983 to 1989, he served as rabbi of Japan's Jewish community.

He began working for the Ronald Lauder Foundation in 1992 and resided in Warsaw until 1998. Returning to Poland two years later, he was appointed chief rabbi in 2004.

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Jewish frat marks 100th anniversary

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Canadian alumni of Sigma Alpha Mu (SAM), a Jewish fraternity that's celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, will be observing the milestone in Toronto with a celebratory dinner in May.

The fraternity, which was founded in 1909 by eight Jewish students at City College in New York because they weren't welcome at existing fraternities, has attracted thousands of Canadian alumni over the years.

While the fraternity hasn't been exclusively Jewish since 1953, it continues to honour its roots by acting on Jewish principles and values.

Bill Schwartz, the international fraternity's executive director emeritus, who was a brother at the University of Oklahoma in the class of 1952, said there are no active Canadian chapters at the moment, but the fraternity has a rich history in Canadian schools, including at the University Western Ontario, University of Toronto, McGill University and the University of Manitoba.

"Our first Canadian chapter was at McGill in 1918. Toronto was [started in] 1920, and we had quite a group from Manitoba," Schwartz said.

Jerry Nesker, who joined SAM in 1966 as a freshman at U of T, said Canadian alumni are very proud of their fellow members.

"We have Supreme Court justices, Superior Court justices, lawyers, accountants, members of both provincial and federal parliaments, industry leaders, philanthropists and entrepreneurs who have shared membership in Sigma Alpha Mu," Nesker said.

Some notable alumni include former chief justice of Canada Bora Laskin, current Supreme Court Justice Marshall Rothstein and billionaire businessman Gerald Schwartz.

Nesker and his wife, Carol, are hosting the Toronto celebration dinner at the Premiere Ballroom in Richmond Hill on May 9.

Representatives from the national organization will be present, speeches will be given, and an award will be presented to Toronto-based philanthropist Joseph Tanenbaum, an alumnus who is being honoured for his commitment to community service.

Nesker said he and his wife wanted to organize a dinner in Toronto to give Canadian alumni an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with brothers they may have lost touch with over the years.

(Nesker, on the other hand, said he's still in close touch with one of his fraternity brothers who introduced him to his wife more than three decades ago.)

Bill Schwartz said that rather than having one big convention, the 100-year milestone is being celebrated with dinners in a number of North American cities – including Phoenix, Atlanta, Chicago, Baltimore and Dallas – in order to make it more accessible to alumni everywhere.

Both Nesker and Schwartz hope to raise awareness about what the fraternity is really about and challenge the reputation that fraternities have when it comes to drinking and partying.

"There are people who say that fraternities are snobby and not egalitarian, and they do things like hazing and all that stuff," Schwartz said.

But community service and philanthropic work is characteristic of the fraternity, he added.

He recalled a scholarship program that some of the Canadian chapters were involved with that brought European Jews to Canada before the Holocaust.

"In the early '30s, the national chaplain of Canada heard, before Kristallnacht, that the Jews were being treated badly," Schwartz said.

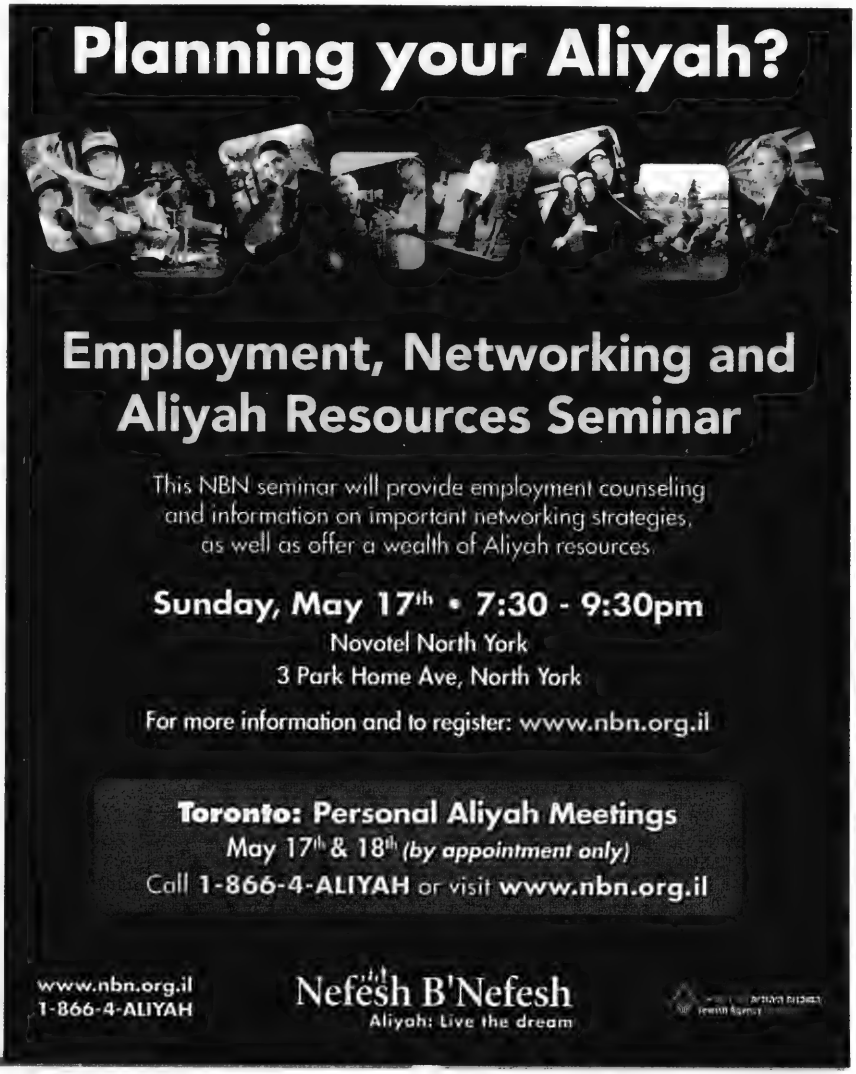
European Jews were sponsored by the chapters to live and study in Canada.

"The chapter whose alumni sponsored more refugees than any other was the chapter at the University of Manitoba," he said, adding that altogether, about 40 Jews were brought to Canada through this initiative.

"It was a trickle. It was extremely hard to get refugees out of Germany. At one point it became impossible... It was wonderful for those 40 people, but there were six million others. We did our best."

For more information about the centennial celebrations, call Schwartz at 317-846-0600, or e-mail him at samfdn@sam.org.

Jerry and Carol Nesker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Jewish Life

Background to a name change

By VICTOR GOLDBLOOM

Guest Voice

Let me begin by making clear what the media have not: our new name is Quebec Jewish Congress, A DIVISION OF CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS. We have not concealed or diminished our commitment to the Canada-wide organization, nor to Canada.

In recent years, repeated public opinion polls have shown that the Jewish community is less well regarded in Canada than in the United States, and less well regarded in Quebec than in other parts of Canada.

We had two choices: to shrug our shoulders and accept this reality, or to analyze it and devise a strategy for coping with it.

Is Quebec an anti-Semitic society? Our analysis says no. It reveals, however, that our community is little known, and what is known is often inaccurate. Yes, there is anti-Semitism – and we must be vigilant and react to it whenever it rears its head – but it is far less than it was when I was growing up, and it no longer has any political or religious endorsement.

What anti-Semitism there is, however, grabbed the microphone at the public consultations of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation of minorities, and made a strategy all the more necessary. As well, in the debate, all minorities tended to be lumped together, whether they began to grow in the last decade or two or, in our case, have been here for 2-1/2 centuries. It is not in our interest to be perceived as a foreign body within Quebec society.

In the aftermath of the presentation of our brief to Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, I decided to undertake a speaking tour of the province. I have been to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Drummondville, Trois-Rivières, Quebec City, Joliette, Valleyfield and Mont-Laurier, and I had a session with a group of former members of the national assembly. As well, Congress recently held a demonstration seder in Saint Agathe.

This has been a thoroughly positive experience, and I have every intention of continuing it.

I speak about our community, beginning with its 249 years as an integral part of Quebec society. I speak of its diversity, of its growth through immigration from Europe, and more recently from North Africa, and of its talents. I respond candidly to the questions I am asked.

I enter these encounters with two hopes, and so far they have been fulfilled every time. People tell me two things: "I learned a lot about your community, and your religion, that I didn't know," and "You corrected a lot of wrong impressions that I had had before." Most rewarding, however, is when they say, "Goodness, you're Quebecers just like us."

It's the feedback from these and other encounters, from conversations with public figures and from interviews with the media that caused us to reflect on our name. The designation Quebec region got a lot of negative reaction, because, indeed, we are not a region, we are a province that has regions of its own.

We felt, therefore, that we would have more positive impact on public opinion, on the leadership of this province and on journalists if we underlined our integration into Quebec society. Our board was unanimous, the two national co-presidents were strong in their support, and the national board endorsed the change with a single dissenting vote.

The mention of the change was applauded in Saint Agathe. The mayor of Montreal went out of his way to congratulate us. The national assembly adopted a unanimous motion of felicitation. We feel that we have made a constructive decision that will significantly serve the best interests of our community.

Victor Goldbloom is chair of the Quebec Jewish Congress, a division of Canadian Jewish Congress, and has been active in Congress for 43 years.

Will we be people of the gigabyte?

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

JEWISH EDUCATION
The Next Generation

"Is Google making us stupid?" muses Nicholas Carr, one of the current gurus of information technology. Complaining that over the past few years he has had an uncomfortable sense that something has been tinkering with his brain, Carr laments what he sees as his diminished ability to hang in there with a longish piece of writing – forget about War and Peace or, heaven forbid, Marcel Proust – and he traces this loss to his constant foraging in the jungles of the Internet.

It appears that Carr is not alone in wondering whether his cognitive abilities have been mislaid in cyberspace. According to a recent and comprehensive report conducted by researchers at University College London, we are in the midst of a revolution in the way we read and think. A five-year research study emphatically concludes that a growing majority of young people prefer reading online than in actual book form. And how does web surfing interact with reading? "It is clear that users are not reading online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of 'reading' are emerging as users 'power browse' horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense."

None of this should be news. In the 1960s, the great early prophet of the information age, Marshall McLuhan, warned that media doesn't simply supply the content of thought, it also shapes the way we process and contemplate thought itself. In "the medium is the message," he was eerily prescient about what it would be like not just to use but to think in Google.

A lack of patience, a quickness to judge, a fatigue with extensive argumentation, an inability to sit still with difficult passages – many is the teacher who has silently noted these features as part of the intellectual profile of the majority of today's students. Indeed, being a stickler in the fight against such traits renders one a quaint (or annoying) relic of the world before Yahoo.

As Carr notes, "My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski."

We are only just beginning to understand what effects this will have in the realm of Jewish education, traditionally an area reserved for intense textual study, commentary and metacommentary, and extensive and exhaustive analysis of words. Jews have had a centuries-old love affair with books. Will we now become the "people of the gigabyte?"

Advocates will argue, correctly, that there are obvious advantages to the new technologies in terms of speed and access. The question is whether they will render impotent the overall desire for actual book learning, or simply convert all of that information into other modes of delivery, making Jewish literacy more, not less, universal.

All of this remains to be seen. For the moment – oops, my allotted space is just about up. I have to get back to YouTube. (Full disclosure: I accessed the London study through the friendly auspices of Google.)

Jewish Life

Jewish pilgrims journey to Jerusalem

Laish by Aharon Appelfeld, Random House.

Books
Bernard Baskin

This brief novel tells the astonishing story of a group of Jewish pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem from eastern Europe in the closing years of the 19th century.

The pilgrims, crowded into a caravan of six horse-drawn wagons, are wondrously diverse: devout and learned elderly men, misfits, widows and orphans, adventurers, thieves and con men. Also, abusive and often drunken wagon drivers, some of them former convicts. The violent drivers accept, to a limited degree, the authority of the elders, but for the most part, they bring practical, worldly-wise leadership to the bewildered, frightened and grief-stricken travellers.

The pilgrimage, now many years old, has experienced a variety of difficulties and misfortunes: a typhoid epidemic, brutal quarrels and harsh weather, as well as the hostility and resentment of the peasants in the towns and villages through which they pass.

Laish, the novel's narrator, a 15-year-old orphan, is confronted with experiences that are often violent, inexplicable and sometimes grotesque. He is a keen observer of events and intelligent, but unable to fully explain or comprehend the actions or behaviour patterns of those about him.

Appelfeld, one of Israel's best-known and admired authors, writes in a terse, unadorned style. His sentences tend to be short and simply constructed. As a result, the reader often feels that there is something missing, some elusive element that is being withheld.

The author is best when he depicts character or personality. Laish says this about a friend among the travellers: "Animals are Struel's great love. Apart from the falcon that alights on his shoulder every evening and sleeps in his lap, he has two German shepherds who are utterly devoted to him. Any animal that encounters him will nestle against him.

"In Lemberg he saved us from a pack of stray dogs. He knows how to take care of sick horses, doves, and even snakes. The old men are fond of him, occasionally calling him up to read from the Torah. Were he not addicted to drink, they would be even fonder of him."

At one point, Laish gloomily observes that wagons have emptied out, and loosened knapsacks and parcels are strewn alongside the wagons. Clothes that once covered people lie torn and shameful on the ground. Shimkeh and Chiyuk were the sole witnesses to the disappearances. Who knows the fate of these people? If Shimkeh is asked where the missing are gone, he waves his hand as if he were about to bring down a horsewhip on rebellious animal and spits to the side.

Finally, a remnant, emotionally and physically drained, reach the port city of Galacz, where their ship is waiting in the harbour. But there are unexpected problems. Will the ship sail? Is the long trek over?

The basic meaning of this affecting work can be interpreted in many ways. Perhaps most comfortably as an allegory, a symbolic re-creation of the age-old quest of Jews for Jerusalem – actual or heavenly.

Above all, this provocative book testifies to human tenacity and resilience. Despite formidable odds, a desperate few achieve their goal. But the way was long and hard and the price was high in pain and death. Does the author think of human life in these terms?

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Business ethics in tough times, Pt. 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Today, we continue to look at what Judaism has to say about business ethics in tough times. Before getting to the issues, the Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem puts some points in perspective about Judaism's view of business. .

- Unlike other traditions, Judaism has never viewed poverty as a virtue. Wealth, however, has always been seen as a challenge.
- The imperative of integrity demands honesty, even when it is contrary to business advantage.
- Judaism recognizes that ethics can only exist where there is an effective and respected legal infrastructure. Ethics, however, go beyond law and can be defined as "obedience to the unenforceable." **[tinyurl.com/ethics11]**

Stay on the Business Ethics site for many thoughtful articles, including a proposed Halachic Corporate Code of Ethics. **[tinyurl.com/ethics12]**

In light of the Bernard Madoff scandal (he has been convicted of operating a Ponzi scheme that has been called the largest investor fraud ever committed by a single person), Rabbi Asher Meir asks, "Can individuals and institutions be faulted for investing with a seemingly upright and reliable person?" He tells about Rav Ashi, who sent a message to another sage asking for 10 *zuzzim* (ancient silver coins) for an investment. The response: "Bring witnesses and let us write a deed." Rav Ashi sent back, "Even for me?" The sage sent back, "Especially you, for you are preoccupied with Torah learning and likely to forget, and I would bring a curse on myself." Rabbi Meir suggests that no one is immune from the discipline of documentation. As for the Madoff affair, Rabbi Meir says "While many people relied on the investment manager's reputation and considered him above suspicion, others were convinced that he was engaged in misconduct but didn't mean because they imagined that he was doing so on their behalf. As they learned, this is not only unethical but also naive." **[tinyurl.com/ethics13]**

Rabbi Yizchok Breitowitz asks if declaring bankruptcy is a kosher choice under Halachah. He points out that "the Torah considers the obligation to pay debts as absolute… and there is no mechanism in Halachah that is tantamount to escaping your debts by filing a bankruptcy and obtaining a discharge." But since we live in a secular country, are we "allowed to file bankruptcy [and] get a discharge?" The answer seems be "yes," but the fascinating part of the article is rabbi's explanation of the rights of the lender and debtor in secular and Jewish societies – as well as the role of the Jewish community toward individuals who find themselves in financial distress. **[tinyurl.com/ethics14]**

Rabbi Jay Kelman of Torah in Motion looks at many issues, including: Can executive salaries be clawed back; may one invest in corporations whose activities may be ethically wanting; should tzedakah be returned if the donor earned funds through illegal activities? **[tinyurl.com/ethics15]**

Another excellent source is the Jewish Association for Business Ethics. In addition to examining a wide range of issues revolving around integrity, it also offers the downloadable booklet Jewish Principles in the Workplace. **[tinyurl.com/ethics16]**

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks addresses the issue of corporate responsibility and places much blame on businesses that shrug off their responsibility to their workers, their customers and their community. "Judaism cannot accept the principle that markets, business, and corporations are a value-free zone" that cry, "It wasn't me," when something goes wrong.

Aside from quoting Isaiah and Amos, Rabbi Sacks tells an anecdote about a rabbi who spent a year trying to teach the Book of Joshua to an unruly class. At the end of the year, he decided to make his questions easy. "Marvin," he said, "tell me who destroyed the walls of Jericho?" "Please, sir," replied Marvin, "it wasn't me." Scandalized, he wrote a letter to Marvin's parents. "I've spent an entire year trying to teach Bible to your son, and when I asked him who destroyed the walls of Jericho, he replied, 'Please, sir, it wasn't me.'" Two days later, he received an indignant letter in return. "Dear rabbi, if our son says it wasn't him, then it wasn't him!" In despair, the rabbi went to the president of the congregation and told him the story. The president got out his cheque-book and said, "Here's a cheque for $1,000. Get the walls repaired and stop complaining!" **[tinyurl.com/ethics17]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet.

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Thousands defy weather to remember murdered children

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Heavy rain and cold winds weren't enough to keep thousands of people from gathering at Earl Bales Park last week to commemorate the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered by Nazis.

The April 20 evening ceremony, called Remembering the Children – sponsored by the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem – featured a candlelighting ceremony, performances by the Toronto Heschel School Children's Chorus and a keynote address by Joseph Gottdenker, a Polish-born Holocaust survivor who was a hidden child.

The ceremony, co-chaired by Louis Greenbaum and Joyce Rifkind, also included prayers and songs, the March of the Colours by the Royal Canadian Legion and the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, and a brief address by Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general in Toronto.

Gissin, who began by praising the Toronto Jewish community for organizing the largest gathering for Holocaust commemoration outside of Israel, said that the UN anti-racism conference in Geneva that began the same day as the memorial service serves as a reminder of how important it is to educate people about the Shoah.

John Sanders, left, Tina Knetsch-Develing, and her son, Bill Knetsch lit a candle together in honour of the Righteous Among The Nations. [Rammy Rochman photo]

Gissin, said that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – who gave an anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist speech on the conference's opening day, and who often promises to "wipe Israel off the map" – uses rhetoric that brings back memories of "hatred without reason against the Jews and against the State of Israel."

Gissin then turned his focus to the 1.5 million children who died during the Holocaust, and the ones who were lucky enough to be taken in by gentiles who hid them from the Nazis in their homes.

"Among the kids who survived the Holocaust… was John Sanders, who lived in the Netherlands and was saved by the Develing family," he said.

Gissin presented a Righteous Among the Nations certificate from Yad Vashem posthumously to Catharina Develing, a widowed mother of five, who took Sanders in for 2-1/2 years during the war.

Tina Knetsch-Develing, her daughter and the last surviving member of the family that took Sanders in, accepted the certificate on behalf of her late mother.

Joined by her son and nephew, Knetsch-Develing, who immigrated to Canada after the war, lit a memorial candle.

As she took to the stage, every member of the audience stood silently in her honour as she lit a candle with Sanders.

Sanders, who wanted to publicly thank the Develing family, said that "exactly 23 years ago, my first granddaughter was born, and a few months ago, our great-grandson entered this world. All of this could not have happened if Catharina Develing… had not opened her house to me."

Gottdenker, another child survivor of the Holocaust, spoke about the world he was born into in Sandomierz, Poland, in 1942.

He said his father was taken to a concentration camp before he was born, and his mother made arrangements with a Polish family, the Ziolos, to hide Gottdenker in their home.

His mother eventually decided that it was too dangerous for her to remain in their home, and she joined the Zegota, the Polish underground group, leaving Gottdenker with the Ziolos for almost three years.

"Many were forced to live under assumed identities, longingly anticipating the return of their mother and father. Some were so young when they were separated from their parents that they forgot their real names and Jewish identities," Gottdenker said.

But, he added, these children were the lucky ones. Those who couldn't find a home in which to hide from the Nazis, lived like animals in the forests or were caught and sent to death camps.

"They were often the first prey of the Nazi killing machine."

He said that after the war, children who survived the Holocaust had to begin a long and painful process of rehabilitation.

"I, too, have rebuilt my life, but I'll never forget how that life began, and how it was only by the gracious kindness of others that I survived the Shoah at all," Gottdenker said.

"Even after witnessing their own friends being murdered by Nazis for hiding Jews in their homes, [the Ziolos] continued to protect me until the end of the war."

The Ziolos have since died, but Gottdenker said he is in the process of having the family recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

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Ottawa's Durban stance praised at memorial

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — For the first time in its six-year history, the national Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony was not held on Parliament Hill.

Because of an ongoing protest by thousands of Tamils urging Ottawa to broker a ceasefire in the civil war in Sri Lanka, organizers decided to move the event to the Canadian War Museum, which proved to be a fitting, although eerie, setting.

Sitting in a huge hall, surrounded by tanks and with a fighter plane hanging overhead, hundreds of people including Holocaust survivors and their families, as well as politicians and representatives of various embassies and churches – some of whom had arrived in the nation's capital on buses from Montreal and Toronto – assembled to pay tribute and to remember those who perished.

Ottawa Jewish War Veterans provided the colour guard at a ceremony organized by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. [Elliot Sylman photo]

The commitment of the government of Canada to fight anti-Semitism and to support Israel's right to exist was affirmed by Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism.

"When speaking of the Holocaust and the history of hatred that made it possible, truly words fail us," Kenney said.

"While hatred begins in hearts, it is spread in words," he added. "We must withdraw public support from those who promote hatred or defend terror."

MC Joel Dimitry praised Canada for taking the lead in refusing to attend last week's United Nations' Durban Review Conference in Geneva. "Canada was the first country to pull out of the Durban II [anti-racism] conference, and if you saw it on television, you know they were not wrong… For taking a stand against anti-Semitism, we owe this government our great gratitude," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Israel's ambassador to Canada, Miriam Ziv.

"Canada should be commended for its decision to pull out of this conference," she said.

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff spoke of the six million victims of the Holocaust as individuals who must always be remembered. He also paid tribute to the Canadian military. "We also remember those who fought for freedom. Every single member of this audience is honoured, as I am, by the presence of our heroic veterans."

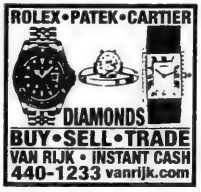
Gilles Duceppe, leader of the Bloc Québécois, said that "each member of the human community is responsible and has a duty to remember." He also spoke about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and said the Palestinians must have their own state.

"Even in a century with so much tragedy, nothing comes close to the Holocaust of six million Jews," said NDP leader Jack Layton. "It taught us the brutality and the evil of which humanity is capable. You wouldn't have thought it was possible."

Wreaths were laid by survivors and their families, accompanied by various politicians.

Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, expressed appreciation to all who attended the event, from children to politicians.

For more coverage of Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah across Canada, please go to www.cjnews.com



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Yom Hashoah v' Hagvurah

MEGILLAT HASHOAH READ

The seventh annual Megillat HaShoah reading took place last week on Yom Hashoah, April 21, at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue in Toronto. Clockwise, from left, Shayna Lightman carries a torch at the beginning of the ceremony; cantors, from left, Aaron Bensoussan, Marshall Loomer and Ben Silverberg sing *Zog Nit Keynmol: the Partizaner Lid* (Partisan Song) while Holocaust survivor Alex Eisen, who first suggested the idea of a Holocaust scroll and was the driving force behind its creation, follows along in the Megillat Hashoah book, and Jenny Eisenstein, a Holocaust survivor, descends from the bimah with her grandson Elijah Eisenstein after lighting a candle in honour of the Ghetto Fighters and Partisans with members of the extended Eisenstein family. Megillat Hashoah readings also took place in the former Soviet Union, South America and Israel.

[Frances Kraft photos]

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שישאר ביניו

גידי קורן וחברים

שעת נפש

יום העצמאות ממש מחר, ואיתי הזדמנית חד שנתית להיות ביחד עם ישראלים, ולהתחבר שוב לתרבות שלנו. יכול ישראלי לצאת מישראל, אבל אינך יכול להוציא את ישראל מעצמך.

הקהילה שלנו מתחזקת, יכמו שהשנה ראיני לראשונה תאטרון קהילתי שנוצר בטורונטו, כך גם האירוע של יום העצמאות בגוי על הפשרונות שלנו.

למי שעדיין לא פגש-תהיה הזדמנית נפלאה לראות את גתית שובל בהופעה. גתית עשתה היסטוריה כשהיתה הזמרת הצעירה ביותר שהופיעה אי פעם בפסטיבל הזמר והפזמון של שנות השבעים בשיר של הוריה. הפזמונאות שרה שובל והמוסיקאי נסים שובל. גתית היתה בת ארבע עשרה אז. וזכתה להכרה לאומית בין לילה. עם השנים פיתחה גתית רפרטואר בינלאומי, וקולה המדהים עם יכולת מוסיקאלית חיבקת עולם עושים את ההאזנה לחוויה מענגת.

לסיפור של גתית יש פרק המשך-בתה תותי דרויאן, זמרת מדהימה בזכות עצמה. לקראת סוף בית ספר תיכון-גם היא מופיעה בערב הישראלי של יום העצמאות. לצידן של גתית ותותי תופיע גם דפנה דקל, זמרת מחיננת שמוכרת לכל מי שמעורב בקהילה שלנו.

יום העצמאות הוא החג של הביחד, כדברי המשורר אמיר גלבע "פתאום קם אדם בבוקר ומרגיש שהוא עם ומתחיל ללכת". אז בואו להיות ביחד.

שאט נפש

תידה ליהורים ולשמחה על הקטע הבא:

ראש הממשלה אמר את הדברים הבאים בראיון לעיתונות:

"מוסלמים המעדיפים להיות תחת חוקי השריעה, מוזמנים לעזוב את המדינה. אני בעד פיקוח ומעקב מודיעיני על מסגדים, המהווים כר פעילה נרחב לתכנון פעולות טרור נגד המדינה.

על המוסלמים להחליט-או שאתם מאמצים את חוקי המדינה, או שתעברי למקום אחר. נמאס לי שאזרחינו חיים בחשש מתמיד מפעולות טרור מטעם האיסלם הקצוני. במדינה שהתפתחה כתוצאה ממאבק למען החופש-אם ברצונכם להיות חלק מהחברה שלנו וליהנות מכל הטוב שהחופש מעניק לכם-עליכם לאמץ את החוקים והכללים של המדינה. אך ברגע שתתחילו לפגוע בה, בערכיה ובדגלה-אני מציע לכם לעשות שימוש בערך הקדוש שלנו-חופש התנועה-ולחפש לעצמכם מקום אחר על פני כדור הארץ."

מי אמר את הדברים האלה??

נתניהו?

ליברמן?

אהוד ברק?

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רק מה-

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אבל שישאר בינינו.

הומור קנדי

מרגע שהוכרזה ונקובר כאתר אולימפיאדת החורף-מגיעות לאתר המשחקים האולימפיים שאלותתמהוניות מכל העולם. השאלות שמוצגות כאן הן אמיתיות. התשובות הן כמובן ברוח הבדיחה, לחדד את הבורות שנשקפת מן שאלות.

מרי מאנגליה: בטלביזיה תמיד מראים את קנדה קפואה. אז איך מצליחים צמחים להישרד אצלכם?

תשובה: האמת- אנחנו מייבאים צמחים שכבר סיימו את גידולם ואחר כך מסתכלים איך הם מתים.

גונאר משוודיה: האם אוכל לראות דובי קוטב ברחובות וונקובר?

תשובה: תלוי כמה שתית לפני זה.

וולטר (גרמניה):אני רוצה ללכת מוונקובר לטורונטו. האם אפשר ללכת לאורך מסילת הרכבת?

תשובה: כמובן, זה רק ששת אלפים ק"מ, כך שתצטרך לקחת הרבה מים לדרך.

ג'ראדי מצרפת: האם מותר להביא סכיני אוכל ומזלגות לקנדה?

תשובה: למה לך, תאכל כמונו עם הידיים.

מיצ'ל מארה"ב: האם אוכל לדבר אנגלית ברוב המקומות בקנדה?

תשובה: כמובן, אבל קודם תצטרך ללמוד את השפה.

Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah

'Canada afforded me a new life,' survivor says

By JOEL JACOBSON
Atlantic Correspondent

HALIFAX — They came from all walks of life – Holocaust survivors, educators, politicians, professionals, businesspeople, Jews, non-Jews, men, women and teenagers.

They filled Pier 21 Auditorium in Halifax to overflowing to honour the six million who died in the Holocaust. They came to listen to Toronto's Max Eisen tell his story of heartbreak and survival, many wiping tears as he talked of man's inhumanity to man.

Toronto's Max Eisen speaks in Halifax.

It was Yom Hashoah 2009.

In several Atlantic Canadian communities, large crowds fill halls and synagogues to light memorial candles, recite names of those who perished, and hear testimony from people such as Max Eisen. Two nights earlier, on April 19, he spoke to 200 people at Temple Sons of Israel in Sydney, N.S., and then brought his message to Halifax.

Elly Gotz, a retired engineer from Toronto and, like Eisen, a speaker with the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, addressed audiences in Saint John and Fredericton, N.B. Halifax resident and longtime Holocaust educator Philip Riteman, a survivor, addressed a large crowd in Moncton. Fredericton's Israel Unger, also a survivor, spoke in Charlottetown, P.E.I., while survivors, led by Ernie Mauskopf, spoke to their home community of St. John's, Nfld.

Eisen, 80, said in Halifax that he knew he was home when his ship docked in Quebec City in 1949.

"Canada afforded me a new life, a new start, a family and success in business," said the retired Toronto manufacturer. "I came alone [after being in concentration camps and on death marches for the last year of World War II]. Only two cousins survived with me."

He said Germans lived by three words concerning Jews – excommunication, expulsion and extermination.

"Just today, I read of a speech given by the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a human rights conference in Switzerland. What I heard Hitler say on radio in 1938, when I was nine years old, that Jews should be exterminated from the world, was the same as I read today. What's so upsetting is that, even though people today walked out from that speech, many sat and applauded after [Ahmadinejad] finished."

He stressed that this should be a warning to everyone. "The Germans took our freedoms away. How can we live in a world today where these choices could be taken away again!"

Born in Czechoslovakia, Eisen was 15 in 1944 when he and his family were uprooted from Moldava, then in Hungary, and taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Existing on about 300 calories a day, a skeletal Eisen toiled in labour gangs with his father and uncle, who were the only survivors from his immediate family. They were soon subjected to medical experiments and slain.

"This was a world no one can imagine unless you lived it. Their aim was to grind us away body and soul. But I had a tremendous will to go on. I didn't want to wind up in the gas chamber."

When liberated by the American 761st Black Battalion on May 6, 1945, Eisen's extended family of 70 people was nearly decimated. He lived in an orphanage for three years and arrived in Toronto in 1949, where he married, had children (he now has great-grandchildren) and retired in 1991 to become a volunteer Holocaust educator.

"As Jews, we must continue to say, 'You can't do this to us, or anyone, in our cities, in our country, in our time.'"

GHETTO UPRISING REMEMBERED: The 66th anniversary of the start of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was commemorated April 19 at Toronto's Winchevsky Centre. Lighting memorial candles were, from left, Barbara Blaser, Marsha Solnicki, Lisa Roy, Howard Kaplan, Solly Blaser and Sol Hermolin. Guest speaker was Bernice Eisenstein, author of the 2006 memoir I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors. The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir also performed. [Ron Csillag photo]

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Comment

We must take Ahmadinejad at his word

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The April 20 opening session of the UN-sponsored "Durban II" anti-racism conference in Geneva quickly became a farce, as Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took the podium for an anti-Jewish and anti-Israel tirade.

While the April 20 CBC and CTV evening newscasts gave the story only brief mention, Global TV News' Mideast correspondent Lauren McNabb had a full report, describing the scene during Ahmadinejad's speech: "As a stream of European delegates walked out in defiance, and a group of journalists booed, the Iranian leader simply smiled and he kept on talking, at one point, calling Israel a country created on the 'pretext' of Jewish suffering from World War II, this on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day."

The following day, newspapers across Canada gave the story front-page attention, and many also commented in editorials.

In "The farce of Durban II," the National Post noted: "Canada was the very first nation – aside from Israel – to announce it would be boycotting the conference, a decision that likely influenced the decision of other nations to not attend. It is hard to remember the last time that Canada exercised leadership on the world stage in such a decisive manner."

The Globe and Mail editorial, "Destined to degenerate," also commended Canada for having been "ahead of the curve" in refusing to "lend legitimacy to an event that was destined to turn into a circus."

In its editorial "Rebuffing Iran's Hatred" (April 22), the Toronto Star took a different line. While condemning Ahmadinejad for his "vile diatribe against Israel," it argued that Canada's position would have been more effectively conveyed from Geneva.

In a news piece for the Globe and Mail ("Iranian leader's 'hateful' tirade causes chaos at UN summit," April 21), Patrick Martin quoted Israeli analyst Barry Rubin on the wider significance of Ahmadinejad's aggressive stance. Rubin remarked: "There's little doubt that [Ahmadinejad] expects his remarks to play well at home, and to stir things up [in Arab states]."

However, Rubin noted, "Egypt and most other Arab states will see right through this speech and recognize it as a ploy to claim leadership in the Arab world. With the exception of Syria, Sudan, Qatar and Yemen, Arab states oppose this guy."

Martin added: "Just this past weekend [April 18], Egyptian media accused Iran of attempting to foster an uprising inside Egypt, by placing Hezbollah agents in the country" – a development that has gone largely unreported in western media.

According to some experts, Ahmadinejad and other leaders in Tehran are convinced the Islamic Republic of Iran can reclaim Persia's glory days and become a regional superpower, which is one reason it's so determined to pursue its nuclear program against all international opposition.

Iranian leaders are also equally convinced that the West is in irreversible decline. Although overlooked in media reports, during his speech in Geneva, Ahmadinejad said, "I also want to lay emphasis on the fact that western liberalism and capitalism has reached its end."

In an important New Yorker article detailing the "Zionist" conspiracy theories that define the mentality of Ahmadinejad and those around him, Jon Lee Anderson ("Can Iran Change?" April 13) left no doubt that Iran's leaders see the world very differently from liberal westerners. For example, Mohammed Ali Ramin, who "advises" Ahmadinejad on the Holocaust (they are both deniers), told Anderson: "Israel has been created to destroy not only Muslims but the Jews themselves." Ramin also insisted that the Jews carried out the 9/11 attacks and then blamed it on the Muslims in order to "have an excuse to attack some Muslim nations."

In his Geneva talk, Ahmadinejad insisted that "the Zionists" and their allies in the Bush administration planned the military assault on Iraq.

It's clear that the Iranian president and other top officials in the Islamic Republic say these things because they believe them profoundly. The lesson is that the West should take them at their word and plan accordingly.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

People often have to choose between paying bills or buying groceries

Continued from page 3

Stories bring the situation to life, he said. "Behind the numbers there are people who are trying to get through tough times."

Wolfman said that people don't understand the reality of the situation until it becomes personal. "They don't grasp the concept of how quickly things can turn around. The community is slow in coming to terms with its challenges but we cannot turn a blind eye. This is reality."

Simon Kalkstein, supervisor of JF&C's Gordon W. Wolfe branch at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, said the situation downtown hasn't changed drastically.

"The caseload is up, but not tremendously, and we are giving out more food vouchers."

He continues to see people "who are having trouble juggling. Do they buy groceries or pay their utility bills? It's 'Sophie's Choice.' Do they pay rent or hydro? All this is not new, but I am seeing a little more."

The problem, he said, is that it's not clear if the economy has hit bottom. "We're holding our own, but it's not a good time. Thank goodness for the Jewish community."

Cummings said that JF&C is particularly challenged, because hard times are befalling many clients at the same time as cutbacks are happening at the agency. "Where do we cut? If we reduce services [we would cause] the perfect storm.

"I cannot emphasize enough that not only are we keeping the same level of services, we are trying to increase them. Our mandate is to support the vulnerable and keep our families safe. We are being fiscally responsible, and we keep our budget lean."

There is no template for this situation, he said. "It is the first time in decades that so many people are affected.

"I feel passionate about telling our story. I want people to know what is going on, but I also want them to feel our optimism. There is help out there, and together we can get through this difficult time."

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada
Toronto Section

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Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto
בתי הספר העבריים בטורונטו

NOMINATION NOTICE

In accordance with Article VI of our Constitution, the Nominating Committee of Associated Hebrew Schools have prepared a list of ten (10) candidates for election to the Board of Directors for the ensuing term.

MARSHA FENWICK	RONIT HOLTZMAN	GABI WEISFELD
JODI GOTTESMAN	AURELIA OSTRO	ESTHER ZEPPIERI
DR. MARK GREENBERG	RENEE ROSENZWEIG	MARK ZIGLER
TAMMY HERMANT		

Additional nominees will be accepted in accordance with Article VI if properly received no later than 5:00 p.m. May 5, 2009 For further information please contact Arthur Landa, Executive Director, at (416) 494-7666, Ext. 200.

DATED April 20, 2009
TORONTO, Ontario

Sheldon Carr, Chair
Nominating Committee

Health & Lifestyles

Visiting Israel was a transformative experience

Life Coach Corner
Judy Siblin-Librach

When you stay open to new adventures, whole new worlds become available to you. Staying open, taking chances and stepping outside the box leads to great discoveries and a panoply of life-changing experiences that you would never have otherwise. Such was our transformative experience for 15 days this past April when we went to Israel as a family for the first time.

I had never been to Israel before, and so every moment was highly charged with an incredible intensity that's hard to describe. As we landed in Tel Aviv, I held hands with our two children, both of whom were on either side of me. I wept as we landed, when I saw all of the lush greenery. There was something exquisitely poignant about this beautiful land that we've worked so hard for, and my heart felt a surge of pride on seeing it for the first time.

When we arrived in the only three-year-old, beautiful Ben-Gurion Airport, I couldn't get over how clean and bright and stunning it was. I have to stop here to say that Israel is really, really extraordinarily beautiful.

After we arrived in Tel Aviv, we had falafel on the beach while overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and watching the most gorgeous sunset I'd ever seen. Israel is breathtaking – the mountains, the lush greenery, the palm trees and the sunsets in fuchsia pinks and tangerine oranges. It is the Caribbean; Hawaii; Santorini, Greece; and Banff all rolled into one and beyond. It really takes your breath away. Add to that the sights and sounds and smells of the colourful market that you walk through on your way to the Western Wall, or Kotel as it's called.

And that is another moment that was unparallelled: my husband and son praying together at the Kotel, and then my daughter and I praying in the women's section, and together putting in all of our notes. I couldn't get over the desert juxtaposed against the flowers and the perfumed scent of pink grapefruit and mango that we experienced on our rugged jeep ride through the Golan Heights.

Tel Aviv is the perfect place to begin a trip to Israel, and we drank up the beauty of the sites and sounds of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, the Old City. Jerusalem was a wonder of great beauty, incredible depth and meaning and rich, evocative detail. Our children absorbed so much, and I was blown away by my son's deep understanding of Jewish history and the incredible poem he wrote about Israel. Our daughter, only nine, wrote copious notes in her journal, and as we were driving, she made such comments as, "Mommy, this is my homeland. When I look outside at the mountains and how beautiful it is, I have tears in my eyes."

We climbed Masada in the morning and floated in the Dead Sea in the afternoon, soaking up the beauty of Eilat, where I had to ask myself, "Why go to Florida when you can go to Israel?" It's worth saving for and going on three fewer trips elsewhere to go to Israel at least once.

We had a great tour guide named Oded Anbar (www.israeltour4u.com), who was beyond wonderful, extremely knowledgeable and very funny. He made all the dots connect and helped to make our trip a spectacular experience.

Fleeting moments will forever remain burned in my memory: the Israeli soldier we met who was very handsome and only 21 years old. Asking him what it was like and thanking him for what he does for all of us; having a seder in Modi'in with my Auntie Dodo, Uncle Jerry and the children and sitting at the table for four hours, singing all the songs and knowing all the prayers; seeing Israel through our children's eyes and loving their wonder and amazement; sharing it with my sister, Jane, by exchanging text messages every day for the whole trip; the underground bullet factory in Rehovot and understanding just how much Israelis put their lives on the line for us every day; the lovely woman I met at the kibbutz we stayed in, and when I said, "I love your country," without missing a beat, she answered, "It's your country, too."

And this is the thing. It is our country. And going there has been one of the greatest experiences of our lives. And we will be back, because Israel is in our hearts and souls forever.

Take a chance in life and you've never been. Go, I promise you'll never regret it. And if you've been, go again. Take a chance in life and do that thing you've never done and wish you had. Israel is a perfect place to begin.

Shalom.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net.

'Anti-Semitic' play makes Canadian debut in Montreal

Please go to cjnews.com

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

MAZEL TOV

to
SHAUNA SILVER
&
ROBERT FONN
on their recent engagement!

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DES and ANITA FONN, Waterloo
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BEVERLEY LEVMAN and ANITA SILVER

Mazel tov Milton (Mickey) & Frimette Snow on your 60th anniversary, June 19. Family and friends wish you many more happy and healthy years together.

Mazel tov Jared & Amy on your engagement. Love, Michael & Erika Lipton, Allan & Caren Gottesman, Bubbie & Zadie Fenyves, Bubbie Lipton and Grandma Kushner.

Naomi & Jacky Vidal happily announce the birth of Maya Rose Margalit, born Feb. 13. Grandparents are Happy Iscove, Mel Iscove, Margot & Felix Vidal.

Mazel tov, Jordan Udaskin, on graduating from Richard Ivey School of Business. We wish you luck in England. Love, Molly, Max and Mom.

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What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
• Features • Heebonics
• Breaking News • Contests
• Past Issues and much more!

What's New deadlines: Monday, May 4, is the deadline for the May 14 issue and Monday, May 11, is the deadline for the May 21 issue. Calls are received on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

Thursday, April 30

SUFFERING

Rabbi Michael Skobac explores why bad things happen to good people with Bible text, Talmud, Maimonides and more. Thursdays to May 21. 9:45-11:00 a.m. at Ulpanat Orot School, 45 Canyon Ave. Register, 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

TODDLERS MUSIC

Shaar Shalom Synagogue offers a five-week toddlers program with **Randy Starr** for parents/grandparents and children with traditional Jewish songs. Begins today, 10-10:30 a.m. youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-889-4975

HADASSAH FUNDRAISER

Hadassah-WIZO chapter Lev Zahav hosts **Anthony Wolfe**, author of Get Out of My Life But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall. 7:30 p.m. at Holy Blossom Temple. $36, includes a dessert reception. Reserve, 416-630-8373.

HEBREW EDUCATION

Beth David Synagogue presents "Modern Hebrew Education: Not My Zaide's Cheder" with **Mark Smiley**. 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500

BEATING CANCER!

Beth Torah Congregation hosts "I'm Still Here… and So Is My Hair!" with **Marla Lukofsky**. 7:30 p.m. 416-782-4495

Saturday, May 2

PARSHAH DISCUSSION

Abe Birenbaum discusses the weekly portion, Acharei Mot/Kedoshim, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. 416-221-3433

RABBIS' ROLES

Beth Tzedec Congregation presents "Rabbis as Poets, Storytellers and Interpreters," with **David Stern**. At 8:45 a.m services, he speaks on "Rabbinic Reactions to Catastrophes." Lecture following services, "Fictions of the Rabbis." Minchah, 7:45 p.m. Lecture during seudah shlishit, "Modern Midrash: Re-Imagining the Akedah." 416-781-3511

Sunday, May 3

AUDITION FOR WOMEN

Westmount Shul holds auditions for women for its upcoming musical today. liora.oppenheimer@sympatico.ca

CRAFT AND GIFT SALES

BAYT Sisterhood holds a craft and gift sale.10 a.m.-5 p.m. Over 45 vendors selling unique gift items. Free. 905-731-0351 or lyndahg@rogers.com

Westmount Shul and Learning Centre presents a One of a Jewish Kind Show and Sale, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Original Judaica of all kinds and prices. Many of the artists will be in attendance. Free. 10 Disera Dr. #250 (WalMart Plaza in Thornhill). 905-881-shul or office@westmountshul.com

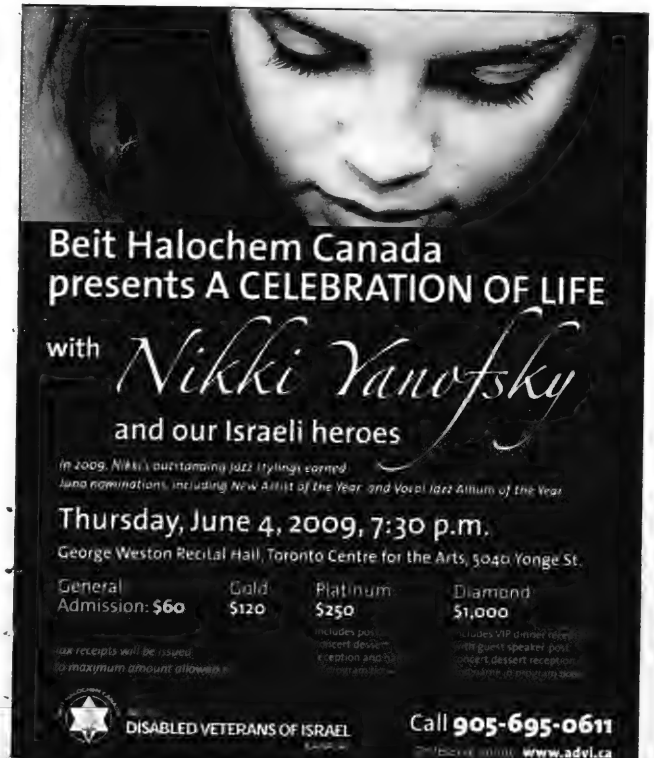
BENMERGUI SPEAKS

National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section, hosts a brunch in support of the Israel Family Counselling Association in Tel Aviv with **Ralph Benmergui** speaking on "My Israel: Your Israel." 11 a.m. at 4700 Bathurst St. $36. Tickets, 416-633 5100 or 905-737-0607.

HOLOCAUST HERO

Anna Porter speaks about her book, Kasztner's Train: The True Story of **Rezco Kasztner**, Unknown Hero of the Holocaust, a Hungarian Jew who had the chutzpah to bargain with the Nazis. 12:15 p.m. First Unitarian Congregation, 175 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-924-9654

Continued on page 25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What's New

Continued from page 24

JEWISH SECULARISM
Toronto Workman's Circle presents **Lawrence Bush**, editor of Jewish Currents, on "The Future of Jewish Secularism." 2 p.m. 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Guests $5. 416-787-2081

TEMPLE CD LAUNCH
Temple Har Zion hosts a concert celebrating the launch of its new CD, Hak'hel Et Ha'am: The Melodies of Temple Har Zion. 7 p.m.Tickets, $20, harzioncd@sympatico.ca or 416-490-9382

BIAS IN THE MEDIA
Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut with **Mike Fegelman**, of Honest Reporting, on "Bias in the Media." 7 p.m. 18 Wynford Dr. 416-385-3910

JEWS IN FILM & TV
Beth Isaiah Congregation, in Guelph hosts **Shlomo Schwartzberg** on "The Image and History of the Jew in Film and Television." 7:30 p.m. 47 Surrey St. 416-567-9756

COUPLES COOKING
Beth Sholom Synagogue invites couples to whip up Asian cuisine with **Lara Kats**. 7:30 p.m. $10, non-members $15. RSVP, 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholo.net.

Tuesday, May 5

LUNCH AND LEARN
William Thorsell on "The Dead Sea Scroll Exhibit in Toronto: Behind the Scenes." Lunch 12:15 p.m., learn 12:45 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $20. By reservation only. 416-221-3433, ext. 352

ALIYAH SEMINAR
The Jewish Agency for Israel hosts "The Toronto Spring Aliyah Seminar." Learn about jobs, housing, the medical system and other aliyah-related information. 6:30-10 p.m. at the BJC. RSVP, 416-633-4766 or www.aliyah.org.

THE JEWISH NAME
Rabbi Paysach Krohn speaks on "It's All in the Jewish Name," the wisdom, humour and significance of giving our children a Jewish name. 7:30 p.m. at Shaarei Tefillah Synagogue. $20.

EQUALITY DEFINED
Muslim liberal feminist journalist **Mona Eltahawy** speaks on "How Do You Spell Equality?" 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Darchei Noam. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.on.ca

CHUG HATANACH
Irving Matlow on Chapter 13 of the Book of Nehemiah. 8 p.m. at Beth David Congregation.

Wednesday, May 6

COURAGE IN MOTION
Interested in taking part in Beit Halochem's bike ride from Tel Aviv to Eilat beginning Oct. 15. Join information evening of wine and dessert. Location, info@advi.ca.

RITUAL SKILLS, PRACTICES
Rabbi Aron Flanzraich begins a series on key life-cycle and ritual skills and practices that are central to Judaism. Tonight-May 20, 7:30 p.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. 416-783-6103

THE JEWS IN TORONTO
Temple Har Zion Sisterhood presents **Ellen Scheinberg**, director of Ontario Jewish Archives, examining the history of the Toronto Jewish community. 8 p.m. $5, non-members $8. 905-889-2252

'BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS'
Chabad Markham offers a six-week course with **Rabbi Avraham Plotkin**, "Biblical Reflections," stories from Genesis. 8:30 p.m. www.chabadmarkham.org or 905-886-0420

Other News

MORGAN ON ISRAEL
Beth David Synagogue presents "Israel: Democracy and Human Rights," the social and legal challenge faced by Israeli society in the 21st century, with **Prof. Ed Morgan**. Thursday, May 7, 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500

PULPIT EXCHANGE
Adath Israel Congregation hosts a pulpit exchange Saturday, May 9, featuring **Rabbi Wayne Allen**, of Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Services begin at 9 a.m. with Rabbi Allen speaking on "The Strange Case of the Ambidextrous Priest." Luncheon follows services, $10, reservations required. 416-635-5340 or louise@adathisrael.com

MOTHER'S DAY CHAI TEA
Beth Tzedec Congregation celebrates all women with a traditional high tea and entertainment, Sunday, May 10, 3 p.m. $36. RSVP **Avital**, 416-781-3511.

CELEBRATE JEWISH MUSIC
Adath Israel Congregation presents "A Celebration of Jewish Music" with the Lachan Choir conducted by **Cantor Benjamin Maissner**, with cantors **Marshall Loomer, Eliezer Kirshblum and Eric Moses**. Sunday, May 10, 7:30 p.m. $10. 416-635-5340

WINTER IN ISRAEL
Spend two to seven weeks in Israel, from Jan. 10-March 1, with JNF's CAARI Program(Canadian American Active Retirees in Israel). The program includes community service and touring. Attend information session Wednesday, May 13, 2-4 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El. RSVP, **Anice**, 416-665-2482.

BBYO SPRING CONVENTION
Bnai Brith Youth holds its annual convention May 22-24 at Camp Northland. For info and registration, call **Kevin Goodman**, 416-398-2004 or kgoodman@bbyo.org.

SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM
The Baycrest Summer Youth Program is recruiting young people 13 to 24 with interpersonal and communication skills. Volunteers will engage with Baycrest clients and staff assisting in programs and share their skills and interests. Volunteers with musical ability and/or who speak a second language are needed. Contact 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 or alefkovitz@baycrest.org.

JF&CS GROUPS
Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com

All programs at the Lipa Green Building.

Parenting Speaker Series: Raising Children with Resilience and Self-Esteem, a workshop for parents of school-age children. Tuesday, May 5, 7-9 p.m. Free, registration required.

Looking Ahead: Six-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals who are dealing with the initial feelings of loss, anger, loneliness and who want to let go of the past and move forward. Begins Wednesday, May 6, 7-9 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger For Women: Six session group for women who want to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non- aggressive way. Thursday, May 7, 7:30-9 p.m.

For Men After Divorce: A six-week group for men experiencing separation or divorce. Discuss how to let go of your grief over the loss of your relationship and how to become an effective single parent. Thursday, May 7, 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Living With Teens: Six sessions on parenting adolescents without losing your cool – on setting limits, letting go, parents' rights and responsibilities, on keeping the lines of communication open and on the pressures of drugs, alcohol and sexuality. Thursday, May 7, 7:30-9 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group screens An Afternoon with **Pavarotti** in Concert filmed in Beijing. Thursday, April 30, 2-4 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Sunday dance, May 3; Seniors walking group, Tuesday and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. Other programs, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC presents **Michael Mandel** on "The Golden Age of Yiddish Radio in Canada: **Max Mandel**'s The Jewish Hour." Thursday, May 7, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org

Hop, Stitch and Jump, a performance in support of children affected by poverty and AIDS, April 30, 7:30 p.m. $25. Ext. 0.

A music talk with **Jordan Klapman**: "Rock 'n' Roll Jews: The Mega Producers: **Phil Spector** and **Don Kirshner**." Sunday, May, 3, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. music@mnjcc.org or ext. 133

"What Makes Jewish Theatre Jewish?" a panel discussion with **David Eisner**, **Hannah Moscovitch** and **Julie Tepperman** grappling with questions about professional, personal and political choices and their consequences. Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m. Free. esthera@mnjcc.org or ext. 606

Te-Amim Music Theatre presents Ten Green Bottles, From Vienna to Shanghai: A Journey of Fear and Hope, a family face of persecution. Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m. and Sunday, May, 24, 2 p.m. Ext. 0

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Information session May 4, 8 p.m., on Women's Inward Bound Israel Trip led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**, Nov. 15-23. Ext 472

Computer workshops for those 55+: Photo Sharing – learn how to share photos online and create online albums, Thursday, May 7, 9 a.m.-noon. $15. Instant Messaging – learn to use MSN, Skype, AOL and more, Thursday, April 30, 9 a.m.-noon, or Thursday, May 14, 9 a.m-noon. $15. Register, ext. 235.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Moskovits, Debby	April 7/09	Private
Kravets, Leonid	April 9/09	37 Bob O'Link Ave
Bearg, Sidney	April 9/09	355 St. Clair Ave. W
Finkelstein, Sam Shlomo	April 9/09	39 Stonedene Blvd
Sarfati, Helene	April 10/09	541 Finch Ave. W.
Ritter, Deborah	April 11/09	18 Maques Lane
Yaldor, Josef	April 11/09	Private
Lerman, Sylvia	April 11/09	Private
Silver, Nettie Naomi	April 10/09	55 Ameer Ave
Miles, Shirley	April 12/09	Private
Silver, Alek	April 13/09	
Shnayder, Riva	April 13/09	170 Red Maple Rd

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MEIR SCHAPIRA ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 3rd
11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Community Section 5
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SARA ROTSZTAIN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 3rd
10:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Cemetery
10 Dewlane Dr.
Zaglembier Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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On Campus

Seated from left are Egyptian-born George Sawa and Cantor Aaron Bensoussan, performing at a recent YONA concert at York University. The music inspired audience members to join hands and dance.

[Sheri Shefa photo]

YONA unites Jews, Muslims

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Your Outreach Network Of The Arts (YONA) founder Marcel Cohen hopes that music will help build bridges between different religious groups on university campuses.

YONA is an organization that aims to bring people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds – particularly Jews, Muslims and Christians – together in non-partisan environments.

Cohen, a 40-year-old special education teacher at Netivot HaTorah Day School, said that it may seem as if the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activity on university campuses is a new phenomenon, but he remembers similar activity from anti-Israel student groups when he was a University of Toronto student from 1987 to 1992.

In response to the hostility he felt as a pro-Israel Jewish student, he and a friend started a group called the Jewish Student Council.

Then Cohen and Jewish students at smaller campuses in Toronto without organized Jewish campus groups planned apolitical, bridge-building programming.

He said the positive programming left the anti-Israel groups with nothing to protest or complain about.

"That was the genius about it," Cohen said, adding that his positive programs made the anti-Israel programming look even more aggressive by comparison.

"In juxtaposition to them only saying horrible things about Israel, I didn't say anything bad against them. That was not lost on student government and even the editorial in the campus newspapers."

Once Cohen graduated from university, he decided to make aliyah. While living in Israel, he reached out to Israeli government officials to convince them of the need to develop positive campus programming.

"I approached the consulate here, but they weren't interested. I approached the Israeli government… but they were too busy with the peace process or the intifadah," he said.

"When I came back to Toronto in 2003, I kept approaching the consulate. Now, this year, when I approached them again – you can see that I'm very stubborn – they not only were open to the idea, but they said this is the most important thing."

Earlier this month, on April 6, Cohen organized a concert at York University that featured performances from Egyptian-born George Dimitri Sawa, a master of the qanun, a string instrument; Suzanne Meyers Sawa, his wife, who holds a master's degrees in musicology from U of T; Cantor Aviva Chernick, a singer of Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, Yiddish and English songs, and Moroccan-born Cantor Aaron Bensoussan, who sang and played the guitar.

At one point during the performance, when Sawa and Bensoussan shared the stage to perform Hineh Ma Tov, members of the audience clapped along with the beat and linked hands while they danced around the stage.

He said that holding the event at York "was 100 per cent intentional. That was the place that I felt I needed to go to. It's calling for me. It's got my name all over it. It is a place that needs healing."

Cohen said he's been organizing concerts since 2004. He said he was inspired by the riot at Concordia University in 2002 that kept the current Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, from delivering a speech on campus.

Following that, when Concordia denied a request from Hillel to bring former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak to speak at the school for fear that a repeat of the Netanyahu incident would occur, he contacted Hillel and worked together to bring a cultural, rather than political, message to campus.

He said that they brought an Israeli band, Shemesh Ve Kochavim, to play Jewish and Israeli music.

Cohen said both Jews and non-Jews responded to the event.

"This concept is starting to gather a lot of steam," he said, adding that Christians and Muslims help him organize events.

Cohen said that one of the most important aspects of YONA is that the programming is free.

"I discovered that if you charge [a cover fee], you won't get anybody but those who support Israel. If you don't charge, it is accessible to everyone and the curious people will come," he said.

"Muslims and Arabs… now have a safe forum to explore Jews and Israel… Trying to out-hate them will never work."

But to be able to present the programs free of charge, Cohen relies on donations from private donors as well as help from organizations to work out the logistics.

He said when it comes to the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic atmosphere on some campuses, "a lot of people are standing around in horror and they don't know what to do. This is the rallying point… By interacting with each other in these positive places… relationships will grow from that."

His ultimate goal, Cohen said, is for non-Jews to see Israel for its diversity, and complexity.

"The delegitimization [of Israel] is all about generalizations, oversimplifications and really a lot of misinformation. Just by seeing what an Israeli looks like, at this point, just by putting a human face on an Israeli does a world of [difference]."

On Campus

Jewish, non-Jewish biz students visit Israel

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The organizers of a business-themed trip to Israel for Jewish and non-Jewish university students are thrilled that the 10-day tour was able to present a side of Israel that's seldom seen on the news.

Twenty students from McGill University's Desautels Faculty of Management and 20 students from University of Western Ontario's Ivey School of Business travelled to Israel during reading week from Feb. 19 to March 1 to take part in programming that included a meeting with Dana Azrieli, head of the Azrieli Group of Companies, as well as a visit to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and tours of Jerusalem, the Dead Sea and the Golan Heights.

The Canada-Israel Committee, as well as student organizers from Desautels – Zack Belzberg, Samuel Langleben and Daniel Shiner – and from Ivey – Mara Bannack, Benjamin Harris, Josh Zagdansky and Michael Katchen – helped put together the tour.

"We had a goal of showing non-Jews the business side of Israel, and the eventual goal is to have them invest in Israel when they grow up and hopefully they'll be influential people who will have a new take on Israel," said Belzberg, 21.

The trip, sponsored by the Schwartz Reisman Foundation, served as the main component of an official full-credit management course at Desautels taught by Prof. Karl Moore, called Perspectives on National Competitiveness.

Although the trip was not part of an accredited course at Ivey, Deborah Compeau, an associate professor and the director of Ivey's MBA program, presented her students with a strategic problem involving Super-Pharm, the Israeli branch of Canada's Shoppers Drug Mart. The students who prepared a case study on the topic received partial course credit.

"We studied Israel as an increasingly important player in the world market, and [Desautels] students were required to write an exam and a 12-page reflection paper based on the trip and make presentations," Belzberg said.

Although the focus of the trip was on Israel's economy, organizers also wanted to give students historical, political and cultural perspectives on the country.

"We went to the separation barrier and met with someone from Fatah, and it was interesting to see the differences in the political awareness of the McGill students and the Ivey students," Belzberg said.

The tour also visited Yad Vashem, and Belzberg said that after the visit, some students said that they had never realized before how inappropriate it is to make comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany or South Africa under apartheid.

"We went [to Israel] right after the election, right after the Gaza war, and the day we got back to school was the first day of [Israeli] Apartheid Week. We had non-Jewish students [from the trip] who were actually angry about the existence of apartheid week when they never would have cared before," he said.

"They now understand that there are two perspectives, and they are not getting the full story."

Of the 40 participants, only 13 were Jewish. Belzberg said the students' backgrounds ranged from Saudi Arabian to French-Canadian.

"We had a very diverse group... and seeing them, the first night, dancing at the [Western] Wall – six very visibly non-Jewish people – one Indian kid, a couple of Muslim kids – wearing those paper kippahs, getting in a big circle with these Chassidim on a Friday night at the Wall – it was just the most amazing moment."

Osama Siddiqui, an Ivey student and a participant on the tour, said he was touched by the hospitality and generosity of the people they visited.

"I also found Israeli society to be very innovative, and I was inspired by young Israelis who were working to harness the power of science and technology to change the world," Siddiqui said.

Tejaswinee Jhunjhunwala, a participant from Desautels, said that before she travelled to Israel, all she knew about the Jewish state was what she saw on the news.

"Dealing with history, politics, economics and business all at one time and combining all of these to understand the national competitiveness of the country and relating it back not only to Canada, but also India, my home country, was dually beneficial in broadening my perspective," Jhunjhunwala said.

"There was a takeaway from every moment of that trip that I feel will carry with me much longer than any theory I could learn in a classroom setting."

Belzberg said that he and the organizers wanted to ensure that the participants didn't feel like they were a part of the advocacy machine.

"We showed them both sides and let them decide... When they made their presentations when they came back, their focus was on Israeli high tech and Israel as a leader. The fact that they saw Israel as an important player in the economy and global trade was an inspiring thing for us," he said.

"Most of the Israel talk on campus has been negative... The Jewish community should appreciate the fact that something is happening that is focused on tomorrow's business leaders."

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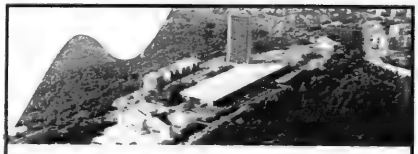
THE 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF MEMBERS* of
Canadian Friends of Haifa University
will be held at
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Monday, May 11,2009 - 7 pm
* Members are directors of, and those who made a donation to, Canadian Friends of Haifa University, during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2008.
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Critical Issues in Israel Today:
Internal and International Political Realities

Speaker:
Colette Avital
Knesset Member, 1999-2009
Labor-Meimad
Wednesday, May 6, 2009
Time: 7:30 PM
Temple Sinai
210 Wilson Ave.
Toronto, ON

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From left, MK Shai Hermesh, Kadima, and Robert Ilatov, Israel Beitenu, receiving gift from First Nations delegation. [Rhonda Spivak photo]

MK addresses First Nations, Christian supporters of Israel

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Israel's new government won't be pressured to follow in the footsteps of the former Kadima-led coalition, an Israeli MK who is part of the new administration said here last week.

"The American government is trying to pressure Israel into agreeing to the policies of the previous Israeli government, but it will have to… understand that the Israeli people had a democratic election, and elected a different government," Robert Ilatov of the Israel Beitenu party told an April 22 audience of some 250 Christians and 50 Jews at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue.

"We expect other countries to support the decision of our democratically elected new government," Ilatov said, and he thanked Canada, "for being one of our closest friends today."

Ilatov and fellow MK Shai Hermish, of Kadima, received a warm welcome at the event from a large First Nations delegation that including Ron Evans, grand chief of Manitoba, and Tagak Curly, an MLA from Nunavut. Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz and provincial MLA Sharon Blady also gave greetings at the event sponsored by a number of Christian groups under the banner the "Canada-Israel Friendship Tour."

The tour also made stops last week in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Evans said that both the nation of Israel and Canada's First Nations "have come under attack" and "we've both endured oppression," but "nevertheless we are still here."

Josh Reinstein, director of the Knesset's Christian Allies Caucus, told the crowd that the Knesset decided to form the caucus five years ago to reach out to Christian supporters of Israel.

In an interview after the event, Ilatov said that "the Annapolis process which the previous Kadima-led government agreed to was not one which had been ratified by the Israeli Knesset… We [Israel Beitenu] left the [previous Kadima-led] government because we didn't agree with Annapolis, and it's because of this that Israel went to elections and elected a different government… we now ask [U.S. President Barack] Obama to recognize that the people of Israel voted against the declaration made at Annapolis."

Ilatov, a second-term MK who lives in Netanya and chairs the Knesset's economic affairs committee, added that "even though we [Israel Beitenu] voted against the [internationally sponsored] 'road map' [peace plan], we are committed to it because it was ratified by the Israeli government… Israel has proven that when we sign a deal, we've stood by it."

"Everyone knows that if Israel left the West Bank it would become a Hamas state," Ilatov said, adding that he doesn't foresee any progress on peace talks until the Palestinians "accept a Jewish state and start to fight terror."

He said that right now he doesn't think "there is a [Palestinian] partner."

Ilatov also stressed that Israel Beitenu "is a pragmatic party" and has recognized the concept "of two states for two peoples," but it has also called for "transferring heavily Arab populated villages of pre-67 Israel," such as Um al Fahm, to a future Palestinian state in exchange for Israel retaining Jewish areas in the West Bank.

As for Iran, Ilatov said that "Israel can strike Iran militarily, [but] the question would be what would be afterward."

He added that "Iran is not just a problem for Israel, but for [others in] the Muslim world… We've seen Iran is a problem for Egypt… The fact that it has developed missiles that can reach 5,000 kilometres means it can reach Moscow, Rome, Spain… Its purpose is to take over the world with radical Islam… We have a strategic dialogue with the United States and it's clear that any kind of proposed military action would have to be considered at that level."

Yoga marathon planned

About 1,000 yoga enthusiasts are expected to take part in Mount Sinai Hospital Auxiliary's Yoga in Motion event, a 4-1/2-hour marathon to raise $500,000 for breast cancer research at the hospital's Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute.

The inaugural event, to be held at The Hangar at Downsview Park on May 3, is designed for people at all skill levels – classes are led by yoga instructors – and will also feature inspirational speakers, live entertainment, a food emporium and vendor marketplace, silent auction and prizes.

Sandy Braz, 28, who is co-chairing the event along with Vanessa Ferrone, said that yoga can empower and energize cancer patients and survivors.

"I wanted to bring yoga and breast cancer together in an event that would create connections among participants, and encourage all women to be proactive in their breast health while raising money for leading breast cancer research," said Braz, whose mother is a breast cancer survivor.

Participants are asked to raise at least $500 each, and support tools are provided on the Yoga in Motion website, www.yogainmotion.ca. Fees are $25 per person.

Coast to Coast

Camping retailer faces fire over proposed Israel boycott

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) was in full crisis-management mode last week after reports that some of its members want it to boycott Israeli-made products and will table a motion to that end at its annual general meeting this week in Vancouver.

The co-operative has sourced seamless underwear and hydration systems for backpacks from Israel for the past two years.

"This all began two months ago when we first started getting e-mails from members of a group called BC Teachers for Peace and Global Education [PAGE] asking us to boycott Israel," said David Labistour, CEO of MEC. "It was a fairly small group and didn't seem to have much momentum, so we didn't take it seriously. Then small groups of people started showing up outside our stores in various cities and distributing pamphlets."

On April 8, members of PAGE met with representatives of the Vancouver-based MEC for an exchange that was "polite, not antagonistic," Labistour said.

"We told them why and how we do things and why we would never boycott Israel. They told us their position, which was, essentially, to boycott Israel. They also told us they would propose a resolution to do so at the next annual general meeting of MEC members on Thursday, April 30."

MEC, which calls itself "Canada's leading supplier of quality outdoor gear, clothing and camping equipment," has outlets in Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec and Halifax.

"We just don't think [Mountain Equipment Co-op] should be doing business with Israel until it changes its behaviour," Patrik Parkes, a PAGE spokesperson told Canwest News. "Many of us are MEC members, and because MEC promotes itself as an ethical company, we believe their actions need to reflect that."

Labistour stressed that the proposed resolution is not part of an agenda driven by MEC, but rather, comes from a small minority of its three million members.

Southam estimates there are no more than 50 MEC members who have voiced support for a boycott of Israeli products, and Labistour anticipated that a boycott resolution would be defeated.

"But even if it isn't, it's an ordinary resolution, which means it's not binding," he explained. "If the resolution passes, the nine members of the board will take it under consideration."

There are usually between 120 and 180 MEC members present at the AGM, but Labistour predicted that the turnout for this week's meeting, to be held at Simon Fraser University's Segal School of Business, will be much larger.

"If people are opposed to the resolution, they should get out and vote," he said.

Since the proposed boycott surfaced in news reports last week, MEC's phones have been ringing incessantly, Labistour said. "It's become huge. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, for three days I've done nothing but answer phone calls and e-mails."

Tim Southam, public affairs manager for the company, said news reports have given the impression that MEC is calling for a boycott of Israeli products.

"That's nonsensical," he said. "We source from Israel, and we would not call for a boycott of our own products, manufactured in that country under our name. What's disconcerting to us is that some people are under the assumption that MEC is endorsing this resolution, and that's not the case."

In a letter to Labistour, Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, suggested: "Much of the anti-Israel rhetoric is based on misinformation and ignorance."

In an e-mail circulated last week, Canadian Jewish Congress encouraged Vancouverites who are members of MEC to attend the meeting and defeat any proposed motion.

"It is important to note that the Mountain Equipment Co-op is not anti-Israel or anti-Jewish," the e-mail stated.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Risky business: from lawyer to entrepreneur

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

The current economic climate has been called a lot of things, but one thing it's rarely referred to is a time of opportunity.

But that's how 28-year-old budding entrepreneur Michael Hershfield looks at it. He might not have expected the recession when he and his partner came up with the idea for a ticket reselling website more than a year ago, but with the launch of LiveStub.com just last August, he's in for the long haul.

Born and raised in Vancouver, Hershfield's initial career path was much like many of his peers. He entered law school at the University of British Columbia only a few months after getting his bachelor's degree at McGill University. After law school, he relocated to Toronto, where he began articling at a law firm.

Hershfield soon realized that law was not for him.

"I needed something that was a little more exciting and had a bit of a creative side," he says.

"I was looking for the next new opportunity, the next great risk to take."

Having grown up with a mother who is a ballerina and who runs a dance studio in her basement, entertainment seemed like the right move.

"It's in my genes," he says with a laugh.

So, what's LiveStub all about, anyway? A ticket reselling marketplace, LiveStub eliminates the middleperson – and middleperson service charges.

"Think Craigslist, but strictly for tickets," says Hershfield.

With companies such as Ticketmaster controlling the majority of the ticketing pie, consumers aren't left with much of a choice as to what they pay for tickets, since tickets are often pre-offered to other reselling companies before they even reach the primary market.

"There was a lot of funny business going on, and there's no reason why everything should be veiled," Hershfield says.

Ticketmaster has been in the news lately because of consumer complaints that the ticketing conglomerate redirects online buyers to a subsidiary it owns called TicketsNow, where tickets are sold for higher prices.

Large brokers and PDF ticket holders can sell their tickets directly to buyers through LiveStub.com. LiveStub adds a fee of up to five per cent to the seller's listed price for facilitating the transaction, with no fee to the buyer. "Compare [this] to our competitors that take 10 to 15 per cent from the buyer and 10 per cent from the seller," Hershfield says.

Hershfield's cousin, who lives in New York, introduced him to his business partner, Levi Bergovoy, a Chicago-based businessman. Bergovoy had the idea for LiveStub. It seemed like "exactly the right risk to take," Hershfield says.

"We believe consumers need to have knowledge, because the more knowledge they have, the better off they are."

Through historical data and graphs on the LiveStub.com, the consumer can learn why a particular ticket is priced the way it is.

What LiveStub promises to do is to usher some much-needed competition into the marketplace, Hershfield says.

"We want to make it easier on the fans – their tickets are like the entrance to the most intimate relationship they can have with their favourite bands."

In the few months since its launch, LiveStub has been considered one of the forerunners in the race to shift away from a Ticketmaster monopoly and as such, has grabbed the attention of the international media, including CNBC, USA Today, Associated Press and ESPN Radio.

"It's surreal that I was a law student not too long ago, and now I'm on the homepage of the Billboard website," Hershfield says.

"The only place that I got to pontificate was at the kitchen table, so [now] it's cool that people ask my opinion. But we're still a small little pisher. The awareness of how quickly the attention can go is one I'm very conscious of."

In keeping with trends in communications technology, it's not surprising that the two business partners, Hershfield and Bergovoy, didn't meet in their first year of working together.

"We were constantly in contact over Skype, Facebook and BlackBerry," Hershfield says.

When the two finally did meet, they felt like old friends and have continued as such throughout their partnership.

"I drove into Chicago for Levi's son's bris last weekend – it was as if we hadn't seen each other in months, although we talk every day," Hershfield says.

Hershfield, who was a volunteer for One Family Fund, an organization that assists victims of terror, when he was studying in Israel at Tel Aviv University, says he wants to engage as much as he can in his professional life "the things that are important to me.

"The dream is that there will be a LiveStub.co.il some day."

Michael Hershfield, pictured above as a guest on the Business News Network, hopes to provide people with an alternative to Ticketmaster.

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Abbas won't recognize Israel as a Jewish state

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JERUSALEM — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas dismissed on Monday calls by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, an issue emerging as a main obstacle to peacemaking.

"I do not accept it," Abbas said. "It is not my job to give a description of the state. Name yourself the Hebrew Socialist Republic – it is none of my business."

Netanyahu said in a statement last week it would be impossible to make progress on the diplomatic track and reach a peace agreement without Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state.

But the prime minister said he had not made such recognition a precondition for opening peace negotiations. Netanyahu has shied away from endorsing the creation of a Palestinian state, a main goal of U.S.-backed peace talks that are currently frozen.

Palestinians fear recognition of Israel as a Jewish state could help Israeli leaders resist any return of Palestinian refugees.

Those concerns were heightened five years ago after then-U.S. president George W. Bush described Israel as a Jewish state in a letter to its prime minister at the time, Ariel Sharon, and suggested Palestinian refugees be settled in a future Palestine rather than in Israel.

Netanyahu and Abbas plan to make separate visits to Washington next month for their first meetings with Barack Obama since he became president in January.

Obama's administration has said it would vigorously pursue Palestinian statehood, setting the stage for possible conflict with Netanyahu.

Netanyahu has pledged to hold talks with the Palestinians on economic, security and diplomatic issues. Palestinian leaders have rejected any notion of an "economic peace" and said talks with Israel could not resume until he committed to statehood.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas

"If you do not want the two-state solution, then what do you accept?" Abbas asked in his speech.

"We want a state on the 1967 borders, not a centimetre more, not a centimetre less," he said, referring to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, areas that Israel captured in the Six Day War of that year.

Netanyahu, who is formulating a Middle East policy plan for presentation to Obama, has said any Palestinian entity must have limited powers of sovereignty and not pose a danger to Israel's security.

Pirates thwarted by Israeli security

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JERUSALEM — An Italian cruise ship with 1,500 people on board fended off a pirate attack far off the coast of Somalia when its Israeli private security forces exchanged fire with the bandits and drove them away, the commander said Sunday.

Ciro Pinto told Italian state radio that six men in a small white boat approached the Msc Melody and opened fire with automatic weapons Saturday night, but retreated after the Israeli security officers aboard the cruise ship returned fire.

Pinto said pistols were handed out to security staff and they opened fire on the pirates when they tried to clamber up the sides of the ship.

"It felt like we were in war," Pinto said.

"They tried to put up a ladder with hooks. They were climbing up, so we reacted. We started firing. When they saw us firing – we even sprayed them with water with the firehose – they gave up and went off," Pinto said.

The pirates followed the Melody for another 20 minutes, firing at it all the while, Pinto said.

"The passengers meanwhile were inside the cabin. There are no injuries. Only two people with scrapes," the captain said. "Someone slipped, fell. Just a few light scrapes."

Domenico Pellegrino, head of the Italian cruise line, said Msc hired the Israelis because they were the best-trained security agents, the ANSA news agency reported.

Cruise line security work is a popular job for young Israelis who have recently been discharged from mandatory army service, as it gives them a chance to save money and travel.

Civilian shipping and passenger ships have generally avoided arming crew members or hiring armed security for reasons of safety, liability and compliance with the rules of the different countries where they dock.

Saturday's exchange of fire was one of the first reported between pirates and a non-military ship. International military forces have battled pirates, with U.S. Navy snipers killing three that held an American captain hostage in one of the highest-profile incidents.

The Spanish warship SPS Marques de Ensenada was meeting up with the liner to escort it through the pirate-infested northern Gulf of Aden, the Maritime Security Centre said.

The cruise ship was headed as scheduled to the Jordanian port of Aqaba. The Melody was on a 22-day cruise from Durban, South Africa, to Genoa, Italy.

Pirates have attacked more than 100 ships off the Somali coast over the last year, reaping an estimated $1 million in ransom for each successful hijacking, analysts say.

Another Italian-owned vessel remains in the hands of pirates. The Italian-flagged tugboat Buccaneer was seized off Somalia on April 11 with 16 crew members aboard.

On Saturday, Italy's foreign ministry dispatched a special envoy, Margherita Boniver, to Somalia to try to win the release of the tug and crew. In a statement, the ministry also denied reports by relatives of the crew that an ultimatum had been issued by the pirates.

Israel's population is 7.4 million, 75.5% Jewish

By MOTTI BASSOK

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JERUSALEM — On the eve of the 61st anniversary of its founding, the population of Israel stands at 7,411,000, up from 7,282,000 last year.

According to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics on Monday, the Jewish population of Israel stands at 5,593,000, or 76 per cent of the general population.

The Arab population is listed at 1,498,000, or 20 per cent of the general population.

Foreign residents of Israel and their children who are not citizens make up 4.3 per cent of the country's population.

Some 154,000 new babies were born in Israel and 12,000 people immigrated to the country over the past year.

Native Israelis, at least half of them second generation, constitute 70 per cent of the country's population, a sharp increase from 1948, in which native Israelis constituted 35 per cent of the country's population.

While in 1948 Tel Aviv, with a population of 248,000, was Israel's sole city, in modern day Israel there are 14 cities, each with over 100,000 residents, and five of them – Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Rishon Letzion and Ashdod – have populations of more than 200,000. Jerusalem is Israel's largest city in terms of population and territory, although the Tel Aviv metropolitan area has the largest number of people in the country.

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Israel Briefs

War crimes alleged

A group of lawyers in Norway has accused 10 Israeli officials, including Ehud Olmert, of war crimes in Gaza. The six lawyers filed a complaint with Norway's chief prosecutor under the country's new universal jurisdiction law, which allows lawyers to file charges against foreigners, including leaders of other countries, for crimes against humanity and war crimes anywhere in the world, according to reports. Along with Olmert, the former prime minister, ex-foreign minister Tzipi Livni, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and seven army officers were accused of responsibility for "massive terror attacks primarily directed at Gaza's population" during Israel's incursion there, Associated Press reported. The attorneys represent three Norwegians of Palestinian origin and 20 families who lost family members or property during the three-week Gaza operation.

Leonard Cohen lobbied

Pro-Palestinian professors from the U.K. last week urged Leonard Cohen to boycott Israel and cancel his plans to perform there this year. "You will perform for a public that by a very large majority had no qualms about its military forces' onslaught [in Gaza in December, and January].You will perform in a state whose propaganda services will extract every ounce of mileage from your presence. They will use it to whitewash their war crimes," wrote Haim Bresheeth, Mike Cushman, Hilary Rose and Jonathan Rosenhead, professors in the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine. In the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Leonard Cohen flew to Israel to perform before reserves and regular soldiers fighting in the Sinai desert.

Rights group raps Hamas

Hamas systematically killed and tortured its opponents, Human Rights Watch reported. The watchdog reported last week that the terror group had killed 32 opponents and maimed dozens of others during and after its recent war with Israel in Gaza. "The spate of attacks began during Israel's military operation, from Dec. 27, 2008 to Jan. 18, 2009, including the summary execution of 18 men in Gaza, most of them suspected collaborators with Israel," the report said. "It has continued in the three months since, with 14 more killings, at least four of them of people in detention." Human Rights Watch rejected Hamas' explanations that such crimes were exceptions and that some of those responsible faced charges.

Israelis want to join EU

A majority of Israelis would like to see their country join the European Union, a new survey says. The 69 per cent of Israelis who want to see Israel join the EU includes 76 per cent of Jews and 40 per cent of Arabs. In addition, 60 per cent of Israelis view the EU favourably, according to the poll conducted by the Keevon Research firm on behalf of the Israel office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung organization. Some 54 per cent of Israelis also support joining NATO, as well as having NATO troops in Gaza and the West Bank in a peacekeeping capacity. Of that percentage, 62 per cent of Jewish Israelis and 24 per cent of Arab Israelis support NATO troops.

Arab village Shoah museum

A museum devoted to the Holocaust was dedicated in an Arab village. The museum opened on Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah in Na'alin, which is better known for weekly protests of the route of Israel's security fence that divides the village in two. It's located in an apartment near where an 11-year-old Palestinian boy was killed last year during a fence protest, Ynetnews reported. The museum features pictures and educational material in Arabic. "If leaders on both sides know and remember what Hitler did, maybe we'll have peace," Ibrahim Amira, a Na'alin resident and a leader of the anti-fence protests told Ynet.

– JTA and Ha'aretz

The process was 'beyond the pale'

Continued from page 1

Poilievre recalled the UN's founding principles and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights as "a model for all nations to strive toward" then proceeded to lament the nature of the UN's Durban Review Conference, known as Durban II, saying the world organization's event had "degenerated into a soapbox for those who would demonize the democratic State of Israel."

Saying the UN's Durban process had "fallen so short" of being useful as a forum for discussing racism that it was now "beyond the pale," Poilievre proudly defended Canada's January 2008 decision not to attend.

"My presence here today, at the real anti-racism conference, is to say to you and the world that Canada will never stop the fight against racism."

Cotler's address included a discussion of ways to uncover the neglected voices of victims and a critique of state-sanctioned cultures of hate in many nations today. He said that leaders such as Ahmadinejad belonged "at the docket of the accused, not at the podium of the UN."

He added: "The first and enduring lesson of the Holocaust and the genocides that followed, from Srebrenica to Rwanda, is that they occurred not only because of the machinery of death, but because of the state-sanctioned incitement to hate. It is this teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other. This is where it all begins.

"The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers, it began with words. These… are the chilling facts of history… the catastrophic effects of racism."

The opening session of the counter-conference was moderated by Harold Tanner of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and featured Vatican adviser Father Patrick Desbois, who criticized the UN as "a principal of irresponsibility that engages in scapegoating on behalf of perpetrators so that they themselves are not accused of intolerance."

Cotler cautioned listeners about a UN Human Rights Council that has adopted 32 resolutions since 2006 – 26 of which singled out Israel, and none of which made any mention of human rights abuses in Iran or Sudan's Darfur region.

Later, this point was further articulated by Lévy, who asked the audience: "What happens if you are neither Israeli nor Palestinian? If you don't fall into these categories you simply don't exist. You have no voice in history. That is the scandal of Durban I and Durban II."

Contrary to the UN-sponsored main conference, the counter-conference gave voices to those such as Gibriel Hamid, president of the Darfur Peace and Development Centre, and Ester Mujawayo, who lost her husband and parents in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and escaped to Switzerland to work as a psychologist with survivors of the massacre.

Mujawayo's address moved many in her audience to tears as she recounted her struggle to survive and rebuild a life for her three daughters.

Other speakers at the conference included former Miss Canada Nazanin Afshin Jam, an Iranian-Canadian who spoke of her family's immigration from Iran and of the heart-wrenching cases she witnesses in her work as president of the international advocacy group Stop Child Executions.

Nazanin said she is currently advocating for Delara Derabi, 17, who was convicted of a crime she says she did not commit, and who is currently on death row in Iran, which is in violation of an International Covenant prohibiting the execution of children for crimes committed under the age of 18.

Durban II's final declaration was ratified a full three days prior to the conclusion of the conference and included the item that prompted Israel and half a dozen other countries to boycott the meeting: a reaffirmation of the 2001 Durban document, which highlighted the plight of the Palestinians in a section dedicated to "victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

Last week, the UN also revoked the credentials of a number of Jewish activists who disrupted Ahmadinejad's speech on the first day of the Durban Review Conference.

Of the 46 badges that were pulled for disruptive behaviour, the vast majority were from individuals accredited through Jewish organizations. Notably, the French Union of Jewish Students lost 21 badges.

Credentials were stripped as well from four members of the European Union of Jewish Students and one B'nai Brith member. Between them, French and European Jewish student groups had 370 members accredited, amounting to more than one-third of all the NGO activists at the conference.

Two members of an Iranian group were expelled for distributing "offensive materials" and an Israeli journalist was sent out for "screaming racist comments" from the gallery, according to UN spokesperson Rupert Colville.

But where the NGO Forum at Durban I was chaos and bedlam, activisim at Durban II was limited by the replacement of an official NGO Forum for informal NGO side sessions, and by moving the conference to the safer, more neutral and more transparent grounds of Geneva – changes that were, in part, a result of the advocacy of organizations like the American Jewish Committee, who were determined to prevent a repeat of the anarchy at Durban I.

And whereas critics of Israel in 2001 went largely unanswered or drowned out pro-Israel voices, Ahmadinejad's speech was met by denunciations in the media, including a rare rebuke by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. And after Ahmadinejad relinquished the podium, the next speaker, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store, called the Iranian president's speech "incitement to hatred, spreading politics of fear and promoting an indiscriminate message of intolerance."

For their part, pro-Israel protesters went on the offensive, interrupting Ahmadinejad's speech and providing context to the Israel-focused tone of the conference with their own news conferences, demonstrations and Holocaust commemorations – the conference coincided with Yom Hashoah – in Geneva and beyond.

While the singling out of Israel surprised delegates at the 2001 conference, Israel's allies worked hard in the months leading up to Geneva to ensure it did not devolve into a complete repeat of Durban I.

With files from JTA and Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

Israelis hospitalized with possible swine flu

JTA

JERUSALEM — A second Israeli who recently returned from a trip to Mexico has been hospitalized with symptoms of swine flu.

The man, 47, checked himself into Kfar Saba's Meir Hospital Monday, where he will remain in quarantine until tests are completed.

Doctors at Laniado Hospital in Netanya on Sunday admitted and isolated another man, 26, and are working to determine if he is suffering from the swine flu virus, which reportedly is responsible for the deaths of up to 103 people in Mexico. He was one of 25 Israeli tourists who recently returned from Mexico to be examined Sunday.

Also Sunday, Israel's Foreign Ministry offered guidelines to Israelis visiting Mexico or planning a visit there in order to reduce the risk of infection with the potentially deadly virus. No Israeli travel advisory has been issued, however.

The infection has spread to the United States, including California, Texas, Ohio, Kansas and New York, according to reports, and cases have been reported in Canada, as well as potential cases in New Zealand and Spain.

Magen David Adom announced Sunday that it would not take blood from potential donors who had visited Mexico, California or Texas in the past week.

The Israeli Embassy in Mexico canceled its annual Independence Day reception following a Mexican government request to avoid public gatherings to halt the spread of the virus.

The World Health Organization has called the virus a public health emergency of "pandemic potential."

IDF acted professionally in Gaza, internal probes find

JTA

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military operated according to international law and maintained a high level of professionalism and morals during the Gaza incursion this past winter, its own investigations found.

The findings of five probes conducted by the Israel Defence Forces were announced April 22 by IDF Deputy Chief of Staff Maj.-Gen. Dan Harel.

Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, the chief of staff, supervised the probes.

In "a very small number of incidents," intelligence or operational errors took place during the fighting, the investigations revealed.

"These unfortunate incidents were unavoidable and occur in all combat situations, in particular of the type which Hamas forced on the IDF by choosing to fight from within the civilian population," an IDF spokesperson said.

The investigations looked into claims involving incidents in which United Nations and international facilities were fired upon; shooting at medical facilities and personnel; the harming of uninvolved civilians; the use of white phosphorous; and damage to infrastructure by ground forces.

Investigators operated independently and were given access to all relevant materials and the freedom to question personnel, according to the IDF spokesperson.

A summary of each investigation will be presented to the military advocate general, who may decide independently whether additional checks must be performed or if another type of investigation should be opened.

The conclusions of the investigations and the opinion of the military advocate will be presented for review to the attorney general.

A central IDF investigation of the entire three-week Gaza operation in late December and January is set to conclude by June.

South African Jews mixed on Zuma rise and election victory

By CNAAN LIPHSHIZ

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JOHANNESBURG — While leaders of South Africa's Jewish community expressed cautious optimism regarding Jacob Zuma's rise to power last week, other community voices described his presidency as a "depressing defeat" for democracy.

The African National Congress garnered almost two-thirds of the votes, making the party's controversial yet charismatic candidate the republic's next president. Zuma won the election after overcoming a rape charge and numerous corruption charges.

"No one can make predictions," South Africa's chief Orthodox rabbi, Warren Goldstein, told Ha'aretz. "But there are encouraging signs: the financial crisis hasn't hit the country so badly and Jewish emigration is down compared to last year."

While remaining equally noncommittal, Ze'ev Krengel, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, mentioned that thanks to the "contacts between [Rabbi] Goldstein and Zuma," the Jewish community could enjoy improved accessibility to the presidency.

At Rabbi Goldstein's request, earlier this year Zuma spoke before the community and even presented the Jewish leadership with a document affirming the party's support for a two-state solution in the Middle East.

But Steve Magid, publisher of the popular Jewish affairs blog "It's Almost Supernatural," says Zuma's presidency could help one of the country's most anti-Israel bodies: South Africa's largest trade union COSATU, where Zuma is reported to have a "strong base of support."

"Zuma's style is to tell everyone what they want to hear," said Magid, who called on readers to "try and stop the ANC," on his blog, which he runs with Michael Kransdorff. They both say they believe Zuma overcame his corruption charges by illegitimate means that relied on the ANC's power.

"I was depressed to see Zuma might pass two-thirds of the vote. It's a defeat for democracy," Magid said.

Goldstein argues COSATU's rank and file "are not interested" in Israel, and that the Israel boycotts promoted by COSATU are orchestrated by a "few people with limited influence, regardless of who's in power."

The fact that the transition of power occurred smoothly attests to the resilience of democracy in the country, he said.

Another concern by supporters of Israel in South Africa is that Zuma may appoint Blade Nzimande from the Communist Party, known for making hostile statements about Israel, as foreign minister.

"We will have to wait and see," Krengel said. "We'll know more about where Zuma's heading when we see his cabinet. Until then, he's done no wrong and he's done no right."

South Africa's ambassador to Israel, Ismail Coovadia, told Ha'aretz his country and Israel would continue to enjoy "excellent relations."

"The whole world is witnessing the fact that South Africa has come a long way in fulfilling the vision to safeguarding the democratic principles for which we struggled so hard over so many decades: a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic society… Like any true democracy, national interests will take priority," he said.

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Sophie Milman's latest CD finds her in a happy place

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Sophie Milman is in a happy place right now. And well she should be.

The jazz singer's second album, Make Someone Happy, won her a Juno Award last year and broke into the U.S. market. Now she's about to release a new CD, Take Love Easy, go on tour and get married in August.

"My whole career surprises me," the Russian-born Toronto singer says. "I never expected this kind of success."

Milman's 2004 debut recording was also nominated for a Juno, but she lost to Diana Krall. "If Diana's nominated, she wins by default," Milman jokes. Last year, though, Krall wasn't nominated, and Milman beat Holly Cole and Deborah Cox, among others, for vocal jazz album of the year.

Looking back, her experience at the Junos in Calgary was surreal, she says. "I flew to Calgary from Colorado. They lost my luggage and I had to go shopping for a new dress, so I was hoping that the day would at least end well," she recalls.

She says she was shocked when she won. "I was nervous and had knots in my stomach all day. I didn't even hear my name being mentioned. I saw the presenter's lips move and saw my picture on the screen – I was, 'Oh, my God!'"

What followed was a page that could have come from Bridget Jones's Diary.

"I had bought these ridiculous seven-inch heels, and I went up on stage in the most graceless way imaginable."

After her speech, Milman was supposed to go backstage for photos and press.

"I was so shocked that I went back to my table," she says, laughing. "And this woman from the Juno committee came up and said to me that I had to give the award back to her [to go backstage] and I thought, 'Back off! This is mine!'"

But that's all in the past now, as Milman gets ready to promote Take Love Easy, which is to be released in Canada on May 5.

"It's like having a baby," she says of the work that went into her latest project. "You work so hard on something from recording to mixing to the artwork. It's a long process. But I am proud and happy with the result."

Milman's song selection is always eclectic. Take Love Easy consists of 13 songs, both traditional jazz fare from Cole Porter and Duke Ellington to her own take on modern songs by Bruce Springsteen, Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon. Overall, it's a lot lighter and easier to get into than her last outing, which was a lot more melancholic. Take Love Easy sounds very sharp and her vocals seem crisp, more confident and sophisticated.

"I think this is more forward looking," she says. "It's more modern sounding, both musically and lyrically. Yet, I think it's more legitimate jazz than before. There's more improvisation – both on my part and the band."

Sophie Milman shows off her 7-inch heels.

The CD was produced by Steven MacKinnon and features appearances from top musicians Wessell (Warmdaddy) Anderson, Michael Kaeshammer and Robi Botos.

"It's funny because my sound doesn't reflect who I'm influenced by and I wanted to go for a more 'rootsy' sound on this album. But what we ended up with is definitely not roots and definitely not big-band happy. It's somewhere in between."

Although she doesn't consciously look for a theme when choosing songs, she concedes that "love" forms a huge part, conceptually, of this album. (Seven of the 13 songs have the word "love" in the title.)

But, she says, she doesn't subscribe to the Hollywood notion of love, and the songs ride the wave of emotions, high and low.

"Love is not simple. It's very complicated. There's a world of emotions in relationships." She says Love For Sale and I Concentrate on You try to reflect that. "But most of the songs are quite positive. They come from a happy place, which I'm in right now."

Among the contemporary songs that Milman has included is her special take on Bruce Springsteen's I'm On Fire.

"Bruce is incredibly manly," she says. "His songs are full of testosterone, so I wasn't sure how I could sing it as a woman. We slowed it down quite a bit."

The result works quite well, as does her take on 50 Ways to Leave Your Lover.

"That song really struck a chord with me, and I wanted to do it for a long time. I love the sarcasm and the humour in it. The problem is, the original is so incredible and perfect – how can you top that?

"We kept the verses very true to the original but gave the chorus a very Afro-Cuban feel."

On this song, Milman also experiments with scatting for the first time, a vocal improvisation style made famous by Ella Fitzgerald, on this song.

Until they sat down in the studio, they had no idea how the song would work out. But once Hungarian-born pianist Botos got his hands on it, "it all came to life," she says.

Take Love Easy should be a shoo-in for another Juno Award, even if Krall is nominated this time. Milman is performing May 13 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, before hitting the road in the United States and Japan.

You can listen to Take Love Easy at www.sophiemilman.com.

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Winslet's Oscar winning role on DVD

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

When I saw The Reader last year, I immediately knew that I had just seen a film of superior quality.

I was right, judging by the five Academy Awards for which the film, which was recently released on DVD, was subsequently nominated.

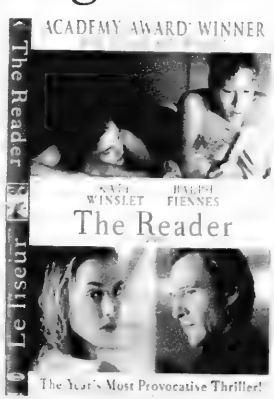
David Hare's screenplay, adapted from Bernhard Schlink's best-selling novel, was literate. Stephen Daldry's direction was flawless. The cinematography, by Chris Menges and Roger Deakins, glowed. And Kate Winslet was sizzling as a former Nazi concentration camp guard.

The Reader was also nominated for best picture of 2008, but was edged out by the low-budget but brilliant Slumdog Millionaire.

Happily, however, Winslet, an actress of uncommon talent, won the Oscar for best actress.

Which is appropriate, since she is at the centre of this exceptionally fine movie.

In The Reader, which is set in Germany from 1958 onward, Winslet is a dowdy streetcar attendant named Hanna Schmitz. When first glimpsed on screen, she is 36 years old and lives in a nondescript provincial town. One rainy morning, she meets a 15-year-old student, Michael Berg (David Kross), who feels ill. She helps him get home, and when he recovers, he seeks her out. They fall into a sexual relationship, during which Berg reads to her from great books.



She disappears, their strong bond notwithstanding, and the film flashes forward to 1966.

By now, the adult Berg (Ralph Fiennes) is a law student. On one of his classroom assignments, he observes a Nazi war crimes trial. Much to his astonishment, Schmitz is one of five defendants.

Berg has information that may save Schmitz from a long prison sentence, but will he disclose it to the judge?

In this morally complex story, Hare brings Schlink's novel to the screen with effortless ease, while Daldry handles the material deftly.

The cinematography heightens the mood, and Winslet delivers a blistering though low-key performance.

The Reader, a film of depth and empathy, examines the Holocaust from a completely different point of view.

The DVD has some deleted scenes and a making-of documentary.

Historical drama flawed but still worthwhile

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

O Jerusalem, the 2007 historical drama about the State of Israel's early days, will be released on DVD May 12, in time for Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Elie Chouraqui's film, based on the 600-page book by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, was poorly received by critics during its short cinematic release. Perhaps unfairly so.

Yes, some of it is contrived. Especially the friendship between the two main fictitious American characters, Bobby Goldman, who is Jewish, and Said, an Arab Muslim. But in the film's defence, it's hard to see how the story could be told without these characters.

O Jerusalem takes place in the first year of Israel's existence, during the War of Independence.

We see Jews dancing in the street following the UN vote on the partition of Palestine, while the Arabs hunker down and plot war. We see the Arab blockade of Jerusalem, where 150,000 Jews live in the Old City, the battle for the strategic hilltop of Kastel and the fighting in the streets of the Old City.

Ian Holm, sporting a crazy lock of wild white hair, plays a determined David Ben-Gurion, and Tovah Feldshuh is a younger, chain-smoking Golda Meir, who is sent on a futile mission to make peace with the Trans-Jordanian king.

The movie takes great pains to be unbiased, almost to a fault. Arabs riot in Jerusalem, the Irgun storm an Arab village. Jew kills Arab. Arab kills Jew. Jews capture hill. Arabs capture hill. Irgun argues with Haganah, the Arab League nations fight among themselves.

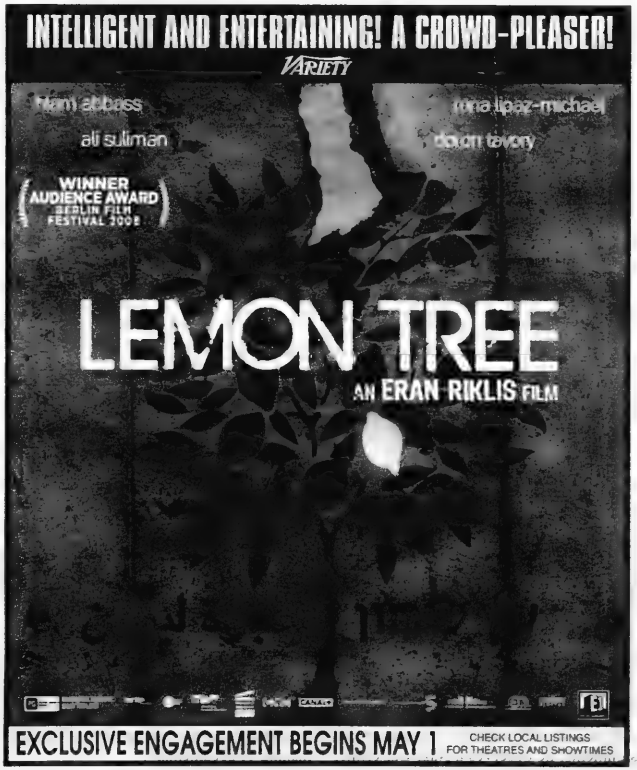
I imagine the body count on both sides is probably equal.

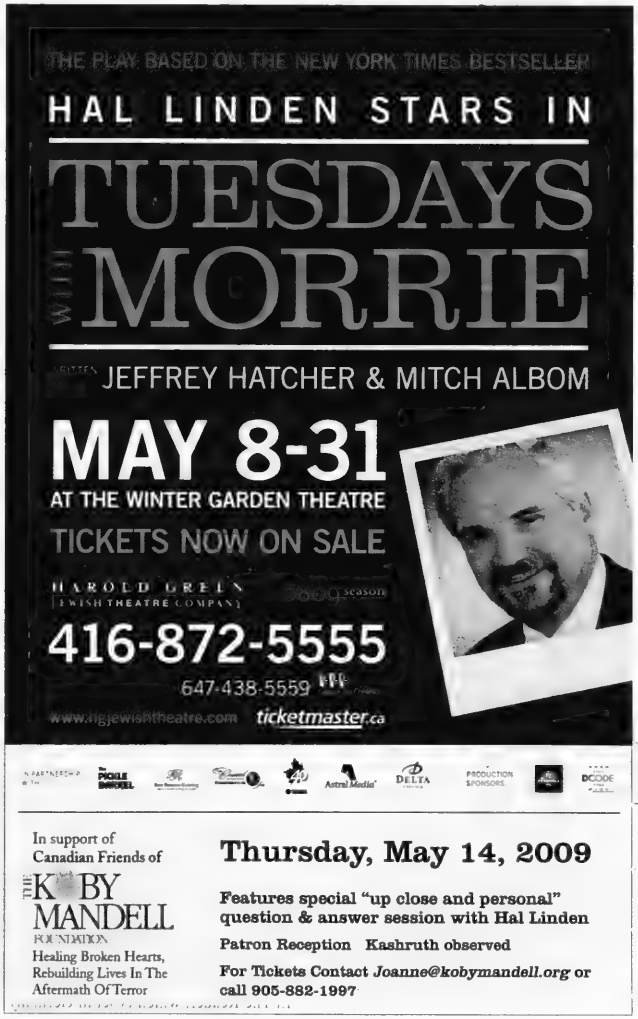
Since the movie is presented from both points of view, there is no Bad Guy and no Good Guy, an important dramatic device. But maybe that's the point the filmmaker is making. Objectively, there is no right or wrong in this endless battle in the Middle East.

This story has been better told by Amos Gitai in Kedma and, of course, in Exodus, but all in all, this movie is worth watching.

Although history teachers will probably find fault with it as an educational tool, it does present the conflict in a simple manner, perfect perhaps for high school students.

To that end, this DVD is lacking in special features. Perhaps a documentary that put the conflict into a historical perspective, both past and present, would have been more helpful.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

JERRY GRAY'S TRAVELLERS AND OTHERS TO PERFORM TRIBUTE TO PETE SEEGER

Jerry Gray and **The Travellers**, **Ken Whiteley**, **Joanne Crabtree** and **Paul Mills** celebrate the life, songs and 90th birthday of **Pete Seeger** with a concert on his actual birth date.

Seeger walked a tight line between being blacklisted in the 1950s, exonerated in the 1960s and venerated with awards and honours since the 1990s.

Songs written or edited by the now-legendary folksinger include Guantanamera, Turn Turn Turn, Where Have All the Flowers Gone and We Shall Overcome.

The Toronto-based Travellers became Seeger's disciples and close associates following the breakup of his band The Weavers in 1951. He made many visits to Toronto and performed many times with Gray and the original Travellers at Massey Hall and protest rallies.

Seeger is in fine health but will not attend the Toronto concert, Gray said. "He can't be there because they're planning a huge tribute concert for him at Madison Square Gardens with **Bruce Springsteen** and many others," he said. The local concert is at Leah Posluns Theatre, Sunday, May 3, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $40. 905-731-1805, grayg@rogers.com

* * *

Tuesdays With Morrie: The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's production of Tuesdays With Morrie, starring **Hal Linden**, opens here next week. Based on the bestselling memoir of the same name by **Mitch Albom**, and adapted by Albom and **Jeffrey Hatcher** for the stage, Tuesdays With Morrie recounts the discussions between a newspaper columnist and his former professor who is dying from Lou Gehrig's disease. Their conversations about life's most important lessons were published as a book to help pay the medical bills. The director is **Ted Dykstra**. $55-$92. Winter Garden Theatre, May 8 to 30. 416-872-5555, www.ticketmaster.ca or www.hgjewishtheatre.com

* * *

Jewish Theatre Panel Discussion: "What makes Jewish theatre Jewish?" Playwright **Emil Sher** (Mourning Dove) moderates this free panel discussion featuring panellists **David Eisner** (Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company), playwright **Hannah Moscovitch** (East of Berlin) and actor-producer-playwright **Julie Tepperman** (The Gladstone Variations; Yichud – Seclusion). Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

* * *

Media Watch: Kudos to **Anne Bayefsky** for the superlative interview she gave to the CBC's The Current last week regarding the United Nations' recent noxious Durban II hatefest in Geneva. When host **Anna Maria Tremonti** asked Bayefsky for her reaction to an over-the-top, Israel-bashing comment from author **Naomi Klein**, Bayefsky made a smart rebuttal and then a gracious exit before Tremonti could further attempt to undermine her eloquent defence of Israel. Bayefsky is a York University professor, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, and editor of the watchdog publication Eye On The UN.

* * *

Names in the News: Classic jazz fans were treated to a special program on **Gene Steven**'s Vintages Favourites show on AM 740 last week. Stevens interviewed Toronto photographer **Tom Sandler**, whose late mother, **Ruth Lowe (Sandler)** composed I'll Never Smile Again, the wonderful tune that launched **Frank Sinatra**'s career nearly 70 years ago. Sandler shared some rare recordings from the Big Band era, including alternate versions of I'll Never Smile Again (and Put Your Dreams Away, another of his mother's compositions) by **Bing Crosby**, **Fats Waller** and other artists. He also promoted the very good idea of putting Lowe onto Canada's Walk of Fame.

* * *

More Names in the News

• Toronto's mayor, **David Miller,** led a delegation that unveiled a new street-name sign, "Ed Mirvish Way" on April 15 to honour the late theatre impresario, restaurateur and bargain department-store owner. **Ed Mirvish**'s widow, **Anne Mirvish**, and his son, **David Mirvish**, and members of the public attended the ceremony at the corner of King and Duncan streets in the entertainment district. Ed Mirvish died in 2007 at the age of 92.

• **Daniel Brooks** is the director and co-creator (with **Rick Miller**) of Hardsell, a Canadian Stage production about "the nightmare of consumerism," at the Berkeley Street Theatre until May 9. The artistic director of Necessary Angel Theatre Company, the prolific Toronto-based writer-actor-director-producer has won the prestigious Siminovitch prize, several Chalmers and Dora Mavor Moore awards, and other accolades over the last two decades. www.Canstage.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Poet **Jeff Bien** performs with musicians **George Koller**, **Rick Lazar** and numerous other top talents at the launch of his first CD of music, Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer. The CD features two original renditions of Hebrew classical liturgical pieces, Kaddish and Adon Olam, as well as Kol Ha'olam by **Rabbi Nachman** of Breslav. $20, $25. Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas St. W. Wednesday, April 29, 8:30 p.m. 416-531-6604, www.jeffbien.com

• Hop, Stitch & Jump is a performance in support of children affected by poverty and AIDS. $25. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, April 30, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

• **Jordan Klapman** continues his series on Rock 'n' Roll Jews with a discussion of "The Mega Producers, Phil Spector & Don Kirshner." Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday May 3, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. 416-924-6211, ext. 133.

• The Toronto Workmen's Circle is sponsoring a talk by **Lawrence Bush**, the American author, artist and editor of Jewish Currents magazine. The topic is "The Future of Jewish Secularism." 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m. $5, members free; includes refreshments. 416-787-2081

• **Michael Mandel** presents a talk on "The Golden Age of Yiddish Radio in Canada: Max Mandel's The Jewish Hour," about his father's popular early radio program. $2, includes refreshments. Miles Nadal JCC, Active Seniors. Thursday, May 7, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

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Family's saga in wartime Shanghai comes to the stage

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Seven years after Vivian Kaplan's Holocaust book Ten Green Bottles – Vienna to Shanghai – Journey of Fear and Hope was launched, it continues to resonate with readers.

Now, Te-Amim Music Theatre, a non-profit company that uses the arts for Holocaust education, is presenting a new one-act play based on the book at the Al Green Theatre in the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre in downtown Toronto.

"The book has taken on a life of its own," Kaplan said from her Toronto home. "There are so many people around the world affected by it."

The poignant book is written from the point of view of Kaplan's mother, Nini Karpel, who starts by telling of her care-free life in Vienna before Adolf Hitler came to power.

After that, however, in order to survive, the family fled to Shanghai and suffered anew under the Japanese occupation of China.

Vivian Kaplan

Kaplan, who was born in Shanghai, received the Canadian Jewish Book Award in 2003 for Ten Green Bottles, and won the first prize literary award from ADEI-WIZO (Associazione Donne Ebree d'Italia, the Women's International Zionist Organization in Italy) in 2007, after the book was translated into Italian.

The author was honoured at an award ceremony in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio, where high school students read from her book.

"Later we spoke about how it affected them," Kaplan said. "That was really a highlight, but there have been so many moving experiences."

Kaplan was invited to speak at Sapienza University of Rome, and a luncheon was held in her honour hosted by Canada's ambassador. Being honoured in Italy was significant for Kaplan, because her father left Austria for Milan in 1938, and his story is told in Ten Green Bottles.

Helena Fine

Nini Karpel's journey has touched Kaplan's readers worldwide, especially those whose family share her Shanghai experience – close to 20,000 European Jewish refugees took refuge there, because it was one of the few places European Jews could go without a visa.

But it was the book's historic setting that drew singer/producer Helena Fine of Toronto's Te-Amim Music Theatre to contact Kaplan. When Fine returned with the Lachan Jewish Chamber Choir from the World Choir Games in Xiamen, China, in 2006, she read Kaplan's family saga and was inspired.

"I thought Ten Green Bottles would be a wonderful way of educating high school students. This story has a different angle because there are a lot of Chinese immigrants in Toronto, so this would be an interesting story for them and others to hear," said Fine, whose theatre uses the arts to teach about the Holocaust.

The play was adapted by its director, Mark Cassidy (The Secret of Gabi's Dresser; Kafka and Son), in collaboration with cast members Lauren Brotman (Dora Mavor Moore Award and Jessica Fraser Award), Sascha Cole (Beatrice Fox in The Great War – CBC/Gala Films), Ginette Mohr, Nathan Schwartz and Daniel Krolik.

Cassidy who workshops with actors to improvise and revise the script, also consulted with Kaplan.

"Mark gets to the inner core of the people and has taken the play beyond the book," Kaplan said. "He looks for parts that are significant to him, like how the characters interact, what they are thinking and feeling in the framework of the historical play, which will bring it to reality for the audience."

A Holocaust survivor will speak after every daytime performance for students, which begin May 14. There will be a limited number of evening performances open to the public, including a gala performance on May 23, 7:30 p.m. as a fundraiser for Te-Amim Music Theatre.

For tickets, performance dates and times visit www.te-amim.com or www.mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211. For school showings and bookings, call 416-642-0430.

New reality show profiles real estate agents

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

People are fascinated by real estate, said a Toronto agent who appears in the second episode of a 10-episode half-hour documentary series on W Network.

Giving viewers a peek into the day-to-day lives of real estate agents, The Agents profiles two agents each week – a rookie trying to make it in the business and a pro struggling to stay there.

Leslie Dennis, 46, an agent since 1991, said people always have questions for her when they find out what she does. "If I'm at the hairdresser, the grocery store, the dentist – they all want to know if they should sell, if they should buy, how the prices are, etc."

What they do not realize, she said, is that agents are much more than "salespeople dealing in buying and selling. We have to know how to talk to people, to listen to them, and to know what they want even if they don't know themselves.

"We see everything. We're in people's drawers and in their bathrooms. We forge a relationship with our clients. We have to build trust and respect. It's hard work, but I wouldn't trade it for anything," said Dennis, a single mother of a 15-year-old and an 11-year-old.

Real estate follows life cycles, she said, "and we're there for all of them. Houses are bought or sold when clients have babies, become empty nesters, have a death in the family or are getting married. We share in these events."

On top of everything else, she said, "we have to juggle our own lives. We have to be at our kids' soccer games, pick them up from school and take them to medical appointments, even if we have an offer coming through."

To organize her life, she gets help from newer agents who have different schedules and can assist her when she has other obligations, she said.

"I have to work with other people. I'm raising kids, and I want to be a good role model. I want them to know that mothers can work hard and still be great moms."

The Agents was filmed when the economy began to turn, said Dennis, and "that shaped the story lines. Listings are taking longer, price reductions are common, and there is lots of staging so a house stands out from the others.

"Staging a house is like packaging a lipstick. Put the same colour lipstick in a sleek box and it sells faster. There is no question about it."

The show, she said, a "docusoap," gives viewers some idea of the "life behind the life. People will see that we make deals and we live our lives. We're not unique."

Dennis' episode is scheduled to air May 4 and 6. For more information, check your listings .

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Poems for a fallen industry: Philip Levine's Detroit elegies

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

Norman Ravvin

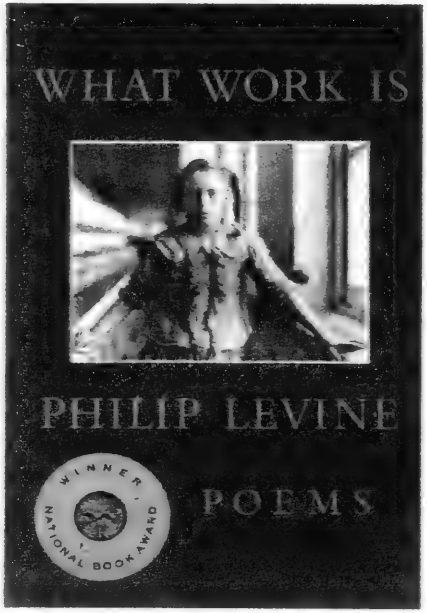
With the news filled with the imminent bankruptcies of General Motors and Chrysler, much attention is being paid to the mistakes made by the managers of these manufacturing giants; the investment strategies of American and Canadian governments to keep them afloat, and to the job losses that will result as they emerge in some pared-down form.

Not enough is said, though, about the centrality of car culture in North American life, and the way the failure of such trademark American brands reflects fundamental shifts in technology and work in auto-building centres like Detroit and Windsor.

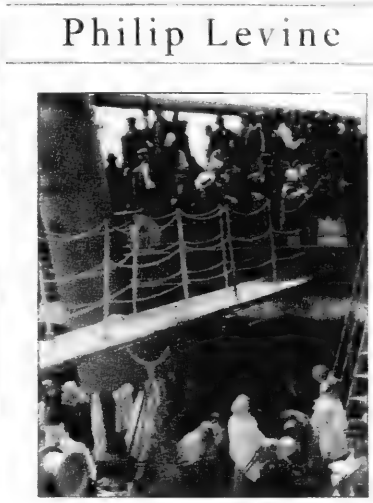
It may come as a surprise that there is a poet – Detroit-born Philip Levine – whose major works, as well as being wonderful and sad portraits of a particular time and place in postwar America, provide a primer on the history of work and daily life associated with the heyday of the American automotive industry.

The two collections that evoke these things in the greatest detail are What Work Is (Knopf), which appeared in 1991, and The Mercy (Knopf), published in 1999.

Levine writes elegies, narrative poems that tend to share a similar shape and length, aimed at evoking character, place and the era of the writer's youth in the 1940s and 1950s. Detroit, though the hub of a key American industry, is described as "our least favorite city," a place where soot and snow settle on the shoulders of men "in a long line/ waiting at Ford Highland Park. For work." It is the place that, some fifteen years later, would be "bombed and burned from the inside/ by its own citizens."



Levine's own youthful experience of shift work was dirty and brutal. It was taken up, he tells us, by the inhabitants of "a grid of crowded blocks/ of Germans, Wops, Polacks, Jews, wild Irish,/ plus some square heads from the Upper Peninsula."



On these postwar streets, Levine and his compatriots found what he calls "village life,/ exactly what our parents left in Europe." In a poem called Reinventing America, he reminds us that urban manufacturing served as a crucible within which the outsider and immigrant was remade as an American. And against the harshness of the work, the narrowness of its expectations, he remembers, too, a feeling of

> joy that comes to a great artist
> who's just completed a seminal work,
> though the work you've completed is "serf work"
> . . . a solid week's worth of it
> in the chassis assembly plant number seven.

Cars themselves appear only rarely in Levine's poems. Instead, the places where they are put together – the "night shift/ at Cadillac," the upholsterer's line "at Dodge Main" – rear up like mythic settings.

It is the looming presence of the factories on the cityscape, the baloney sandwiches eaten at lunch, the after-hours gatherings to smoke, drink and listen to Charlie Parker that draw Levine's attention. He is attentive to the lostness of it all, the particular life of a young working man or woman in mid-century Detroit.

And he is aware, too, of the peculiar quality of his obsessive return to these themes in his poetry. "How ordinary/ it all was," he admits,

> the dawn breaking each morning, dusk
> arriving on time just as the lights of houses
> came softly on. Why can't I ever let it go?

Norman Ravvin is chair of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. His books include the story collection Sex, Skyscrapers and Standard Yiddish and A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory.

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Coast to Coast

Rookie MLA explores her Jewish roots

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — When newly minted Manitoba MLA Sharon Blady was invited by the Canada-Israel Committee to visit Israel for the first time in February 2008, she jumped at the opportunity to further her research into her Jewish roots.

"Going to Israel was an overwhelming experience," she says. "I've never fallen in love with a place so quickly. I think that Israel is one of the most beautiful places on the planet."

While in Israel, she did some research at Yad Vashem and learned that there were a number of Holocaust victims with her last name who were from Shistakova, the same small town in Poland where her grandfather grew up. She also met a tour guide at Masada who told her that the name Blady appeared in his family tree. His family also came from Shistakova.

"We might be cousins," Blady says. "We are keeping in touch by e-mail."

Sharon Blady
[Myron Love photo]

Blady, a university and college instructor who specializes in gender and aboriginal issues, was elected to the provincial legislature in June 2007, in the riding of Kirkfield Park, the west Winnipeg neighbourhood where she grew up. Her mother's side of the family is Franco-Manitoban and can trace its ancestry back to Samuel de Champlain. Her father was the son of an immigrant Polish Catholic family – or so Blady thought.

"My grandfather, Miesczyslaw – he was known as Mitch or Mike in Canada – Blady, on my father's side came to Canada in 1939 and found work on my great-grandfather's farm near Thunder Bay," she says. "He literally married the farmer's daughter. He never spoke about the old country. He never went to church with us, but we thought that was just the way he was. Grandmother was a devout Catholic."

Although Blady was raised Catholic, she says she always took issue with what she was taught. "I could never understand how you could be a devout Catholic and also be anti-Semitic. After all, Jesus was born, raised and died a Jew. The Christian faith grew out of Judaism."

Blady also recalls having Jewish friends when she was growing up. She was particularly close to one Jewish family who were like a second family to her.

While studying for her PhD at York University in Toronto in 2001 – after her grandfather had died – she began to get an inkling that she might have Jewish ancestry.

"There weren't many Bladys in the phone book," she recalls. "I kept getting calls for Abe or Benjamin Blady. I found out that they were Holocaust survivors who had operated a kosher deli in Etobicoke. I got to know them. They were also from my grandfather's home town."

Blady began doing research into her family name at the York University library. She learned that her name, which always mystified her while she was growing up, is a Polish translation of "White" or "Weiss." She found a Jewish Polish lady from the Krakow area whose maiden name was Blady who had written a book called I Remember Nothing More, about her recollections of the Holocaust.

She notes that all the Bladys she located were Jewish.

As Blady began gathering more and more family records, she began piecing things together. Her research expanded into looking for information about Polish Jews, in general.

Having ascertained that her grandfather was most likely Jewish has left Sharon Blady a little confused about her identity, she says. On the other hand, she views her new Jewish antecedents as another flavour in the pot that makes up her ethnic identity.

Last Chanukah, for the first time, she notes, she celebrated the Jewish festival of lights with her two sons, aged eight and 16. One evening, they were invited to celebrate Chanukah with JNF shaliach Erez Rotem and his family, whom she met at last year's Negev Gala. She has since become friends with the Rotems. She lit the candles every evening at home. (She also had the traditional Christmas tree.)

"We are working on this a little bit at a time," says Blady, who is divorced. "We are dealing with having Jewish ancestry more from the historical and cultural perspective right now. I'm trying to get my kids to understand that my grandfather had to flee for his life and felt that he had to choose to give up his identity to survive."

She hopes that if she can clearly establish her Jewish identity, her sons might qualify for the Birthright Israel program.

"Maybe we could plan a family trip to Israel," she says. "It would be a great experience."

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Training culminates in running part of Tel Aviv Marathon

By YAEL POLLAK
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Handcyclists participate in the Tel Aviv Marathon, above, while runners race along the city's Mediterranean Promenade, with the city of Jaffa in the background. [Israel Sun photos]

TEL AVIV — Last Friday I ran the 10-kilometre race at the Tel Aviv Marathon. The well-trod cliche that every journey begins with one small step may be so, but luckily for me it ends with a small step as well.

Over the past month and a half of intense training, I learned that the journey is far more complex than an endless series of steps – whether large or small, quick or laboured.

I've always wanted to be a long-distance runner, but somehow that didn't prevent me from letting every opportunity to fulfil that dream pass me by. There were times when I would decide on the spur of the moment to run, taking quick jaunts with the dog until both of us were nearly choking on our tongues, engrossing myself in soap operas on the gym TV in hope that the minutes would progress quicker than the calorie counter on my stair machine.

And then I met Dalit and her running club. She was able to persuade me to push my abilities to their limits (again with the cliches – apologies), to reach the place where your muscles hurt from being stretched to the breaking point, but inexplicably you still want more.

There's nothing like setting out on a dark morning and taking in the sunrise while your lungs plead desperately for air, or lacing up at dusk and watching the sun set over Yarkon Park, to smelling the chocolate wafting from Max Brenner's at the Tel Aviv Port, only to turn around and run back the entire distance you just came.

Five wonders of the world were running beside me in that group: Efrat, with whom I chatted until both of our air supplies had run out; Yishai, who distributed high-fives every time he lapped us; Hadas, with her inconceivable lust for "more"; Elad, whose effort level only began at 100 per cent, and Lilach, whose boundless energy was nearly as impressive as her consummately gentle manner.

I began to grow into the habit of waking up at 5 a.m., slamming the alarm clock in the darkness, throwing on tights and running shoes, and testing whether I could hold down even a banana at such an ungodly hour.

When I told my partner just how nice everyone in the park is early on Friday mornings, that, wonder of wonders, they even say "good morning" to strangers, he had an answer ready.

"Sure they are. They'll do anything to make themselves believe they're not the only ones who have lost their minds."

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Israel avoids relegation in IIHF Division II tourney

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Israel barely avoided relegation to the lowest depths of the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) rankings thanks to a single win at a World Championship Division II tournament recently.

Israel opened the tournament in Novi Sad, Serbia, with a 2-1 victory over North Korea, but after that, it was all downhill. Estonia clobbered the Israelis 16-2, the host Serbs spanked them 12-1, China defeated them 5-1 and Israel even succumbed to Iceland 4-3 in the final game of the round robin event.

It's a far cry from the team's glory days in 2005 when the team was first in Division II and moved up to Division I the next year, competing against France, England and Germany.

But that team was led by the Eizenman brothers – Oren, who is now with the Milwaukee Admirals of the AHL; Alon, who played professionally in France, and Erez, another talented player.

None of them were available this year. Neither was Kazakhstan-born Max Birbraer, a former draft choice of the New Jersey Devils who has also added offensive punch to the Israelis.

Sergei Frankel was named top Israeli player in Novi Sad. The 25-year-old, who plays for Bat Yam, had four goals in five games. Defenceman Daniel Spivak was next with one goal and two assists.

Other returning Israeli included Shlomo Levy, Daniel Bochner, Ron Soreanu and Ely Oosterhuis.

I've grown up on this page

It's been five years since I first started writing the twentysomething column for this fine paper, and I'm sad to announce that this will be my last one.

Fortunately, I've been given the opportunity to continue the column as a blog on The CJN's youth site, Heebonics.blogspot.com. I'm glad about that, but I can't help feeling that this is the first phase of saying goodbye to my 20s.

I still have two years left before I hit the big 3-0, but my 20s have been so eventful that I probably will need that time just to adapt to all the changes in my life.

I can see now how blessed I was to have had such a stable, happy and positive childhood in which nothing really eventful happened, even as I skipped through my teen years.

My life, it seems, began in my 20s, as every year has turned out to be a roller-coaster marked by change and self-revelation.

In the past five years, my parents divorced, my mother remarried, I began a career, I moved out on my own and then in with my boyfriend, and I even dealt with his tragic death.

I realized that I suck at keeping the house clean, but I can cook better than I ever thought. I'm a toughie when it comes to my independence, but a big crybaby for my mommy when I'm sick. I'm a hardened war veteran when it comes to love, but a softie when it comes to those I love.

When I look back at all that has unfolded on the CJN's back page, I realize how lucky I've been to have had the opportunity to record and reflect on the most challenging times of my life. It has forced me to pause and analyze all the changes, and it has allowed me to accept what has come out of them.

I also realize how lucky I am to be able to have done it in front of strangers, who have had no problem putting me in my place whenever I came across as too spoiled or cheered me on when I needed the extra encouragement.

Two readers especially come to mind.

About four years ago, I wrote a column about depression becoming an epidemic among twentysomethings. Soon after, I received a long letter in the mail encouraging me to be positive and to find the light in all of life's mishaps.

The night I received the letter, a dear friend of mine was hospitalized for depression. I read him the letter over the phone and he was as encouraged by it as I was. I always meant to write you a thank-you note for your thoughtfulness. I hope you're reading this now.

The other reader I always think of is the man who wrote me a letter chastising me for being selfish about my boyfriend's needs when we moved in together. I had complained about having to share a closet and a bathroom. I thought I was being funny, but this gentleman made me realize that there's nothing funny about a grown woman who still stomps her feet like a little girl. (Although I have to admit, I still hate to share – sorry!)

There have been other memorable correspondents, such as the woman who promised me that some love really does last forever, the bubbies and zaides who asked me if I would meet their grandsons, and the cute boys who wrote sweet notes complimenting my writing (these are my favourite.)

What am I supposed to do now?

I must say that I'm looking forward to going hi-tech and blogging my thoughts away. Maybe one of these days I'll even figure out Twitter and tweet my column along. Hmmmm… tweety-something anyone?

I figured my life out on this back page. I've grown up on this back page. And now it's time to turn to a new page in my life.

Wish me luck.

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1 pkg. (16 oz.) plain frozen cheesecake
2 doz. wooden craft sticks
1 1/2 tablespoon size ice cream scoop
1 pkg. chocolate chips
1 tblsp vegetable shortening
Colored sprinkles, sugars or chocolate chips

LINE baking sheet with parchment paper. REMOVE cheesecake from freezer; thaw 5 min. Cut into 24 pieces. PRESS pieces of cheesecake, including crust, into ice cream scoop. Working quickly, shape into 1 1/2" balls. Press a lollipop stick into each cheesecake ball. Place on prepared baking sheet; freeze 1 hr. MICROWAVE chocolate chips and shortening 1 min.; stir. If necessary, microwave at additional 5 sec. intervals, checking and stirring just until melted. DIP frozen pops into melted chocolate; shake off excess. Immediately dust with colored sprinkles, sugars or chocolate chips. Working quickly, repeat with remaining pops. Place on lined baking sheet; freeze until ready to serve.

Allow to soften for 5-10 min before serving.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

I'm still sitting here with my mouth open, not sure of what just happened. I have been dating a lovely gentleman for three months. I hadn't heard from him for a week, so I decided to call him to make sure he was alright. He told me he doesn't want to see me anymore, because throughout our relationship I did not offer to pay for any of our dates. I didn't even know how to respond to that and just said OK and goodbye.

I'm an old-fashioned girl in my early 70s and although this dating thing is fairly new to me, I don't remember ever paying for a date. My dates opened doors for me, pulled out my chair and paid for our dates. Have things really changed that much? Did I do something wrong, or should I be glad to be rid of this tightwad?

Old Fashion Girl

Dear Old Fashion Girl

Don't feel upset about losing this man. He obviously lacks communication skills, which would make it very difficult to have any kind of relationship with him.

Wouldn't it be nice to turn back time to when we were familiar and comfortable with old customs. But as the world around us changes, the rules change right along with it.

In these days of tough economic times, recessions, fixed incomes and equality between the sexes, it's not only appropriate for a woman to pay for dates, it's expected. I'm sorry to inform you that you will have to leave the comfort of the time warp you were once used to and join the new dating world of the 21st century.

What does that mean? Often it means letting go of old expectations and habits, trying new things, sharing feelings and being honest about boundaries, families, finances, health, etc. New relationships can bring complications at any age. Dating should still be loads of fun and exhilarating, but at this stage experience and wisdom will often override naivete. That's actually a good thing. You can enjoy each other's company without all the game-playing.

Should you pay for your share of dates? Absolutely. If you are short of cash, you could make dinner and invite your friend to your home for a date. This is a whole new adventure. Let your hair down, stop dwelling on what you think is proper and let yourself enjoy this new phase in your life.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional*

Thanks, Edward

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Make no mistake about anti-Israel sentiment and/or anti-Semitism.

Let's not think that because Gaza is calmer and Israeli Apartheid Week is over, all is okay. Here is a response I received on my blog, to an article stating that 250 citizens were killed during Israel's incursion into Gaza, a refutation of other reports of as many as 1,000 civilians deaths.

"How ludicrous! We're supposed to trust a terrorist, the head of the IDF's Gaza co-ordination and liaison administration, Col. Moshe Levi? Then I'm sure that the six million Jews who were killed by Hitler should be revised: let's hear it from the Nazis themselves. I'm sure they'll say that only 25 per cent of the six million have been killed! What a bunch of Israeli NaZionist crap!"

People like this fellow came out of their hateful crannies in droves during the recent Gaza war. This blog comment shook me out of my sleep, yelling in my ear that it was time to wake up, as the shameful dark of night, with its ugly spirits hovering all around us, still extends into the daytime hours.

Please Google information on Durban II, the UN "human rights conference" in Geneva (April 20 to 24). The first day of the conference included an address from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Holocaust denier and president of Iran. It was on the eve of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). It is clear that this was meant as a slap in the face for us and those we remember.

York University's "alternative" campus newspaper, the YU Free Press, this month printed grossly anti-Semitic images. One cartoon shows menacing Israeli/S.S. troopers summarily executing innocent Palestinians in open-air graves marked "Gaza," and the second depicts a sickly looking Palestinian dressed in a pinstriped uniform, lying on the ground next to Israel's security barrier, which looks very similar to the barbed wire fence of a concentration camp.

The cartoon was promoting the idea that it is Israeli policy to perpetrate a Holocaust against the Palestinians. Anti-Semitism is not only alive, but the lub-dub of its heartbeat is audible and, well, right up the street at York University, a place of higher learning – or something.

So, as people continue to espouse views that seem to be rooted in an inexplicable anger rather than in real facts, we can't make the mistake of getting comfortable again in our blessed place in history, pretending that anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment are gone. They're not.

And therein lies the next point we need to remember. The Jewish People have many friends.

Here is another blog comment I received in response to the same article mentioned above: "I am with you, and your people."

I have also been in touch with a lovely man, Edward R. Vrscay, of the department of applied mathematics at the University of Waterloo, who cancelled a lecture he was to give at Ryerson University because Ryerson hosted Israeli Apartheid Week. In the academic world today, one which is quite anti-Israel with a strong anti-Semitic bent, Edward Vrscay did not do himself a favour by taking a pro-Israel and Jewish stand. But he did so anyway. He is a courageous individual who would likely have been a righteous gentile standing up for our people when called upon to do so. He is a friend. Thank you Edward.

Ask yourself, are you being complacent? Have you done anything this week to fight anti-Semitism or embrace a friend of the Jewish People?

Anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment are still quite busy. So are our friends in supporting us. We need to be, too.

Darfur? Read more on Avrum's blog – http://avrum.net

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This Week

National

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A serious case of BlackBerry loathing.

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UNITED IN CELEBRATION

Students from Associated Hebrew Schools, Leo Baeck Day School and Netivot HaTorah Day School celebrated Israel's 61st birthday together last week in their annual march down Atkinson Avenue in Thornhill, Ont. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

Mountain Equipment Co-op resists call for Israel boycott

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Corresponden

VANCOUVER — The resolution by a few members of Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) to convince the company to stop sourcing products made in Israel was soundly defeated by a majority vote at its annual general meeting last Thursday night in Vancouver.

There were 265 members in attendance, and 70 per cent of them voted against the resolution, said Michael Elterman, the Canada-Israel Committee's Pacific region chair.

When Elterman arrived at the meeting at 4 p.m., there was a long line of MEC members waiting for admission, while people for and against the resolution circulated pamphlets stating their views.

"The venue [Simon Fraser University's Segal School of Business], was filled to capacity, and there were at least 20 irate members who could not get in," he said.

Elterman estimated that members of the Jewish community represented only 25 per cent of those in attendance, and he said he was surprised by the margin of the non-binding resolution's defeat.

"A number of regular patrons or members of the Christian community came out against the boycott," he said.

"One of MEC's upper management came out to talk to the members who had not gained admission and told them that because the vote on this resolution was non-binding,

Continued on page 32

Emor
Candlelighting: 8:10
Havdalah: 9:16
Greater Toronto Area

Renowned academic named Israel's envoy to U.S. – see page 37

The News in Brief

CANADA

Speakers Announced

TORONTO — Israeli Vice-Prime Minister Silvan Shalom will address Canadian Jewish Congress' 29th plenary assembly, to be held May 31 at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto. Also slated to speak is Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who will receive the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award, and Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. Other speakers will include NDP leader Jack Layton and Bloc Québécois MP Carole Freeman, Congress said.

Honey Pioneer Dies

TORONTO — Jack Grossman, founder of Billy Bee Honey, Canada's leading honey maker, died April 27 in Toronto at age 92. Grossman served in the Royal Canadian Air Force as an aerial photographer in World War II. Upon returning home, he founded Billy Bee. The family-owned firm was bought by U.S. spice giant McCormick and Co. in 2008 for $75 million (US).

Israelis Get Awards

OTTAWA — Two Israelis are among the inaugural 166 recipients of the federal government's new Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships worth $150,000 toward study at Canadian universities. Shai Sabbah will receive $50,000 a year for three years to study life sciences and psychology at Queen's University, while Tal Avgar will get the same to study earth sciences and ecology at the University of Guelph.

WORLD

JTS Deals With Cuts

NEW YORK — The Jewish Theological Seminary says it still has a $5.5-million budget gap even after a round of cuts due to a drop in investment and fundraising revenue. In an open letter April 27, Chancellor Arnold Eisen detailed the cuts, describing them as "challenging and painful," and said more steps must be taken. Cuts already made include eliminating 10 faculty positions, suspending some employee benefits and an unspecified reduction in salary for employees earning more than $60,000.

Specter Switches

WASHINGTON — Arlen Specter, the only Jewish Republican in the U.S. Senate, is becoming a Democrat. The moderate Specter, 79, a longtime Pennsylvania lawmaker, said April 28 that he switched his affiliation and will run for re-election in 2010 in the Democratic primary. His switch would give Democrats a 60-vote, filibuster-proof majority if Al Franken eventually prevails in Minnesota's contested Senate race over Republican Norm Coleman. Specter's switch, assuming Franken wins, means Rep. Eric Cantor of Virginia would be the only Jewish Republican in the U.S. Congress.

NYU Cancels Event

NEW YORK — New York University cancelled an anti-Israel event disguised as an event about climate change. The event, slated for May 4, was titled "The Hidden History of Zionism: The Road to Gaza's Killing Fields." Organizers promoted it with flyers that some called anti-Semitic, Ynet reported. University officials confirmed the cancellation of the event, but stressed it was because the student who booked the event said it was going to be about climate change.

Charges Dropped

WELLINGTON — Charges against the Catholic priest in New Zealand who smeared blood on a memorial to former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin will be dropped. Father Gerard Burns led a Jan. 6 protest of several hundred pro-Palestinian demonstrators through the streets of Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, during the offensive against Hamas. At the monument, Burns sprinkled droplets of red paint mixed with his own blood on the plaque. Pictured wearing a black and white keffiyah at the rally, Father Burns called it a "symbolic action." He was charged with wilful damage after David Zwartz, ex-honorary Israeli consul in New Zealand, reported him.

Actress Played Maude

LOS ANGELES — Actress Bea Arthur, who won Emmy Awards for her roles in the television sitcoms Maude and The Golden Girls, died April 25 at her Los Angeles home of cancer at age 86. Arthur, born Bernice Frankel in New York, also played Yenta the matchmaker in the original Fiddler on the Roof on Broadway.

Ties With PA Set Up

CARACAS — The Palestinian Authority and Venezuela established diplomatic relations. PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki met Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro on April 27 to set up bilateral relations and open an office in Caracas. Venezuela cut ties with Israel in January to protest the Gaza incursion, calling it a "massacre." Israel responded by ousting Venezuela's envoys in Israel and to the Palestinian Authority. President Hugo Chavez then said at a summit with Arab nations that he had no plans to re-establish ties with the "genocidal" state.

Prisoners Messages Found Near Auschwitz

WARSAW — A message written by Nazi prisoners and placed in a bottle was discovered by builders working near the site of the Auschwitz death camp.

The bottle was discovered April 20 hidden in a concrete wall in a school that prisoners had been forced to reinforce, according to an Auschwitz museum official.

The official said the message was written in pencil, dated Sept. 9, 1944, and signed by seven inmates from Poland and France. At least two survived the Holocaust. "They were young people who were trying to leave some trace of their existence behind them," the official said.

The note's authenticity has been verified and the museum will receive the note this month.

Meanwhile, the Czech government on April 28 voted to contribute about $100,000 toward the repair and upkeep of the former death camp. It's the second country after Germany to promise funds following a Polish plea for help.

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CCRJ office to close as Reform restructures

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Toronto office of the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism (CCRJ) will close May 31 as part of a larger recession-driven restructuring by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the congregational umbrella for the Reform movement.

Rabbi Sharon Sobel

"Taking the opportunity to reshape our organization structurally is something we hoped to do in any case, but the financial situation made it an obligation," New York-based URJ vice-president Rabbi Stacy Offner told The CJN in a phone interview last week.

"We had a $5-million hit because the funds were lacking," she said.

The restructuring was based on a projected 20 per cent decline in available revenues, compared to the URJ's 2008-2009 operating budget of $25 million.

Congregations have had difficulty paying their dues, which comprise the lion's share of the URJ budget, according to a JTA report in February.

The CCRJ and other regional lay leadership councils will continue to exist, noted Rabbi Offner, who said she is "optimistic about our future structure."

There will also be a small office in Toronto to deal with specifically Canadian needs, including the issuing of tax receipts. It will be housed in the Camp George office.

The CCRJ – which has been headed for the past nine years by Rabbi Sharon Sobel – is the only Canadian regional office among 14 in North America that are being dismantled. The URJ also eliminated 60 full-time-equivalent positions in North America in January, when two of the CCRJ's five staff members had to be laid off.

The CCRJ serves 26 Reform congregations across the country and has provided services that include programs, long-range planning, and working with rabbinic search committees as well as with congregations in crisis.

The URJ is setting up "an entire new system," said Rabbi Sobel, executive director of the CCRJ and ARZA Canada (Reform's Zionist arm here), which will continue to operate independently, but without Rabbi Sobel.

In a letter to the Canadian Reform movement detailing the upcoming changes, Rabbi Sobel lauded the lay leaders

Continued on page 20

Baycrest unaffected by swine flu

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

It's business as usual at Baycrest despite concerns about a swine flu pandemic said Chingiz Amirov, the geriatric centre's director of prevention and control.

They are monitoring the situation closely, and they are in communication with their partners at Toronto Public Health and Toronto Academic Health Sciences Network, the group of teaching hospitals of which Baycrest is a member, he said.

"Our approach, and that of all GTA hospitals and healthcare agencies, is enhanced surveillance of symptoms and rigorous adherence to the precautions we use as part of our normal practice."

He said that staff is reminding residents and visitors to wash their hands and practise "respiratory etiquette. We are also increasing our signage at the entrances, which reminds people not to come in if they are sick. We're asking for people to stay home if they have any flu-like symptoms."

All this is nothing out of the usual, he said. "We have a gastroenteritis outbreak right now, but that has nothing to do with the swine flu. Outbreaks such as this one happen at every facility."

The centre has a comprehensive pandemic plan to address every level of the outbreak situation, he said.

At Terrace Gardens Retirement Residence on Bathurst Street, they are asking residents to stay in the building as much as possible, said Josie Canda, a registered practical nurse.

"They get sick very easily, and we don't want them to pick up anything."

Other than that, she said, they are not taking any out-of-the-ordinary precautions. "We always encourage people to use hand sanitizers before and after a visit, and stay away if they feel sick."

Please see related story on page 34

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Greater Toronto Area

'Doing' Jewish history

From the editor's desk...

The sweet, endearing photograph on the cover of the book is a captivating, visual fractal of the substance and essence of From Couscous to Kasha: Reporting from the Field of Jewish Community Work by Seymour Epstein (Urim Publications, Jerusalem, New York, 2009).

We see a young boy, probably not more than six or seven years old, in a school, standing at the front of the classroom pointing to words and images written neatly, in large format, on the blackboard. He is smiling. He seems happy, and for the moment, at least, pleased with himself and perhaps, too, his teacher. We learn subsequently that the classroom is in an elementary school in Morocco in the 1980s.

We learn a great deal more in this thoughtful, eye-opening book about the Jews of Morocco in the 1980s – their history, traditions, communal life, hopes and disappointments.

Indeed, we also learn a great deal about the Jews of the former Soviet Union (FSU) during the turbulent, watershed days and years immediately prior to and after the fall of the Soviet empire.

Epstein takes the reader into those two vastly contrasting Jewish communities and deftly, even tenderly, shares with us observations, anecdotes and conclusions that enable us to view, occasionally to feel, and always to better understand those two different, complicated respective communities from within and not merely from the outside.

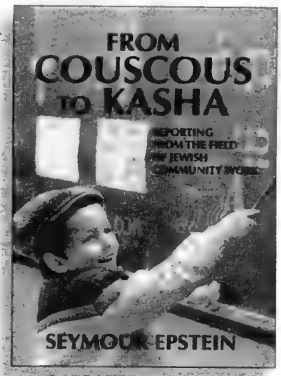
Epstein worked for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint, as he refers to it) for 18 years. He was a pedagogic consultant for the Joint in Morocco, served as a regional director based in Paris and then worked in the former Soviet Union.

This book records some of the highlights, happy and sad but always poignant, from that profoundly important work on behalf of the Jewish people. It is part memoir, part essay. The 43 volumes of notes he kept in the field formed the well from which he drew the stories that we read.

Epstein writes as a teacher teaches, putting forward propositions and information, asking questions and then often, but not always, helping the reader find the answers. This is not surprising, for Epstein – Epi, as he is known throughout the world of his encounters – is a teacher. He is a teacher of teachers. He has spent his entire adult life in the field of education.

Until recently head of the Board of Jewish Education of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, subsequently known as Mercaz, Epstein was born into the comfortable yet changing world of Toronto Jewry after World War II.

He has always been a conductor for the current of Jewish electricity, always wanting to share with others the energy, buzz and excitement of a full, literate, engaged Jewish life. He has never been satisfied to merely sail along the shores of Jewish life. Rather, he has always preferred to sail in the heart of its seas.



"I had the sense that the great moments of 20th-century Jewish history had passed me by and that my life would be as a passive object of that history, not one of its writers," Epstein writes in the introduction.

But that sense must have quickly passed. At the age of 35, the curious, intellectual, determined educator signed up with the Joint, intent on influencing and not merely observing the course of Jewish life and history.

"My chosen career as a Jewish educator was my humble attempt to 'do' Jewish history by teaching a new generation of Jewish youth about their rich heritage of languages, literature, values and spirituality. As active as that was as a profession, it was the Joint that gave me the opportunity for proactive involvement in making new history among Diaspora Jews."

Epstein's decision to "do" Jewish history is inspirational and instructive for us all. "Doing" Jewish history, after all, is acting for the sake of others, for the sake of the larger group, for the sake of those who came before us and those who will yet come after us.

He makes this point elegantly in recounting a compelling story about some youngsters from the former Czechoslovakia and their discovery of Jewish culture at a summer camp.

"I realized that all the artificial national borders that separate Moroccan Jews from Canadian ones, Russian Jews from Israelis, French Jews from Azerbaijanis, or American Jews from Hungarian ones have almost no effect on us as a people. While our various environments have certainly given us different cultural traits, the connective tissue that links us to one another as a unique people is a far greater force than we ever imagined. As the world continues to shrink through communications technology, this unity becomes ever more powerful."

We – the Jews of Morocco and the FSU, the parents and grandparents of children who have learned and studied in various Jewish educational systems, the readers of this book and those of us who have absorbed his key, central message of the overriding, pre-eminent importance of education in the eternal continuum of the Jewish people – are the beneficiaries of Epstein's decision to "do" Jewish history.

The book will be launched in Toronto on May 10 at Israel's Judaica on Eglinton Avenue at 7:30 p.m. ***–MBD***

SeeJN

SURVIVORS HONOURED

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty (back centre) joins the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's national chair, Fran Sonshine, and it executive director, Yaron Ashkenazi, to honour 12 Holocaust survivors. The premier, consul general of Israel, Amir R. Gissin, Citizenship and Immigration minister Michael Chan and MPP Monte Kwinter presented each honoree with a scroll at a ceremony at Queen's Park held on April 30. Honorees are Fay Goldlist, Zelda Rosenfeld, Elly Gotz, Shoshana Rotenberg, Pinchas Gutter, Wolf (Bill) Rotman, Peter Jablonski, Helen Sonshine, Frida Lebovici, Edith Weiss, Jack Mudryk and Ernst Weiss.

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Some 4,000 people came out last week to celebrate Israel's 61st birthday on the grounds of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre. Clockwise from top left, Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and western Canada, with Yael Karol of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto executive committee; a proud flag bearer; one of the many entertainers on site; from left, aliyah shlichah Lianne Sela with Canadians who are making aliyah in 2009: Joyce and Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Ziv Har-Gil, Yael Erez (who made aliyah last year) and Gabriel Weitzner; the band Monday Rose. The event was co-sponsored by the Israeli Forum and UJA Federation.

[Rachel Singer photos]

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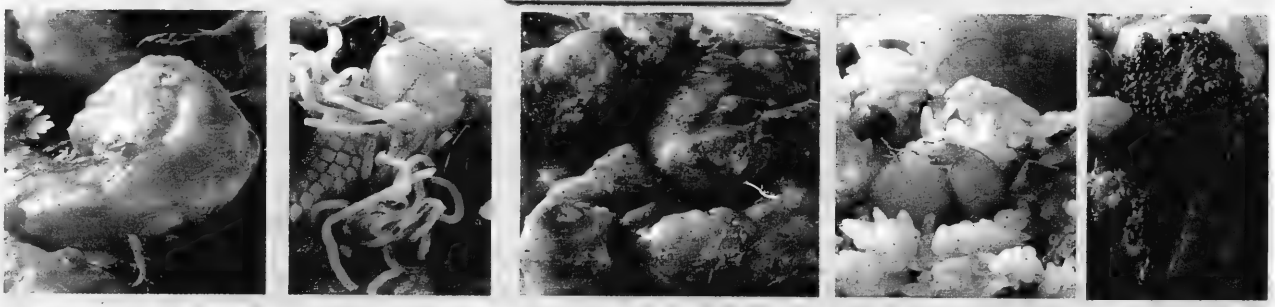

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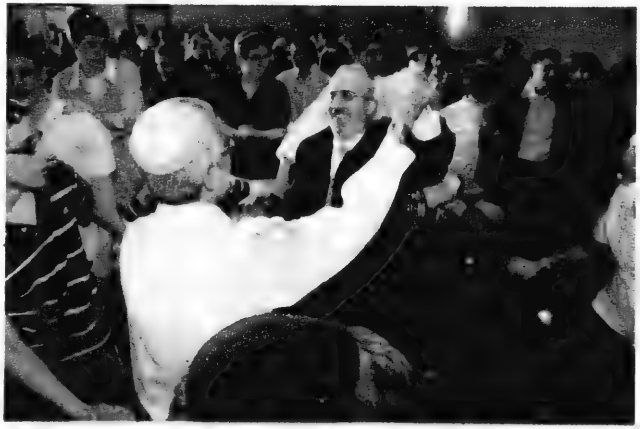

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No one-sided bargains

The month of May will possibly be a diplomatic watershed in the search for a solution to the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas are scheduled to travel to Washington to meet with U.S. President Barack Obama.

Abbas has wasted no time in softening up the diplomatic terrain in advance of his May 28 visit with the American leader. He met Sunday with King Abdullah of Jordan and has also announced a pre-Washington meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Whenever a microphone appears near him, he issues pronouncements on the peace process and the usual list of his peace process diktats to the Israeli government. He does so to maintain his image as a stalwart protector of Palestinian rights in light of the fact that his rivals for power, Hamas, control Gaza and most likely, the allegiance of many Palestinians in the West Bank, too. Thus, being known as a fair-minded negotiator of a permanent, two-sided bargain with the Jewish state is not part of the image he assiduously cultivates.

Abbas constantly carps that Middle East peace talks hinge on Israel's support for a two-state solution. At his meeting with King Abdullah, he loudly reiterated, "Our conditions and vision are part of the two-state solution, which also involves halting settlement building and the policy of house demolitions."

He was emphatic in stating that a prior commitment from the Israeli government that there will be two states is a precondition for talks with Israel. It must have come, therefore, as somewhat of a surprise to him when Israel's deputy foreign minister, Daniel Ayalon, the same day, told Bloomberg News that the "government of Israel, because of our democratic tradition and because of the continuity principle, is going to abide by all previous commitments the former government took, including the acceptance of the 'road map' to peace, which will lead to a two-state solution." Ayalon's statement was unambiguous and quite definitive. Israel is bound by its earlier agreements, which, as we know, envision an end result of two states coexisting side by side.

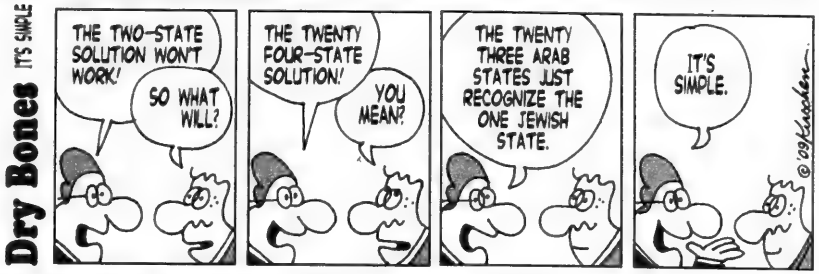
Ayalon was merely restating the commitment last month by Netanyahu said that he will co-operate with Abbas for the sake of attaining peace.

Let, therefore, a sound, reasonable plan for good faith negotiations emerge from the meetings later this month among the various leaders in Washington. But that plan must also include an unambiguous, definitive statement by Abbas that one of the two states will be the Jewish State of Israel. This will require some equally unambiguous, definitive declarations to that same effect by Obama, for Abbas and his colleagues and, of course, his rivals for leadership in Hamas, have already told the world that they will never agree to the existence of a Jewish state alongside their Palestinian one.

Two states must mean one Palestinian Arab, the other Israeli Jewish. No Israeli government will agree to a one-sided bargain. Nor should they. Nor should the United States. Nor should the world.

25 years ago in The CJN

At the United Nations, 21 members of the Arab League blasted Costa Rica and El Salvador for moving their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak threatened to break off ties with any country – even the United States – that did so. U.S. evangelical leaders urged the United States to move its embassy as well.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Yom Ha'atzmaut greetings from the PM

I am deeply honoured to extend my warmest greetings to all Canadians celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut, marking the 61st anniversary of Israel's independence.

The creation of the State of Israel is a testament to the triumph of faith and perseverance over adversity. Israel is an enduring symbol for the world and a source of great inspiration. The resilience and determination that built this formidable, enterprising and democratic nation continues to hearten Jewish communities around the globe.

This proud celebration affords us the opportunity to reflect on the events that have shaped Israel's history, as well as the shared history between our two great nations. We count ourselves among Israel's closest partners. Since its founding in 1948, Canada has supported Israel and its right to live in peace and security with its neighbours. We value this relationship and look forward to continued friendship and collaboration.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, please accept my best wishes for a memorable celebration and a prosperous and peaceful year ahead.

Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

* * *

Yom Ha'atzmaut greetings from Ignatieff

Today, on Yom Ha'atzmaut, we celebrate the founding of the Jewish homeland – the 1948 Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.

We also celebrate the rich and vibrant culture of the Jewish people, in Israel and around the world, and the immense contributions Jewish Canadians have made to our society.

Since a Liberal government recognized the State of Israel in 1948, our party has been a firm supporter of Israel, its freedom and security. On this anniversary, we reaffirm our belief in Israel's right to exist, and we restate our condemnation of the terror and violence that have threatened Israel for more than six decades. We look forward to the day that a free and secure Israel coexists in peace with a free and secure Palestinian state.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and our parliamentary caucus, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all those celebrating the 61st anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Yom Ha'atzmaut Samayach!

Michael Ignatieff
Leader of the Opposition

* * *

Lieberman will stand up to pressure

Describing Avigdor Lieberman as both a "right-wing nut" and a "religious fanatic" is false and misleading ("Lieberman is dangerous," CJN, April 17). Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu party is the only party in the coalition, along with Labor, that supports a Palestinian state in areas of the West Bank and Gaza. A secular Jew, Lieberman advocates an easing of the religious domination of both marriage and conversion laws.

Referring to him as a xenophobe whose plan would destroy Israel is a claim easily refuted. Yisrael Beitenu is a diverse political party that does not hate Arabs – it simply deems it necessary to ensure a Jewish majority in Israel and protect it from her inner enemies. The proposed citizenship law would not force individuals to unequivocally support the state – it is simply a statement pledging allegiance to a Jewish state.

Israel is currently in a tough position, with the world pressuring for a Palestinian state without making the abolishing of terror a prerequisite, and the Israel people have chosen leaders who will courageously stand up to this pressure. Israel is a Jewish state and steps must be taken to ensure this. Only Lieberman seems to recognize that fact.

Joseph Schwartz
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

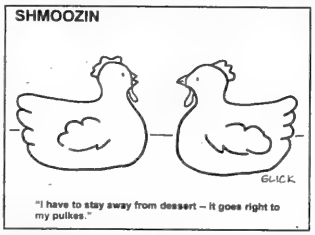
Anti-Semitism at pop music concert

My parents and I recently attended a concert by the British artist Adele at Massey Hall in Toronto. Between songs, Adele told the audience about an encounter with a pawnshop owner in a downtown store and characterized him as the "rudest person ever." Her description was very charming. During the performance, she made a mistake in one of her songs and then blamed it on the fact that she had been distracted by thoughts of that pawnshop owner. Then she added, "But don't worry, he wasn't Canadian, he was Jewish."

The comment evoked laughter. My father booed, got up and left immediately. After two more songs, my mother and I felt too uncomfortable to enjoy the concert and left as well. I was shocked by the racist nature of the comment and by the reaction from the audience. The comment was accepted and, indeed, embraced.

There is still a threat of anti-Semitism in Canada, and despite the efforts of human rights and the pride we feel in maintaining a diverse country, racism still takes place and, more disturbingly, it is accepted. One can suggest that Adele's comment was merely intended as a joke, that she is simply a silly 20-year-old displaying her ignorance. But, that does not absolve her of the responsibility for what she said. Casual racism desensitizes and provides a breeding ground for more serious offences.

Eitan Levitt
Toronto



LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Get ready for duelling prayerbooks

By RABBI MARTIN LOCKSHIN

Twenty-five years have passed since the beginning of the most surprising Jewish publication success of the 20th century: the ArtScroll takeover.

ArtScroll is the name used by Mesorah Publications, based in Brooklyn, N.Y., for its line of books that present traditional Hebrew texts in readable English translation. Perhaps the best known ArtScroll product is its prayer book, first published in 1984. It's difficult to find a Canadian or American Orthodox synagogue these days that doesn't use the ArtScroll siddur, except perhaps in the most right-wing circles, where prayer books with any English may be dismissed with disdain. But ArtScroll has managed, with some success, to reach that market, too, with a prayer book that looks like its Hebrew-English version, but has only Hebrew.

The reason that the success of ArtScroll is so surprising is that the largest and most established Orthodox synagogues in Canada and the United States like to think of themselves as "modern Orthodox," yet the values reflected in the notes of the prayer book that they use are unabashedly haredi (sometimes termed "ultra-Orthodox," or "fervently Orthodox"). Modern Orthodox values are assiduously avoided by ArtScroll, as this article will show.

ArtScroll has succeeded for a number of reasons. Its publications are user-friendly and esthetically pleasing. Its marketing strategy has been brilliant, and some say very aggressive. But perhaps the most important factor is that the competition wasn't stiff. While I always liked the old Birnbaum prayer book, most Jews in the 1980s and subsequent decades weren't interested in an English translation that used archaic forms such as "thee" and "thine." Before ArtScroll, no one had produced a useful, complete and esthetic Orthodox prayer book with notes and translations in modern English.

But now, for the first time, ArtScroll will be subject to stiff competition in the prayer book market. A new prayer book is scheduled to be released this month by Koren Publishers in Jerusalem. Called the Yehudah Bilingual Edition of the Koren Siddur, it features an introduction, translation and commentary by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the United Kingdom. (Henceforth I will refer to this edition as KorenSacks).

For a number of decades, Koren has published what is generally seen as a very accurate, readable and esthetically pleasing Hebrew text of the Hebrew Bible. More recently, it published an excellent all-Hebrew prayer book. Now Koren has teamed up with one of the most thoughtful contemporary modern Orthodox scholars, Rabbi Sacks, to produce a visually attractive and well-organized prayer book whose beauty is not just external. The 33-page introduction by Rabbi Sacks, "Understanding Jewish Prayer," is the most moving explanation of what it means to pray as a Jew that I have read in any language.

The difference between ArtScroll and KorenSacks can be divided into a number of categories:

Language

The ArtScroll English translations are often puzzling, and the English usage is inelegant. Compare ArtScroll's rendering of the first line of the *Ana Bekhoach* prayer, "We beg You! With the strength of Your right hand, untie the bundled sins," with KorenSacks' "Please, by the power of Your great hand, set the captive nation free." God's name is consistently "translated" in ArtScroll as "Hashem," the traditional Hebrew euphemism that allows an observant Jew to refer to the deity without pronouncing His name unnecessarily. The resulting text – where God's name does appear in the Hebrew prayers, but not in their English translations – accomplishes no clear religious or didactic goal, except for making the translation sound "frum" (pious).

The majestic poetry of *Adon Olam* is captured much better in KorenSacks' English rendering, "He is my God; my redeemer lives./He is the Rock on whom I rely-/My banner and my safe retreat,/my cup, my portion when I cry," than in ArtScroll's "He is my God, my living Redeemer,/Rock of my pain in time of distress./He is my banner, a refuge for me,/the portion in my cup on the day I call." Those who appreciate the finer points of Hebrew grammar (e.g. the difference between *kamatz katan* and *kamatz gadol*) will also find the Hebrew text of the prayers more accurately and more helpfully presented in KorenSacks than in ArtScroll.

Authorities cited

ArtScroll has a very narrow list of "kosher" authorities to quote in its notes. Even the insights of renowned modern Orthodox scholars such as Nechama Leibowitz aren't included. Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik is also excluded all or most of the time. KorenSacks takes a very different approach, citing many modern Orthodox scholars, but also others, from the most haredi to the most modern. The brilliant insights into prayer of the non-Orthodox Jewish philosopher, Franz Rosenzweig, play a significant role in Rabbi Sacks's introduction. Other writers cited include the author Leo Tolstoy, the scientist Benoit Mandelbrot, and the atheist philosopher Sir Bernard Williams, who Sacks tells us is "described as the most brilliant mind in Britain." This prayer book subscribes to the idea that wisdom is found in many sources, not just in the writings of Orthodox rabbis.

Zionism

The State of Israel is almost totally absent from ArtScroll's siddur. (As a sop to the synagogues that do see religious significance in the modern State of Israel, ArtScroll has published a variant of its product, the "Rabbinical Council of America prayer book" in which two extra prayers may be found – one for the State of Israel and another for Israeli soldiers.)

In KorenSacks, the State of Israel plays a significant and central role. Prayers for Israel's Independence Day, for the Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers and for Jerusalem Day are included. On the assumption that English-speaking worshippers often travel to Israel, instructions about what prayers are to be said in Israel are found in KorenSacks. KorenSacks even tells us what blessing to recite when one sees the head of state of the State of Israel. ArtScroll tells us what blessing to say when one sees a gentile monarch or head of state, but says nothing about the Israeli head of state.

Women

KorenSacks shows a laudable sensitivity to the fact that half of all Jews are women. In the very first prayer in the book, *Modeh ani*, KorenSacks acknowledges that, following the rules of Hebrew grammar, a woman says *Modah ani*. ArtScroll doesn't. But the changes are more significant than just grammatical sensitivity. KorenSacks includes moving prayers for the birth of a daughter and prayers to be recited by a woman who has returned to synagogue after giving birth. Instructions about prayers in KorenSacks are much more inclusive than in ArtScroll. KorenSacks writes that three woman may constitute a quorum for *zimmun*, the prayer that invites those who have dined to say grace. ArtScroll doesn't.

World view

Hundreds of examples may be found of the differences in values between the two commentaries on the prayer book, but for the purposes of this article one will have to suffice: the way that ArtScroll and KorenSacks relate to the disturbing line in the grace after meals, "I was a youth and have also aged, and I have not seen a righteous man forsaken, with his children begging for bread" (ArtScroll translation). The line is problematic, since it seems to contradict our own experiences.

The ArtScroll commentary suggests that the person reciting grace should think, "I have never seen a righteous man consider himself forsaken, even if his children must beg for food," since he will understand that his children's suffering must be part of God's plan.

KorenSacks turns the line in a totally new direction. Based on an insight from Rabbi Soloveichik, KorenSacks argues that the prayer should be understood as meaning, "I have never watched a righteous man forsaken or his children begging for bread." The notes explain that the line "is a warning against being a mere bystander while other people suffer. It thus brings the Grace to a symmetrical close: It began by speaking of God's goodness in feeding the hungry and ends with an injunction for us to do likewise."

Both ArtScroll and KorenSacks try to inspire. ArtScroll attempts to inspire to a docile, passive faith, KorenSacks to an activist agenda. "The religions of the ancient world," KorenSacks teaches us, "were deeply conservative, designed to vindicate and perpetuate hierarchies of power. Judaism, believing that human dignity was the prerogative of everyone, was an ongoing protest against such inequalities." The ultimate purpose of praying, according to Rabbi Sacks, is that we leave synagogue "seeing ourselves and the universe differently, freshly conscious that the world is God's work, the Torah God's word, our fellow believers God's children, and our fellow human beings God's image."

Amen.

It will be interesting to see in the next few months how the Orthodox synagogues of Canada and the United States choose between the values of ArtScroll and of KorenSacks. Stay tuned.

Rabbi Martin Lockshin is rabbi of the Toronto Partnership Minyan and professor of humanities and Hebrew at York University.

Opinions

Choosing life over death

Two dear friends recently died, one in New York and one in Montreal. Both had serious illnesses for more than 20 years, yet their deaths came as a shock. How is it possible that they're no longer here on earth? Even though their lives were not a part of my everyday life, they were a strong presence. Both played formative roles in my own development, impressing me with their own brand of vitality and character.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

I'm grateful that I have such strong memories and don't want to lose that sense of intimacy. How can they not be here when those memories are so vibrant? I appreciate that for some, that sense of remembrance signifies some kind of immortality or of lingering existence of one's loved ones. But in truth, while we hold on to those memories, we no longer can make memories together. It's not easy to find comfort for that loss.

Facing death is difficult for all of us. It's so final, so absolute and so universal. In some ways, all our lives can be viewed from the perspective of death: we are born as an organism on its way toward death. Our body grows, but that growth must end in death. There's no other end possible. Creation ultimately leads to death.

This is a very bleak view of life that most cannot maintain. It offers us no solace and no constructive mode of living. I don't feel my friends' lives were so desolate. They were challenged by life, but not destroyed by it. On the contrary, I'm sad because their lives were so full of love and living. There was so much goodness, friends and family. Death came too soon.

We humans know there is death. We even accept it. It just often comes too soon. We don't turn toward death eagerly, because we're open to life. For the brief moments we do have on this earth, we're dedicated to the creative processes of living – to friends and family, to love and giving.

Our biological existence may move from birth to death, but our moral and existential being acts within life. As commanded in the Bible, we as humans choose life. That should be our focus and our outlook for as long as we can live it.

I write this column at the bedside of my new granddaughter. Surrounded by life and death, let's choose life!

Boycotters take aim at another target

Years ago, when I was associate director of Canadian Jewish Congress' Pacific region, we faced threats from the widespread and well-co-ordinated Arab boycott of Israel. That country was just the primary target – don't buy Israeli products – but Arab countries extended threats of boycott to Canadian companies that did business with Israel, as well as to clients of firms who did business with Israel. Sadly, at least one major Canadian institution went along.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

You would think that this undemocratic, not to say nefarious, way of opposing Israel's right to exist within the family of nations would be a thing of the past, since clearly it has had little impact on the good things that Israel provides and it is manifestly against Canadian mores – if not constituting illegal pressure on Canadian companies.

It seems that, like the monsters of science fiction, the idea of bringing Israel to its knees via a boycott will not die.

Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) is a company that sells outdoor gear of all types and classes. To belong, you simply pay a one-time $5 membership fee and shop thereafter at your leisure. We have purchased many things there for our admittedly wimpy safaris to places such as Haida Gwaii, Costa Rica and Turkey. But we're hardly hard-core outdoors people.

We even purchased a gift certificate as a wedding present for a young Jewish couple. Like many Jewish Vancouverites, we are patrons.

So it came as a shock to get an e-mail informing us that a group calling itself B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Education – don't you love the titles they invent – was planning to present a motion at the April 30 MEC annual general meeting calling on the company to stop selling products from Israel. MEC sources two products from Israeli companies: seamless underwear and a hydration system for hikers and bikers.

Clearly these are weapons of mass destruction.

The teacher group's spokesperson, Patrik Parkes, was quoted in the Vancouver Sun as saying, "We just don't think MEC should be doing business with Israel until it changes its behaviour." This would seem to be the same kind of "we are putting you on notice of punishment" as "Floggings will continue until morale improves."

The resolution reads, in part, "Whereas Israel is currently defying more than 30 UN Security Council resolutions pertaining to its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and is in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law codified under the Geneva Conventions, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice in 2004…" It goes on to quote that firm defender of democracy in Zimbabwe, retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who condemns Israel's "system of discrimination against the Palestinians" which, he says, "reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa."

Others quoted are South African anti-apartheid activist and former African National Congress minister Ronnie Kasrils, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, and Arun Gandhi, grandson of the famous Indian leader.

What can one say? Certainly many Jewish members of the co-op were expected be at the meeting, but if past is prologue, one could only hope that MEC was ready to check memberships and hold the lid on what promised to be a very nasty evening.

Self-described peace-loving but Jew-baiting teachers have tried before to disrupt meetings of the B.C. Teachers Federation with similar hate-filled resolutions condemning Israel.

Never once have they offered a condemnation of, say, rocket attacks on civilian targets, the sexual mutilation of Muslim women in many Muslim countries (one article in the New York Times put the level of female genital mutilation in Indonesia at 95 per cent) or honour killings in many parts of the Muslim world.

No, the big and only thing holding back universal peace and education is Israel.

Even, God forbid, if the resolution garners a majority of members' votes, the MEC board has notified those of us who wrote them letters of protest that the board is the final arbiter of any decision to remove products from the company's shelves.

That decision will be reported here if and when it has been made.

Comparing Demjanjuk to Jesus is obscene

John Demjanjuk, who is about be deported to Germany to stand trial for his role in the murder of 29,000 Jews at the Sobibor death camp, is a Nazi war criminal. He may or may not have been the notorious "Ivan the Terrible" of Treblinka, but there is no question that he was Ivan the Not-so-Good of the Nazi training camp Trawniki, that he went on from there to be Ivan the Very Bad of Majdanek, Sobibor and Flossenburg, and that he lied on his visa application when he sought admission to the United States.

Menachem Rosensaft in New York

Most Americans don't consider Demjanjuk to be a praiseworthy or sympathetic figure – except, of course, for Patrick Buchanan. The MSNBC political commentator likens Demjanjuk to none other than Jesus.

I'm not kidding. In his syndicated column of April 17, Buchanan not only called Demjanjuk an "American Dreyfus" and "the sacrificial lamb whose blood washes away the stain of Germany's sins," but he wrote that the "spirit" behind the U.S. Justice Department's efforts to bring Demjanjuk to justice is "the same satanic brew of hate and revenge that drove another innocent Man up Calvary that first Good Friday 2,000 years ago."

Some innocent man. Among the findings of facts set forth by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio in February 2002 are that "the primary purpose of Trawniki Training Camp was to train men to assist the Nazi government of Germany in implementing its racially motivated policies, including and in particular 'Operation Reinhard'"; that "'Operation Reinhard' was the Nazi program to dispossess, exploit, and murder Jews in Poland"; that "Upon his arrival at Trawniki Training Camp, [Demjanjuk] entered service in the Guard Forces of the SS and Police Leader in Lublin District"; that "by January 18, 1943, while a member of the Guard Forces of the SS and Police Leader in Lublin District, [Demjanjuk] was serving as an armed guard at the concentration camp located near Lublin, commonly known as the Majdanek Concentration Camp"; that "[Demjanjuk] began serving at the Sobibor extermination camp no later than March 27, 1943"; that "In serving at Sobibor, [Demjanjuk] contributed to the process by which thousands of Jews were murdered by asphyxiation with carbon monoxide"; that "On or about October 1, 1943, [Demjanjuk] was transferred from Trawniki to Flossenburg Concentration Camp, where he became a member of the SS Death's Head Battalion Flossenbürg"; and that "[Demjanjuk] misrepresented and concealed his wartime residences and activities, which constituted misrepresentations and concealments of his wartime employment and residences for the purpose of gaining admission into the United States."

None of this matters to Buchanan, whose longtime public support for a succession of Nazi war criminals, from Demjanjuk to Karl Linnas to Arthur Rudolph, is a constitutionally protected perversion.

Buchanan has never bothered to hide his offensive views on Israel and Jews. After the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Buchanan said on national television that "there are only two groups that are beating the drums right now for war in the Middle East, and that is the Israeli defence ministry and its amen corner in the United States." He has referred to Capitol Hill as "Israeli-occupied territory," and he considers the State of Israel to be "a strategic albatross draped around the neck of the United States."

In a September 1993 speech to the Christian Coalition, Buchanan said, "Our culture is superior because our religion is Christianity, and that is the truth that makes men free." After John Cardinal O'Connor had deplored Roman Catholic anti-Semitism, Buchanan declared, "If U.S. Jewry takes the clucking appeasement of the Catholic cardinalate as indicative of our submission, it is mistaken. When Cardinal O'Connor of New York seeks to soothe the always-irate Elie Wiesel by reassuring him 'there are many Catholics who are not anti-Semitic'… he speaks for himself. Be not afraid, Your Eminence; just step aside, there are bishops and priests ready to assume the role of defender of the faith."

Buchanan's colleagues at MSNBC have consistently tolerated and overlooked his worldview. Perhaps Buchanan's obscene comparison of Demjanjuk to Jesus will now cause them to reconsider. At the very least, MSNBC executives should explain how they justify Buchanan's continued appearances on their programs. *(JTA)*

Menachem Z. Rosensaft is general counsel of the World Jewish Congress and adjunct professor of law at Cornell Law School.

The Kirshner File

The mother of all kibbutzim

Degania, a kibbutz facing the Sea of Galilee, was the first collective settlement founded in what is now Israel and what was then Palestine, an underdeveloped backwater of the Ottoman Empire. A century ago this year, 10 men and two women, all hailing from Russia and transfixed by the Zionist dream of resurrecting a Jewish homeland after some 2,000 years of Jewish dispersion, set down roots on a parcel of land, purchased by the Jewish National Fund from a Persian landowner in Beirut, near the Arab village of Umm Juni.

Sheldon Kirshner in Israel

These young Jewish pioneers, members of the Second Aliyah, had been day labourers in such newly formed Jewish towns as Rishon Lezion, Rehovot and Gedera. Fired up by Zionism, they came to Palestine to return to the land and cultivate its soil in a concerted effort to change the socio-economic structure of Jewish society. Convinced that Jews had to move away from traditional eastern European pursuits – petty retailing, inn-keeping, pawn-brokering and the like – they believed that Jews could be "redeemed" by toiling the fields of Palestine.

But when they arrived in the Jewish colonies, which European benefactors such as Baron Edmond James de Rothschild had funded and supported, they discovered, to their dismay, that a Jewish "culture of labour" had been deformed by the vicissitudes of circumstances. Rather than tilling the soil themselves, Jews in Palestine had hired Arabs to work the land and had become landlords.

Disappointed by the harsh realities they witnessed, they asked a leading Zionist figure, Arthur Ruppin, for a plot of land they could work by the sweat of their brows within the framework of a collective settlement, or kvutzah. Impressed by their ardour and commitment, Ruppin acceded to their request. And so the first kibbutz was created.

Named after the cereals they cultivated, Degania – the birthplace of war hero Moshe Dayan – was the forerunner of kibbutzim in the Land of Israel.

Today, as its residents prepare to mark its centenary later this year, Degania is still something of work in progress. Although it is staunchly communal in nature and largely dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, as one of its inhabitants, Itzhak Ankory, pointed out in a recent interview, Degania has privatized and industrialized itself to an astonishing degree, in keeping with current trends.

"The kibbutz has evolved," said Ankory, who was born in Degania 69 years ago, before Israel emerged as a state. "It's a living creature, changing all the time."

In fact, Degania is divided into two parts, Degania A (where Ankory lives) and Degania B, which was established in 1920 after members decided to downsize. Although Degania A and Degania B are separate entities economically, they share a school.

Lush and prosperous, with a population of about 600 and a museum chronicling its development and achievements, Degania was a place of desolation when it was established in 1909. In his memoirs, A Village by the Jordan (1960), Joseph Baratz, one of its original members, recalls that "there were no trees, only burnt grass and a few shrubs."

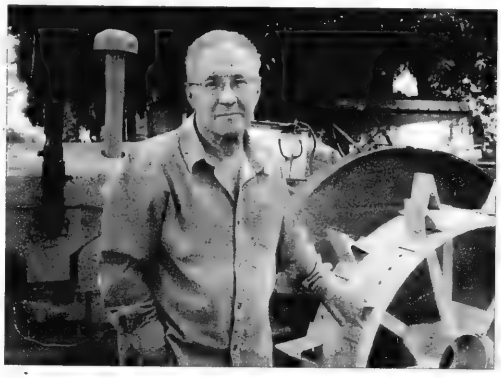
One hundred years ago, Palestine, inhabited by Muslim and Christian Arabs, Turks, Circassians and Jews, was a rocky, swampy wasteland rife with disease. "Nearly everybody had malaria and there were cases of yellow fever," writes Baratz. And in the epoch before air conditioning was introduced, the hot summer climate was virtually unbearable, something that Ankory can well understand. "I used to sleep on the grass, under mosquito netting," recalled Ankory, whose daughter, Nirit, lives in Toronto with her family.

The early settlers also had to contend with Bedouin marauders. As Baratz puts it, "They ambushed us and raided us for our cattle, and they didn't hesitate to shoot to kill." Indeed, the first Jewish settler in Degania was murdered by a Bedouin robber who demanded his mule.

In line with their ideological convictions, the pioneers of Degania were determined to work the land collectively rather than individually, realizing that this method was the most logical way to proceed in a hard and unyielding environment. "We knew that we needed one another's close and constant help in the harsh conditions of the new country," Baratz writes.

Nevertheless, they endured terrible hardship. Palestine, as Baratz says, was "wretchedly poor" and stagnant. There were hardly any roads, security was non-existent, and the soil had been neglected. In addition, they were there illegally, Jewish immigration having been banned by the Ottoman Turks. "Everything we did was on sufferance, through bribery and getting by," Baratz notes.

Through sheer grit, these inexperienced farmers planted eucalyptus trees to drain the malarial swamps and cultivated grain crops. By the 1930s, when Palestine was a British mandate and times were considerably better, the main crops were wheat, barley, vegetables, bananas, grapes, grapefruit, olives and alfalfa. Nowadays, the kibbutz cultivates bananas, dates, avocados, grapefruit and maintains a cowshed, a chicken run and a fish pond, all for local consumption.



[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Itzhak Ankory

The diamond tool factory, which Ankory once managed, commenced operations in 1996, and exports its products to such countries as the United States and Canada. "We discovered it was very, very difficult to live on agriculture alone," said Ankory, whose parents hail from Belarus and Ukraine.

In the beginning, the settlers lived in clay huts and rickety wooden cabins, shared clothes and took their meals in a common dining room. "The whole life of the kibbutz was in the dining room," writes Baratz. "This was where we ate, rested and held discussions." There is still a central dining room in Degania, but it is open only for lunch and is closed on the sabbath. Today, unlike in the past, members dine at home and live with their children. "People want more control of their lives," Ankory said.

During Degania's formative era, salaries were identical, but now there are wage differentials. And in yet another break with former practices, some kibbutzniks, 70 at last count, work outside, contributing their salaries to the collective.

Throughout its history, members have come and gone. Some, unable to cope with the difficulties, went to live in the Diaspora. Still others joined newer kibbutzim.

The pattern continues apace. Much to Ankory's regret, the vast majority of young adults eventually leave Degania, following a tour of duty in the armed forces, travel abroad and university studies.

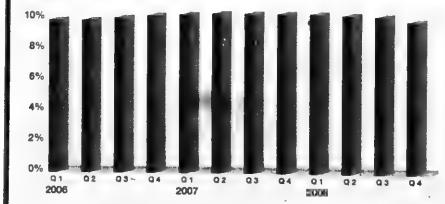
"The kibbutz, as an institution, never attracted more than four per cent of the entire population," said Ankory. "Everybody talked about the kibbutz, but no one wanted to live on the kibbutz. Maybe it will be popular again one day. In the meantime, we've had a steady flow of city people to the kibbutz."

Despite the loss of many of its young people, he is confident about the future. As he said, "The kibbutz will survive." Personally, he loves it. "Life has been good. If you don't mind sharing, it's the right way to live."

From a security point of view, Degania has had its ups and downs. During the 1948 War of Independence, a Syrian armoured force attacked the kibbutz but was repulsed. The lead attacking tank was left as a memorial. During the postwar era, Degania was never shelled by Syria because it was out of artillery range. But in the wake of the Six Day War, and until the 1970 civil war in Jordan, the PLO regularly bombarded Degania. "It was very uncomfortable," said Ankory.

Since then, Degania, the mother of Israel's kibbutzim, has enjoyed a long and uninterrupted period of peace and tranquility.

Solid Returns in Good Times and Bad.



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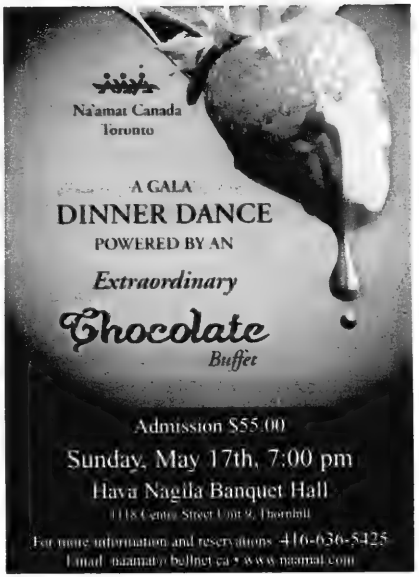

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We're making aliyah, and you should, too

By RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS

Guest Voice

We're making aliyah this summer, and I wanted to seize this opportunity to encourage others to do the same.

But I must disclose that this is the third draft of this article, and it's not that writing is difficult for me, because it's not. The first draft was about how my wife and I are following our four kids, who are all going to be in Israel, with the intention to stay, by this summer. And that first article was about how I – as a rabbi of Kehillat Shaarei Torah in Toronto for 15 years – and my wife, Joyce, have conflicted feelings about leaving people with whom we have become close.

The second article was about how life in Israel is just different – Shabbat not Sunday, Rosh Hashanah not New Year's, the family-type feeling that everyone is connected, how we feel at home, and how we cry for kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit as we would for a member of our own family.

But that's not really why I'm writing this article.

I'm not the only person making aliyah this summer. For years, there have been many fine Jews from Toronto and many from across Canada who have moved to Israel to make it their home. And many will move this year. And they all have my respect.

But I am a rabbi, and I want our story to motivate others.

So I will tell you what I really feel. I am writing this article because I know there are a lot of Jews who want to make the move and have not. I know there are plenty of reasons, plenty of complications, conflicted feelings and insecurity that holds people back. And truly, who am I to pass judgement, I of many years tarrying?

So I will tell you what I feel, and I have no doubt that my experience will resonate with many.

Living in Canada is great. We have peace. We have a pleasant and polite society. We have a standard of living that is nothing short of regal in the history of mankind. We have universal health care, a terrific Jewish community, wonderful schools and great weather. And for many, this is where our family resides and we appreciate living close to family.

But a peaceful life leaves me squirming. I want something more. All of us who have been to Israel have felt something different – a sense of belonging, an inkling that we are walking in the land of history, a sense that maybe there is more to life than meets the eye, that there is a spiritual plane that seems a bit more accessible in Israel.

There's nothing like Shabbat in Jerusalem – for all Jews, secular and religious. Everyone feels the Shabbat Bride, the Queen embracing the city at sunset. We feel we belong.

We feel it, and then we shelve it. But it nags at us. We feel satisfied with our rich and full Canadian Jewish experience – yet that feeling nags at us. For many of us, we know in our hearts that in Israel, we will be the Jews we can and want to be. We will lead a fuller Jewish life, a fuller life for our children. We feel it, and then we shelve it.

Then we visit Israel again and we feel it once more – and we read the news and we feel it. Not that it's a pure and bright flash of brilliance before our eyes. No, there are far too many complications, challenges and difficulties: How will we make a living? How will we manage the language. How can we leave our family? (This question is kind of ironic for Canadian Jews, the vast majority of whom are immigrants, children of immigrants or the grandchildren of immigrants, many of whom left family behind to come here.)

So we suppress the thoughts again.

You see, I feel I'm doing what many others want to do. No one has said to us, "What? Are you nuts?" – well, at least not to our faces. Because for many of us, the love of Israel, the ideal of aliyah and the Zionist dream are things we imbued with our mother's milk. It's an unquestioned part of what we truly feel – that our lives would be historic, heroic, more meaningful, holier and richer if we were to live in Israel.

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks

Even if we define our Jewish living culturally and politically – loving Jewish music and Jewish art, carrying placards and standing with Israel and teaching our children a love of Israel – we feel the tug, for Israel is the epicentre of our Jewish definition. Yet we suppress our feelings with the inertia of life.

And those of us who send our children to Jewish schools, to saturate them with our same love of Israel, we feel the tug.

And those of us who define our Jewish lives religiously, who learn Torah, pray for the return of the Shchinah to Yerushalayim, who send our children – no actually, push our children – to go learn in the great brain trust of Jewish learning that are the yeshivas and seminaries of Israel today, well, I have no doubt that what I have written resonates with you. You know the squirm – the shifting in our seats when we hear of others' aliyah, wondering if we could do it, too. The flights of fancy thinking of those powerful and authentic moments of true prayer we felt that one time, wondering if a life of spiritual authenticity awaits us in that place while we continue in our spiritual exile. We know that our souls would feel truly at home in the land of the Shchinah and her Torah.

That's why I wrote this article. I wanted to articulate what so many of us feel. And I wanted to make myself an example. We, Joyce and I, have all the same reasons to shelve the tug, to ignore the squirm. And we have many reasons to succumb to the tug. But I do know for sure that the reasons to ignore the tug are all of this world, while the reasons to succumb to the tug are deep in the heart and in the soul.

And it is to the tug of the heart and to the soul that we succumb.

Please join us.

Until he leaves for Israel, Rabbi Reuven Tradburks is spiritual leader of Kehillat Shaarei Torah in Toronto.

Jewish Life

Time to renegotiate

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

For weeks, GM and Chrysler have been warning that unless their workers make major wage concessions, the companies would be forced to file for bankruptcy, leading to further job losses. These demands have come despite the fact the automakers are under contract to honour existing agreements and that the autoworkers union has already made many "painful" concessions, while bondholders to whom billions of debt is owing have yet to make any concessions at all.

While one is legally and morally obligated to fulfil the terms of a contract, practically speaking, it just may not be possible to do so. Included in the mitzvot of the Torah is the prohibition of asking for payment of a debt knowing full well that the debtor is in no position to do so. Asking for payment in such a situation, besides being pointless, makes the debtor feel hurt and embarrassed. So sensitive is the Torah to such hurt feelings that the creditor may not even pass by or greet the debtor – such as wishing the debtor a Shabbat Shalom – as such interaction is likely to cause discomfort.

Employers are in business to make money, money often made through the efforts of labour. Yet despite the benefit one receives from the efforts of one's employees, providing employment, from the perspective of the employee, is a form of charity. Our tradition teaches that it is, in fact, the highest form of charity one can do. By providing an opportunity for the recipient to earn his wages, the employer has not only provided ongoing support, but also a sense of dignity for the employee.

There are, however, limits to charity – primarily that one is not obligated, or even allowed, to impoverish oneself so that others may benefit from one's largesse. Jewish law thus allows layoffs, plant closures and the like when necessary – which for simplicity sake we will define as when an operation is not profitable and has no realistic chance of being so in the near future.

When employees in an industry facing structural problems insist on their full wages and benefits, they may be trading short-term gain for long-term pain (something unfortunately that is at the root of our current economic crisis). Whether one likes it or not, employees and employers, especially during a recession, are essentially business partners. While they may have competing interests, those interests will only be met if they collaborate together. Not surprisingly, the unions did agree to further concessions.

Yet what if workers refuse demands to reduce wages? Such was the scenario regarding the (obscene) bonuses paid to workers at AIG insurance, some of whom were responsible for losing billions of dollars and thousands (millions?) of resultant job losses. Yet unpalatable as it may be, it appears that those bonuses were legal, the result of questionable negotiation techniques of the U.S. government. Imposing taxes payable only by AIG managers would appear to be a discriminatory tax and thus not legally enforceable. Doing so retroactively risks making government contracts meaningless this despite the emotional and moral appeal of such legislation.

Unfortunately, correct moral decisions are often just that – left to the moral conscience (or lack thereof) of individuals, but they're not legally enforceable. We can urge and hope that these bonuses are returned, but forcing them to be returned is a different matter. To do would require demonstrating that the bonus agreements were negotiated in bad faith, without full disclosure of all relevant data. Whether AIG negotiated in bad faith is something that can be debated. What cannot be debated is that as long as we value the bottom line over all else, we will continue to have moral crises that will inevitably lead to economic pain.

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Hebrew books donated to Barrie community

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

When a Barrie resident passed away earlier this year, he inadvertently left the local Jewish community with an extensive collection of Jewish books.

A friend of the late Richard Strothard, who wasn't Jewish, was cleaning out his apartment when she discovered about 200 books, including copies of the Torah, Tanach and Talmud, as well as books on various subjects related to Judaism, such as Judaism and Vegetarianism, Waters of Eden – Mysteries of the Mikvah, How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household, Hitler's Willing Executioners and the War Against the Jews.

Not wanting to dispose of them, she offered the collection to Barrie's Am Shalom Congregation and the city's library, but both declined to take it.

She then called Debbie Zober, who leads JACOB (an acronym for the Jewish Community of Barrie), a social and cultural networking group made up of about 50 Jewish families in Barrie with her husband, Robert.

"I got a phone call from a woman who said that her friend had just died and she needed to clean out his apartment, and he had a lot of books in his apartment," Zober said, adding that the woman told her the synagogue didn't want them because it didn't have a place to properly store them, and the library said it wasn't interested.

"She didn't know what to do with them and she was going to throw them out. When I heard that, I thought, some of them have Hebrew, so they might be prayer books, and I didn't want them going in recycling, so I said I'd have a look at them."

Zober said the woman, who didn't want to give her name, brought boxes full of the books to her home.

"We put them in the front hall, and we started looking at them. We realized what they were and how much there was and it was just unbelievable to us," Zober said.

She said that other than his interest in Jewish books (as well as other religions), she doesn't know much about Strothard, who also had teach-yourself-Hebrew books and cassettes.

"He had taught himself Hebrew. Apparently he was fluent. Half these books are in Hebrew, and half the books are in English," Zober said.

"You can see in the books that he had taught himself Hebrew, that he had written notes and plans on how he was going to teach himself Hebrew. It is really amazing."

She said she hopes people in the community, and even those who are visiting in the summer from out of town, will take advantage of the library in her home.

"I think the important thing is that people use them and that they are not just sitting here on the shelf. It is open to anyone who wants to use these books."

To learn more about the collection, email Jacob@jewishbarrie.com.

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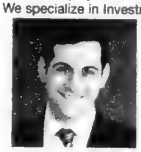

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Facing History combats prejudice from new office

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

In the mid-1970s, Myra Novogrodsky, then a novice secondary school teacher, was shaken up by an unanticipated reaction to the Holocaust lessons that were part of her Grade 12 European history class.

Instead of the empathy with Holocaust victims and commitment to "Never again" that Novogrodsky was hoping for, a couple of her students became fascinated by Nazism and wanted to experiment with it.

Her realization that "as a young teacher, I didn't know what I was doing" led her within a few years to a workshop run by the Toronto Jewish Congress (a precursor of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto) Holocaust Education Committee, which didn't exist when she began her career.

Speakers at the workshop had come to Toronto from a then-fledgling educational and professional development organization called Facing History and Ourselves, based in Brookline, Mass.

After hearing the organization's co-founders Margot Stern Strom, Facing History's executive director, and William Parsons, now chief of staff of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Novogrodsky realized she had made mistakes "in terms of not identifying the issues adolescents were dealing with... obedience, authority, identity, fairness and justice."

In the early 1980s, she obtained a grant to travel with seven colleagues to Brookline for a one-week course in preparation for teaching an interdisciplinary course on the Holocaust.

Within a few years, Novogrodsky was working for the then Toronto Board of Education, teaching other teachers about teaching the Holocaust using Facing History's model. In 1999 she was seconded by York University's faculty of education, where she taught until her recent retirement.

Myra Novogrodsky, left, and Leora Schaefer
[Frances Kraft photo]

Recently, the organization set up its first Canadian office. It received its charitable registration number last July, and opened a downtown office in October.

Novogrodsky is chair of the organization's advisory committee, and Winnipeg-born Leora Schaefer, an educator and graduate of Brandeis University's Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership program, staffs the downtown office as program director.

Schaefer, who taught at the Toronto Heschel School in the late 1990s and has worked for Facing History for seven years, moved back to Toronto almost four years ago. Initially, she telecommuted from a home office.

Schaefer works with Jewish day schools across North America in conjunction with Facing History's Jewish education program, which includes study of prewar Jewish life. The majority of the organization's work, however, has been within the public school system. It began working in Jewish schools in 1998.

Facing History recently partnered with the Toronto District School Board to develop a new course on 20th-century genocide and crimes against humanity that has been approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education and is already being used.

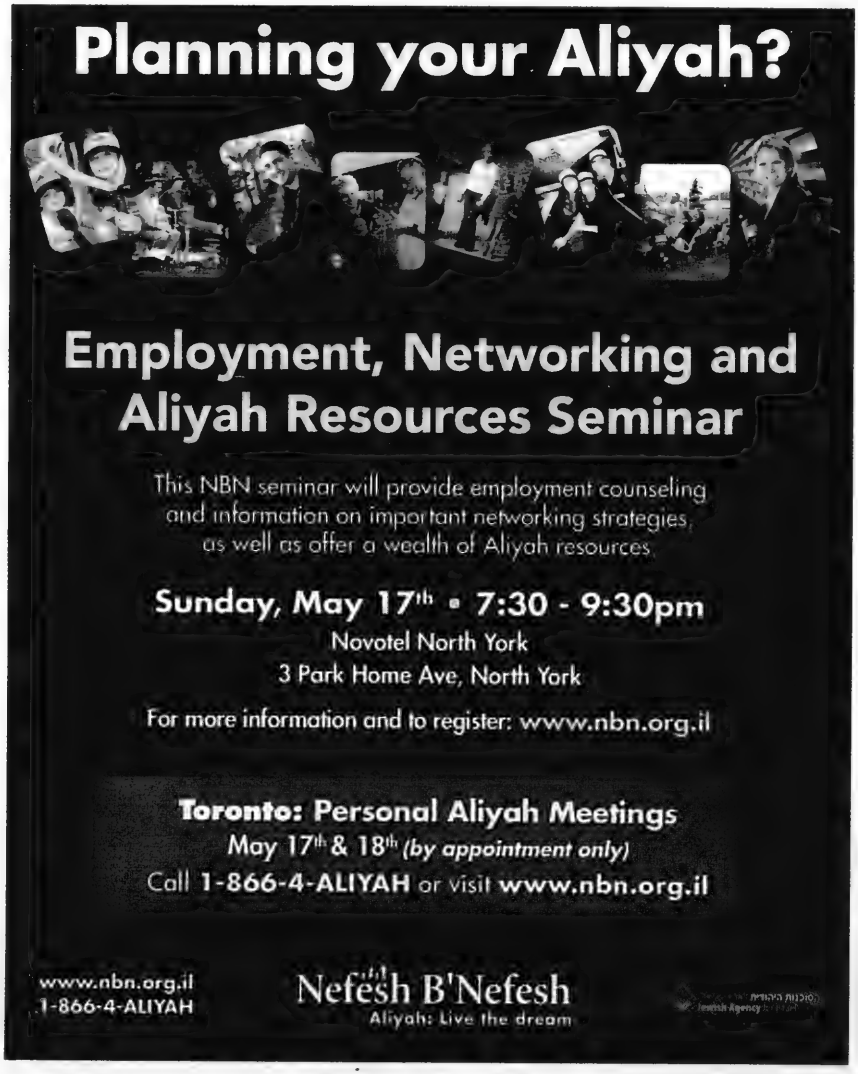
It also offers programs for adults. On May 12, at 7:30 p.m., a free public session on the role of the press in upholding human rights will take place at the Miles Nadal JCC.

Titled "Can Media Make a Difference?," the event, in honour of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, will feature Olivia Ward, Toronto Star journalist, and Amanda Grzyb, University of Western Ontario media scholar. The discussion will be moderated by Michael Enright of CBC Radio.

Facing History has had a presence in Toronto, and to a lesser extent in British Columbia, for years. Every summer it offers a five-day seminar for teachers in the Toronto area.

One thing that makes the organization unique, said Schaefer, is its pedagogical approach. "It has to be intellectually rigorous, emotionally engaging and have that ethical reflection piece... It's critical that students are ultimately empowered."

A privately funded endeavour, Facing History needs supporters, said Schaefer. "This is an incredibly challenging time to be raising money as a new organization, but there really isn't a more critical time to support teachers."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Jewish bikers ride to remember the Shoah

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Members of the Toronto chapter of the Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance (JMA) will participate in the fifth annual "Ride 2 Remember".

The ride will see approximately 40 riders from Toronto – 30 from the city's "Yidden On Wheels" club, plus another 10 from the newly formed "Golf Riders" club – head down to Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C., from May 14 to 16 in order to raise awareness about the Holocaust.

According to Yidden On Wheels member and ride co-chair, Steve Stein, the Toronto riders represent the largest JMA contingent on the 2009 ride.

The alliance calls itself "a worldwide association of Jewish motorcycle clubs" representing more than 3,500 motorcycle enthusiasts. Members from as far off as Australia and Israel will also take part in this year's event.

This year, the JMA will raise funds for the Holocaust Learning and Research Library and the Remember Project, educational initiatives sponsored by the Jewish communities in Savannah and Charleston, respectively.

As of late April, the alliance had raised more than $27,000 (US) for the initiatives, with Toronto chapters contributing more than $3,400 (US), Stein told The CJN.

Last year the JMA raised approximately $60,000 (US) for the Heartland Holocaust Education Fund of Nebraska.

"We expect and hope that donations will accelerate as the event draws nigh," Stein wrote to The CJN via e-mail.

In Omaha for 2008 R2R. From left, Henry Winokur, Washington, DC; Steve Stein, Toronto; Sid Rochwerg, Toronto

"The ride organizing committee… is fully cognizant of the extraordinary challenges of raising funds in the current economic environment, and thus we have not set a [fundraising] goal."

Stein added: "As the number of Holocaust survivors inexorably diminish, every year we ride…, so that we and the world not forget the six million who were murdered [in the Shoah].

"We feel that the worldwide Jewish community is in the greatest danger since the Holocaust. We are in an era of increasing Holocaust denial and state-sponsored declarations that call for the destruction of Israel. Our mission is to counter the culture of hostility toward Israel and the Jewish people that is taking hold in the Western world."

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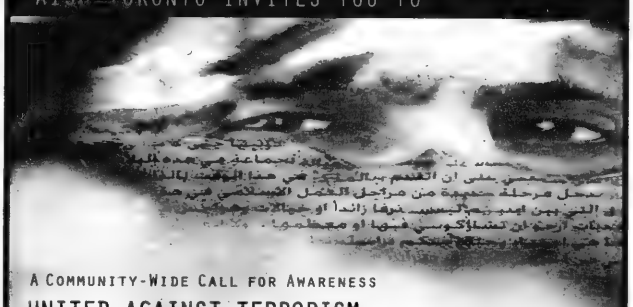

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Yom Hazikaron

WAR HERO: Howard Cossman, left, a Machal volunteer and sergeant of the 72nd battalion of the Israeli army during the 1948 War of Independence, recently met Downtown Jewish Community School Grade 4 student Joseph Blanc, grandson of David Azrieli of the Azrieli Foundation. Cossman spoke to DJCS students about his experiences in 1948 and what motivated him to volunteer to go to Israel during the war. After the lecture, Joseph introduced himself to Cossman, noting that Cossman was featured in the book that his grandfather wrote, titled Rekindling the Torch: The Story of Canadian Zionism. Cossman and Azrieli were in the same unit in Israel in 1948. Thanks to the Azrieli Foundation, every parent at the lecture received a copy of the book.

REMEMBERING HEROES: On Yom Hazikaron (Israeli Memorial Day), students from Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School were moved by a special presentation given by Zev Golan, author of the book Free Jerusalem: Heroes, Heroines and Rogues Who Created the State of Israel. Pictured, back row from left, are Jonathan Clodman, Liron Porges, Dan Amar, Golan, Zachary Mincer, and Deena Spivak; and front, Abraham Train, left, and Josh Grosh.

YOM HAZIKARON COMMEMORATION: Members of the Israeli youth movements Tzofim (wearing white shirts) and Hashomer Hatzair lay a wreath at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue as part of a Yom Hazikaron ceremony last week. The event paid tribute to 22,570 soldiers who died defending Israel, and 1,723 Israeli civilians killed in terror attacks since the founding of the state.

[Frances Kraft photo]

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1. **Tuesday, May 12th at 8:00 p.m.**
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2. **Thursday, May 14th at 8:00 p.m.**
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The Community is invited to attend; doors open at 7:30 p.m.
There is no charge.

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CJPAC party links politicians, young professionals

Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, centre, takes a moment to schmooze with CJPAC members Tyler Golden, left, and Marlee Mozeson at the third annual Action Party. [Adrian Holmes photo]

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The booze was flowing, the music was blaring and the guests were shmoozing with Canadian politicians from all levels of government at the third annual Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) Action party.

The event – held at Andrew Richard Designs in downtown Toronto and co-chaired by Jessica Fenton, Jonathan Goldman, Hartley Lefton and Lauren Levy – attracted about 650 young professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 and about 30 cabinet ministers, MPs, MPPs and Toronto city councillors.

Among those who attended were Canada's minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, Conservative MP Peter Kent, Liberal MP Ken Dryden, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Pierre Poilievre, NDP MP Olivia Chow, and Conservative MPP Peter Shurman.

The April 23 party featured live music, a DJ, open bar, appetizers, desserts and an opportunity to network with some of the most influential people in the country, said Josh Cooper, executive director of CJPAC, a national, independent, non-partisan organization that has been working to engage the Jewish community in the political process since 2005.

"We had the largest turnout of elected officials and the widest range of elected officials [than ever before]," Cooper said.

This year, for the first time, an Action party was also held in Montreal a month earlier, attracting about 300 members of the Jewish community, as well as 23 politicians.

Cooper said he hopes the young professionals who are new to CJPAC and the Action party will become more politically active and engaged in advocacy that will benefit Canada-Israel relations.

"If they see something they like, and they want to thank a member of Parliament, our job is to provide them with the tools to be able say, 'Thank you,' and to speak out when they see something they don't agree with," Cooper said.

Some CJPAC members have even maintained friendly relationships with elected officials they met at the Action parties, he said.

"We now have 650 new or renewed activists who will be actively involved with CJPAC," he said, adding that the $80 ticket included a $25 membership fee to CJPAC.

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For more information about these and other programmes at Zareinu, please contact Dr. Mitch Parker, Principal and Clinical Director, at 905-738-5542 or mitch@zareinu.org.

BBYO teens stay up all night for Israel

Compiled by CJN Staff

BBYO's Lake Ontario Region members held an Up All Night for Israel event in support of Canadian Magen David Adom (CMDA) at Beth Radom Synagogue recently.

At the April 25 event, national executive director of CDMA, Arnold Rosner, spoke to the teens about Magen David's operations and recognized their efforts in raising more than $1,200 through the Up All Night initiative.

Rosner told the teens that the funds would be used toward the purchase an emergency airway passage pack by Magen David, Israel's sole national emergency, medical, ambulance, and blood services society.

The teens also participated in a training session of Krav Maga, the official self-defence system of the Israel Defence Forces, led by Rob Ferreira of Krav Maga Toronto.

"The IDF training was definitely one of the highlights for me," said Grade 9 student Jesse Freedman, who recently joined BBYO. "But the midnight falafel buffet and the Israeli folk dancing were also incredible."

The event was one of BBYO's first under the movement's new Stand Up campaign.

"Stand Up is BBYO's service, social justice, advocacy and philanthropy campaign that promotes teens getting involved in causes important to them," said Kevin Goodman, program director for BBYO's Lake Ontario Region.

For more information about BBYO in the GTA, contact Kevin Goodman at 416-398-2004, ext. 222, or kgoodman@bbyo.org.

Emma Alimi, left, and Bailey Bernknopf, right, of BBYO's Beth Radom chapter, are shown defence techniques by Rob Ferreira of Krav Maga Toronto.

Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation
La Fondation Culturelle Canada-Israel

Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation is thrilled to present Israel Makes Music on Tuesday, May 19th at 8 pm at the Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. West.

This quartet of highly talented young Israeli musicians are all America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarship winners and have been named Distinguished Musicians during their IDF service. There is little doubt that the young people you will hear at Israel Makes Music will be the superstars of tomorrow.

The chamber music concert programme will be in the format of a "guided concert", where the performers will provide an historical context for each composition, as well as an introduction to some of the musical themes.

This promises to be a wonderful evening of music, followed by a dessert reception, with an opportunity to meet these remarkable young musicians.

Tickets are $20, and are available for ordering through Ticketweb www.ticketweb.ca or 1.888.222.6608 or through the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation office at 416.932.2260.

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'An economic reality that we have to reckon with'

Continued from page 3

she has worked with for their commitment and enthusiasm and said she looked forward to the future they were building for the movement.

Rabbi Offner expressed regret over the layoffs initiated by URJ. Addressing the situation in Canada specifically, she said that Rabbi Sobel "has been a great leader of Reform Judaism and we feel dreadful about losing her, but we have an economic reality that we have to reckon with… that is larger than we are. We can't control it. We can only respond to it."

Instead of the current regional URJ offices, congregations will be served by four "congregational support centres."

In Canada, congregations from Victoria to Regina will fall under the aegis of a centre in Los Angeles, while other Canadian Reform congregations will be served by its counterpart in Chicago. The other two centres will be based in New York and Atlanta.

"I think it's something that was necessary and important in terms of moving us into the future," Rabbi Offner said.

"We hope the congregations are affected in a positive way."

Carole Sterling, president of the CCRJ and – until June 7, – of Temple Sinai Congregation, said there is "some uncertainty" over the change, but also "a lot of excitement.

"We do believe it will be a much better model for delivery of service."

She added that, because of the timing of the economic downturn, its effect on Canadian congregations' membership renewals won't be fully apparent until next year.

In related news, the Reform movement's rabbinical school may close two of its three U.S. campuses. The board of governors of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion will meet this month to discuss ways of dealing with the school's financial problems, including whether to keep open just one of its three campuses in Los Angeles, New York and Cincinnati. Other alternatives include merging academic programs while keeping more than one campus open.

In a letter to members of the college community, president Rabbi David Ellenson said HUC faces a $3-million deficit this year because of declines in its endowment and dues paid by Reform congregations, among other funding problems. He said his salary and those of other top administrators have already been cut by 10 per cent and tuition will also be raised.

With files from JTA

Walk with Israel responds to anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism

May 24 event celebrates 60 years of Canada's recognition

The 2009 United Jewish Appeal Walk with Israel takes place on Sunday, May 24, rain or shine.

Husband and wife team Bruce and Lianne Leboff, chairs of this year's Walk with Israel. (Courtesy of Macdonell Photography)

By Daniel Horowitz

With many organizations and individuals questioning the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish State, the chairs of this year's Walk with Israel see the event as the perfect opportunity for Toronto's Jewish community and other friends of Israel to demonstrate their support.

"We feel that it's important to join the Walk every year, but this year in particular we need to walk together as a community to show our pride in, and solidarity with Israel," said Lianne Leboff, who is chairing the Walk with her husband Bruce. Not only did they grow up walking the Walk, but Lianne still proudly holds on to her Walk completion certificates from the 1970s.

"I think it's vital today, in light of worldwide anti-Semitism exemplified by Iranian President Ahmadinejad, anti-Israel hatred on our campuses, and ongoing attempts to deny Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish State, that we show Canada, Israel and the rest of the world, regardless of our religious or political affiliations, that we will remain unwavering in our support for Israel."

The United Jewish Appeal Walk with Israel - which will take place - rain or shine - on Sunday, May 24, will mark 2009 as the 60th anniversary of official recognition of Israel by Canada.

"Canada has shown itself to be a leader in taking a stand on the international stage when it comes to Israel," explained Bruce. "Our Jewish community particularly appreciates the fact that Canada was the first country in the world to withdraw from this year's Durban II conference in Geneva. Prime Minister Harper and Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff have demonstrated leadership in their strong support for Israel based on so many shared values with Canada. This historic bond between Canada and Israel should be recognized and celebrated and the Walk with Israel is a perfect opportunity to do so."

While many married couples may consider co-chairing an event of this magnitude as unwise, the Leboffs are finding it much to their liking, largely because of their shared commitment to Israel.

"The fact that we know each other so well has definitely helped," said Bruce. "We are equally committed to Israel and to a strong Jewish community and we have our individual strengths, which has facilitated the division of responsibilities in chairing this important annual event. We approach this project as a team and we hope that we are setting an example for our three daughters. We are also so appreciative of the tremendous role played by UJA staff in making the Walk happen. We hope to have record-breaking participation from the community this year."

For more information about the 2009 Walk with Israel, visit walkwithisrael.com or call 416.631.5700.

Campaign 2010 Chairs energized by trip to Israel

After returning to Toronto following four intense, eighteen-hour days in Israel, many of us might still be fumbling through the day, recouping our senses.

That is not the case, however, with three Torontonians who recently traveled together on a fact-finding mission to Israel, in preparation to lead United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010.

The mission took the Toronto trio to Eilat, Sderot, Jerusalem and Bat Yam, where they met with members of that city's large Ethiopian immigrant community.

Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, the incoming chairs of this year's campaign, as well as the new chair of Women's Philanthropy, Andrea Cohen, came back to Toronto following their whirlwind trip, energized, educated and enthusiastic about their roles.

"Those four full days together in Israel certainly laid the foundation for a strong working relationship among us," said Tanenbaum, whose role as one of the campaign chairs continues what has become a family tradition. His grandfather Max chaired the annual campaign in 1961 as did his father Larry, in 1999, with Brent Belzberg.

"I had three key takeaways from our trip," offered Tanenbaum. "First, that we have incredibly talented and energized people in Israel who are creating thoughtful programs, leveraging our dollars and delivering remarkable results. Second, our dollars are focused on lifting people up. We're really strengthening Israel through our investment in people. Third, the wonderful programs and the incredible team there have attracted the attention of Israeli philanthropists who want to partner with us, thus maximizing our impact on the country."

"While our Israel mission was for educational purposes, it also gave each of us the opportunity to put real faces to each of the projects UJA's campaign supports through United Israel Appeal (UIA) in Israel," explained Kimel. "For example, after participating in the groundbreaking at the Yoseftal Hospital in Eilat, a radiologist tapped me on the shoulder to say thank you to Toronto for improving the quality of life and health care in Eilat. By meeting and talking to people we partner with in Israel, and by listening to the stories of the recipients, we were all able to come back to Toronto with a clear understanding of the impact UJA gifts make."

(L-R) Andrea Cohen, Ken Tanenbaum and Debbie Kimel in Bat Yam.

"Potential donors to Women's Philanthropy need to know how challenging life is in Israel," said Cohen. "We do excellent work in Israel with various agencies and Israeli philanthropists, to ensure that Israelis have a better quality of life. We help to integrate Ethiopian immigrants, we provide support in Sderot, we are building the new emergency wing in the only hospital in Eilat, which has not been renovated in 60 years, and we provide help for Israel's youth-at-risk. At home, in Toronto, ten percent of the Jewish community – approximately 20,000 – live below the poverty line, and we provide for them as well. The people we met on this mission have helped to inspire me to do the very best I can to educate other women about the needs faced by Jews in Israel and in our own community."

"I believe that two of the common threads that bind us as a Jewish people are a sense of collective responsibility and a love for Israel," explained Tanenbaum. "Our UJA campaign is an efficient and effective way for our community to maximize its impact across the spectrum of Jewish needs."

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Has Ahmadinejad really turned over a new leaf?

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Recent headlines in Israeli and Canadian newspapers seemed to tell of a remarkable development: "Iran will honor any two-state decision made by Palestinians" (Jerusalem Post, April. 26); "Ahmadinejad 'fine' with two-state solution" (Ynetnews, Apr. 26); "Iran prepared to back Palestinian deal with Israel, Ahmadinejad says" (Globe and Mail, April 27); "Iranian president appears to recognize Israel's right to exist for first time" (National Post, April 27).

If true, these reports indicate a revolutionary change in the thinking of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who had just come from the United Nations' anti-racism conference in Geneva, where he once again vilified Israel.

The only problem is that the journalists' interpretation of Ahmadinejad's intent was simply incorrect. The headlines reflect a misunderstanding of an interview with Ahmadinejad on ABC's This Week (April 26).

Host George Stephanopoulos tried to pin Ahmadinejad down on whether he would support a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that would result in a two-state solution.

At first, Ahmadinejad would only say that Iran supports the "legal rights" of the Palestinian people, code for the "right of return" of the Palestinians to present-day Israel, which would amount to the destruction of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.

Stephanopoulos plowed on, asking again: "If the Palestinians sign an agreement with Israel, would Iran support that?" Ahmadinejad answered: "Whatever decision they take is fine with us."

Many in the media took these words as a breakthrough in Iran's adamant refusal to recognize Israel.

However, Jim Lederman, senior Israel analyst for Oxford Analytica, explained during a conversation that "since the time of [former Palestinian Authority president Yasser] Arafat, the term 'a decision of the Palestinian people' has been a code word for a vote in which all Palestinians, including refugees and expatriates, such as those living in Central America, Brazil, Nigeria and the United States, could take part. Stephanopoulos, like most journalists who are unfamiliar with the political code words that are used, was unable, despite all his efforts, to explain to his audience the true meaning of Ahmadinejad's words.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejd

"The result of such a vote, involving millions of people, on particularly sensitive subjects such as the 'right of return' would be predetermined."

Meanwhile, as reported by the news service AFP ("Iran should act to back two-state solution: U.S.," April 28), "[U.S.] State Department spokesman Robert Wood said the United States wanted Iran to 'play a positive role in the region, which up until now it hasn't.'

"'If Iran wants to show goodwill, it should encourage those forces that it supports that are opposed to a two-state solution to cease their opposition and work constructively toward helping us reach that two-state solution,' he said."

Even the AFP story contradicts itself regarding Ahmadinejad's intentions. The lead paragraph states that Iran's president "said Tehran could accept a two-state solution." Later, it notes: "Ahmadinejad did not specify if Iran would recognize Israel if there were a two-state solution creating an independent Palestine." Indeed, Ahmadinejad never spoke directly about accepting Israel.

As far as playing a "constructive role in the region," Iran stands accused by moderate Arab states of fuelling Hezbollah's destabilizing designs in Lebanon, underwriting Hamas' and Islamic Jihad's radical rejectionism in Gaza, and, most recently, seeking to undermine Egypt's stability by funding Hezbollah cells on Egyptian soil.

In "Iran's New Target: Egypt," (Wall Street Journal, April 28), Abdel Monem Said Ali, director of the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo, wrote about Tehran's growing thirst for influence and power in the Arab Middle East.

Iran, wrote Said Ali, is making a "determined effort to sabotage Egypt's attempts at regional stability… Egypt's persistent attempts to bring about peace in this arena and its encouragement of other Arab countries to follow its path with Israel threaten to deprive Iran of the single most potent issue that it can exploit to further its radical agenda. Thus Tehran seeks to undermine the prospects for this peace."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Book makes case to scrap rights commissions

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It's safe to say Ezra Levant doesn't have a large fan base inside Jewish organizations that, under various community relations mandates, are expected to defend Jews from the dangers posed by anti-Semites.

Levant has stepped on more than a few toes with his caustic critique of Jewish groups that, he says, support human rights commissions' restrictions on free speech in order to tackle what he considers to be a non-existent threat posed by neo-Nazi nobodies posting material on the Internet.

But in his recent best-selling book, Shakedown, McLelland & Stewart, the Calgary-based author goes further, alleging that in the 1960s, Canadian Jewish Congress even bankrolled the Canadian Nazi Party because it wanted to justify its own existence by having a real enemy to contend with.

That prompted a response from Congress, which pointed out Levant relied on a mistaken Maclean's article from 1966. The extent of the "bankrolling" was an expense incurred by a private investigator hired by Congress to investigate the Nazi group who bought a bottle of rum, stated a letter from Congress co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka. Rabbi Bulka went on, however, to acknowledge that Levant's book "does open the door to a potentially serious debate on human rights law."

Indeed, in Shakedown, Levant offers a compelling case why the hate speech provisions in human rights legislation should be abolished, if not the commissions themselves. The commissions have become superfluous in pursuing their original mandates of ending discrimination in the provision of apartments and jobs. Employment and landlord and tenant legislation already does that, he says.

What we have now is a bureaucracy staffed by left-wing activists expanding the reach of the state to limit legitimate expressions of free speech to satisfy groups or individuals who feel aggrieved. That's not a bargain most Canadians feel comfortable with, Levant argues.

In an interview with The CJN, Levant said much of the work of human rights commissions (there are 14 in Canada, one for each province and territory and one federal body) has gone under the radar. The mainstream media has largely ignored them, and most Canadians know little about them until they have to face a complaint themselves. "People feel trapped" by the commissions and "appalled at the lack of natural justice," he said.

Levant's own run-in with the Alberta commission came in 2006 as a result of the now-defunct Western Standard magazine, which he published, printing cartoons that depicted the Muslim prophet Muhammad. Publication of the cartoons in Denmark inflamed the Muslim world and led to riots and deaths. The Western Standard made an editorial decision to print the cartoons so its readers could see for themselves what had prompted such a violent reaction.

Around the same time, columnist Mark Steyn and Maclean's magazine were hauled before the B.C. Human Rights Commission after the magazine ran excerpts from Steyn's best-seller, America Alone, which examined the threat posed by radical Islamists. The two cases became causes celebre and shone a light on the commissions.

Levant maintains both cases were dismissed because of the notoriety attached to them, but in most instances, victims capitulate because the deck is stacked against them. Complainants don't incur any expense, while it is costly to present a defence. Adjudicators aren't neutral, but are often political activists who side with the complainant and who have no particular legal training. Disclosure is hit and miss. (Jewish groups argue the commissions should be reformed, not abolished.)

Dragged before the Alberta Human Rights Commission, Levant made it "my personal mission" to repeal the provision limiting free speech.

"But that's not enough," he said. The vast majority of cases don't deal with allegations of hate.

For example: in British Columbia, a woman was fired by McDonald's because a skin condition prevented her from washing her hands as often as mandated by the restaurant chain. She alleged discrimination based on a disability and, amazingly, won a judgment of $50,000.

In another case, a pizza delivery woman complained about the violent, sexually explicit music being played in the workplace. She won a settlement of $3,500 four years after the restaurant manager agreed to change the music from CDs to radio.

According to Levant, human rights commissions have elevated everyday disputes to the level of human rights. But it is their assault on free expression that should concern Canadians most, he said.

Ezra Levant

And in that area, Jewish organizations are out of step with their constituencies. "I don't think Jews are for censorship," he said. "As a minority, we were subject to censorship."

Levant dismisses the argument that anti-Semitic words could lead to genocide. "The presence of anti-Semitic words did not lead to the Holocaust," he said. "It was laws passed by the Nazis that led to genocide." You are mistaken if you believe that a government that would kill you would be deterred by the rulings of human rights commissions, he added.

The night before his interview with The CJN, Levant was on a panel in London that attracted 600 people to hear a discussion on free speech and the commissions. His book is number 3 on the Globe and Mail's best-seller list. Editorials across the country have come out against the commissions' restrictions on free speech, as did an investigation by Prof. Richard Moon for the federal commission. Alberta is taking another look at them.

"There are very positive signs. I think change is going to come," Levant said.

Give Thought When Choosing Your Investments

Michael Korman, B. Comm, FMA, FCSI
Financial Advisor

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If you don't have the time to understand what is affecting your money it may be to your benefit to seek a second opinion and consider a full time fee-based professional. The business cycle can dramatically impact your money and it really is important that someone works with you to help you understand the economy's impact on your money. I try to explain to my clients that there is a difference in a total wealth management big picture approach and a stock market approach to money. I prefer the total wealth management approach for retail clients.

Here is an example of what I mean.

A cardiologist recently requested an appointment. Her $1.2 million portfolio consisted of a capital pooled fund and one discretionary program. The pool was essentially a duplication of the TSX top 60 dividend stocks yielding about 3.2% while the discretionary program was a copy of the bond index with an extra fee. The bond index represented about 25% of the portfolio while the equity portion represented 75%. The mandate of the equity manager was all stock with no ability to move to more than 20% cash. The result was a net reduction of about $254,000 CDN on the portfolio considering the cash position.

A better understanding on the part of the advisor of this doctor's financial picture and obligations, and how the business cycle affects the bond and equity markets, may have prevented such an onerous amount of equity being used in the doctor's portfolio at this point in time.

Typically at this phase of the business cycle, there is lending available to staple stock market businesses such as medical supply and health care companies, food processors, larger food retailers, cable companies — virtually anything that has consistent strong operating cash flow. In my past corporate experience, banks lend money to businesses based on balance sheet strength, not on what companies say they earn. Your money invested today in your pension plan is affected by the fundamental weakness in the consumer's bank account. The threat to the consumer is the loss of disposable income from aggregate job losses and the resulting loss of household equity borrowing power.

So what can you do to gain better control over your money and perhaps end up with a better retirement and pension? Hire someone who understands how operating cash in companies can affect their share price or unit value. Also make sure your advisors have a good understanding of the bond and business cycle and don't assume just anyone has the background to understand the valuation of a stock because they are in the business. Most medical clients I know have little time to consider what impacts their money.

If you feel that way as well, feel free to give me a ring at 416-222-6848 at my Raymond James office or e-mail me at michael.korman@raymondjames.ca.

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RAYMOND JAMES

Israeli survivors cope better with trauma: study

Comparative study conducted at Haifa U

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Holocaust survivors in Israel cope better with trauma than survivors in the Diaspora, says the author of a Haifa University comparative study on the long-term effects of the Holocaust.

"It was found that living in Israel rather than in other countries can serve as a protective factor for psychological well-being," Efrat Barel told The CJN in an interview.

Barel, a research fellow at the Center for the Study of Child Development, also discovered that survivors adapted to Israel just as well as non-survivors, even though they had to deal with more problems.

"Survivors' attempts to reach [Palestine] were met with resistance by the British mandatory government," she said. "Next were the struggles associated with immigration: unemployment, personal and social adaptation and assimilation."

Finally, survivors had to cope with the perception that the Holocaust should be suppressed from Israel's national consciousness.

Nevertheless, survivors adapted no less well to Israel than non-survivors, reported Barel, who conducted her study under the supervision of Avi Sagi-Schwartz, a professor at Haifa University's department of psychology.

Asked to account for this phenomenon, Barel pointed to two possible explanations.

"The first may be found in the strains and stresses inflicted on Israelis... by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Constant existential threats may contribute to lower psychological well-being in both groups, which would explain the absence of differences between them.

"The second explanation is based on the notion of man's search for meaning, which emphasizes the healing power rooted in the desire to find meaning, even in anguish. This notion is relevant in particular to Israel's postwar reality.

Efrat Barel

"Survivors who immigrated to Israel were part of a large community with a shared vision – building and shaping the Jewish state. Perhaps this served as a protective factor that helped them achieve a new sense of meaning in their lives. This was not the situation for survivors who settled in countries other than Israel."

Scarred as they were by their terrible experiences, survivors exhibited remarkable resilience in their daily lives, noted Barel, currently a lecturer at the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel.

Barel added that they still bear the pain of their past in the form of various psychiatric symptoms, particularly post-traumatic stress.

"Our findings are especially relevant for child survivors," she said.

"Most survivors were children during the Holocaust. Special attention should be paid to them. As they approach old age, they encounter new challenges, including loss of spouse, retirement and health care problems that may reactivate their extreme early stress.

"Therapeutic interventions are, therefore, sometimes needed for coping with the reactivated stress."

The psychiatric needs of survivors tend to be overlooked because their resilience has masked vulnerabilities and difficulties, she observed.

In general, they develop more frequent symptoms such as depression and anxiety.

Yet in other areas relating to functionality – physical health, psychological welfare and cognitive functioning – there were no significant differences between survivors and non-survivors.

Nor were there disparities in their longevity rates, she noted.

In short, she said, her findings underscore the fact that survivors in Israel display both vulnerability and resilience.

Barel's study is based on 59 earlier studies encompassing 71 sample groups and 12,746 survivors.

"I am interested in trauma and stress, especially in resilience from trauma," she said of her decision to explore this topic.

"I am not personally connected to the Holocaust, but this dimension of Jewish history is part of my identity. I believe that through studying Holocaust survivors we will be able to uncover the enduring effects of massive trauma and extreme stressful experiences."

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Independent centenarian doesn't feel 100

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Margaret Kamin-Zysman will be 100 years old on May 16.

At an interview in her apartment, where she lives alone, the sprightly centenarian said, "I am 100 years old. Isn't that ridiculous? I don't feel it. And I don't look it."

There's no doubt that she could be taken for a person in her 80s, both mentally and physically. She has some hearing loss, but her memory is exceptional.

Born in Poland, she had a long career in the theatre business in Toronto and was active in fundraising .

Her memoirs were published in 1996.

Before Memoirs of Margaret Kamin-Zysman was published, she had been making notes about her life to give to her children and grandchildren, but she discovered that the cost of getting a book published was high.

In the mid-1990s, she saw an item in The CJN by June Callwood asking people to submit their biographies for possible publication.

"I went for an interview with June Callwood, and I sent her a few pages from my book," Kamin-Zysman said.

"I was thrilled when she told me that the book had literary value and that she would publish the book for me for $300."

In the foreword of her book, which is dedicated to her two sons, Arthur and Jules Kamin, Kamin-Zysman acknowledges Callwood. "My deep gratitude to June Callwood without whose help these memoirs would never have seen the light," she wrote.

Born Miriam Fingerhut in Bolechow, Poland, a shtetl near Lvov, Kamin-Zysman came to Canada at age 17 with her parents and two younger sisters. Her grandfather had arrived in Toronto in 1890.

Although she is fluent in six languages – English, Polish, German, Ukrainian, Yiddish and Hebrew – her first job was in a millinery factory.

"The Depression made the work sporadic," she said. "So I looked for more permanent employment."

Her mother's stepbrother, Samuel Fine, was in the theatre business. He arranged for her to work as a cashier in a theatre box office. From the 1930s to 1985, when she retired, she worked in several movie theatres, including the Towne Cinema, which used to be at Yonge and Bloor streets.

Centenarian Margaret Kamin-Zysman is seen at a Na'amat Canada tribute dinner in September 2008.
[Mollie Rothman photo]

She jokes that she became known as "Margaret," because that's what her "colleagues, lovers and boyfriends" would call her.

In 1939, she married Mack Kamin. Along with raising her boys, working, singing in the Beth Tzedec Congregation and the choirs of Farband, a Yiddish-speaking labour Zionist organization, she joined Pioneer Women (now Na'amat Canada) and became an ardent fundraiser. She was a delegate at a Na'amat conference in Israel in 1965.

Her husband died in 1976, and she remarried Arthur Zysman in 1983. Although they were married for only four years, she said she was fortunate to have had two good marriages.

When asked about her independence, positive outlook in life and how she copes with problems, she said, "Throughout my life, in times of need and uncertainty, I think of my mother and ask what would she do."

Kamin-Zysman plans to lead a family sing-song at her birthday celebration.

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On Campus

U of T faculty club renames its card room

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

In honour of its building's Jewish history, the University of Toronto's Faculty Club has renamed its card room the Primrose Room.

The building at 41 Willcocks Ave. was home to a Jewish men's club for 40 years after it was purchased in 1920. In 1959, the building, where men gathered to play cards, eat and socialize, was handed over to the expanding university for $1.

The Primrose Club moved to another location on St. Clair Avenue W., but that property has since been sold to developers and the club was disbanded.

On April 29, Faculty Club board members and people with connections to the now-defunct Jewish club gathered for a ceremony to officially change the name of the Faculty Club's card room to the Primrose Room.

The renaming was initiated by Estelle Creed Kaufman – daughter of the late Edmond Creed, president of the Primrose Club before it was expropriated by the university – who made a donation to the club.

Marvin Sazant, Creed Kaufman's cousin and a member of the Faculty Club, conducted the ceremony and read a letter of thanks from Creed Kaufman, who couldn't attend the ceremony because she lives in Flint, Mich., with her husband Benjamin Kaufman.

Marvin Sazant

In the letter – written in memory of her father, her late mother Rae Creed and her late brother Raymond Creed– she thanked the board members for recognizing the building's history.

"The roots are very beautiful and very strong," she said in a telephone interview.

Creed Kaufman also wanted to recognize former Primrose Club members, who she called "gracious and giving."

"They all volunteered and joined the 7th artillery of Canada and they were very patriotic to Canada. They were with the 7th artillery of Canada until war's end."

YORK CELEBRATES: A York University student, left, lines up for a piece of cake with Hillel of Greater Toronto staff members Alona Geysman, centre, and Rotem Stark at a Hillel-organized Yom Ha'atzmaut barbeque at York on April 29 to celebrate Israel's 61st birthday. The event, which included kosher burgers and hot dogs, Israeli music, a hookah and birthday cake, attracted enthusiastic supporters of Israel who proudly waved Israeli flags. [Daniel Abramson photo]

On Campus

JDL objects to 'Israel/Palestine' conference at York

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The Jewish Defence League said it plans to hold weekly demonstrations at York University to protest an upcoming two-day conference called Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace.

The June 22-24 conference, co-sponsored by Queen's University and York, and an official part of York's 50th anniversary celebrations, will "explore which state model would be the best to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, respecting the rights to self-determination of both Israelis/Jews and Palestinians," the event's website said.

Critics of the conference are worried that while it's being promoted as a dialogue on which solution would be best to achieve peace in the region, the speakers – some of whom are active in the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel – will present the one-state solution as the only viable option.

The website for the conference also says that "despite the current diplomatic focus on the two-state model… the conference seeks to systematically measure the two-state model against the promise of alternatives; very specifically the potential in the model of a single bi-national state."

Among the 49 confirmed speakers are Omar Barghouti, a founding member of the Palestinian BDS campaign against Israel, and Ali Abunimah, co-founder of the Electronic Intifada, a website that posts articles that accuse Israel of ethnic cleaning and labels Israel as an apartheid state.

There are also a number of Jewish speakers, but some, such as Jeff Halper, a member of an organization that "resists the Israeli occupation on the ground," and Michael Mandel, who recently published an article in Shunpiking magazine that said Israel deliberately kills "civilians for illegal political ends," share a very critical view of the Jewish state.

Meir Weinstein, the JDL's national director, said that the few people who have agreed to lend a "legitimate voice" to the conference should withdraw so as not to lend credibility to a one-sided event.

He said that as of this week, his group will be picketing every week on the sidewalk in front of York's Vari Hall rotunda.

Ed Morgan, a University of Toronto law professor and former Canadian Jewish Congress president, said he considered taking part in the conference, but backed out when he learned that it would mostly promote the view that a one-state solution is the only viable option.

In October, in an op-ed piece in The CJN, he wrote that "the notion of 'one state' is deployed by Israel's enemies as a rhetorical tactic to undermine the Jewish state."

Morgan thought it would be appropriate to "fight the fight from the inside" because the "core group that thought up the conference are perfectly good scholars at Osgoode Hall and Queen's University who hold a genuine interest in debating alternative forms of democracy in the Israeli and Palestinian context.

"But the guests are starting to outnumber the hosts, and the cynical edge of the 'one-state' crowd is showing as the proposed speakers start to bare their anti-Israel teeth," Morgan added.

In a statement on behalf of the organizing committee, conference organizers Sharry Aiken and Bruce Ryder said that "a topic as fraught and weighty as the future of Israel/Palestine," will cause everyone to "disagree passionately with at least some of the speakers."

But Aiken and Ryder said they've chosen speakers with the assistance of an international advisory committee, "based on the strength of their academic achievements and the scholarly quality of the paper proposals they submitted."

In response to the concern about the inclusion of BDS activists in the conference, Aiken and Ryder said the papers submitted "contribute to scholarly debates about the models of statehood that offer promising paths to peace, respecting the human rights and security interests of all peoples.

"We did not consider it appropriate, in an academic context, to undertake an assessment of the political opinions or political activities of the scholars who submitted paper proposals to us."

York spokesperson Richard Fisher said it's too early to characterize the conference as being one-sided, because the list of speakers and the format hasn't been fully developed.

"The organizers have no agenda on this issue one way or the other, except of course for exploring paths to peace....There is no attempt to promote one solution or the other," Fisher said.

Responding to the inclusion of speakers who support the BDS campaign, he added that "to say that a debate should not take place unless it supports our pre-disposed view on either side, we deny the very essence of academic freedom and we kill the very thing we are trying to protect."

In related news, Weinstein attended a board of governors meeting at York on April 27 to deliver a petition with about 2,800 signatures to York president Mamdouh Shoukri. The petition called on the university to stop the intimidation of Jewish students on campus, citing an incident in February during which Jewish students were barricaded in York's Hillel Lounge by students yelling anti-Israel and anti-Jewish slogans.

It also referred to "anti-Jewish and anti-Israel graffiti" and "verbal threats of physical harm," against Jewish students.

The petition demanded that York officials "enforce their official campus policy on disruptive and/or harassing behaviour."

The petition was passed on to Osgoode Hall Law School dean Patrick Monahan, York's incoming provost who also chairs York's new Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community, which was struck earlier this year in the wake of clashes between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian students.

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Men urged to speak out on domestic violence

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

We need a paradigm shift in our thinking about domestic violence, says Jackson Katz, an anti-sexist male activist.

"It's time to stop calling it a women's issue," said the educator, author and filmmaker who has spent years speaking out on the issue of gender violence.

Author of The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help, Katz will speak at Beth Tzedec Congregation on May 20, 7: 30 p.m., during an evening sponsored by Jewish Women International Canada.

Speaking from his California home, Katz, 48, who is married with a seven-year-old son, said that domestic violence has always been seen as a women's issue, "simply because it is women that talk about it. Since they talk about it, it is seen as their problem.

"That's all wrong, though. The issue of gender violence is a man's issue, first and foremost. We need men to step forward. They need to take a more prominent role in speaking out."

He cannot name one specific incident that challenged him to step forward, he said, "but as a student at University of Massachusetts, I was 18 and I was outraged by what I saw. I knew that if I feared for my safety as many of the women students did, I would be very unhappy. I knew that I was in a position to do something."

As part of a growing movement of men who are working on the issue, he admitted that some men feel threatened by other men who speak out against sexism or domestic violence.

"They're afraid to face the issues because to deal with it, you have to admit what it means to be a man in our culture. Men are committing lots of violence, and statistics say that one in four women on a college campus will be raped. That is all messed up, and something has to be done."

When we work with women and girls in order to teach them the signs of domestic abuse and how to take care of themselves, we are able to reduce the risks, he said. "Preventing violence, however, means going to the root cause of the problem."

Katz said that early intervention is critical. "Women abuse is not genetic or biological. Some boys learn that part of being a man means being dominant and controlling over women. They feel entitled, and most boys do not learn this from watching their fathers. They learn their behaviour outside of their home.

"Young boys are as loving as young girls, but then what happens? The answer is not simple, because it is deeply rooted in the structure of society. It is not aberrational behaviour. The solutions are complex, but something has gone on and we need to face it."

In high schools and university campuses, the men need to step forward, he said. "The principals, the gym teachers, even the college presidents have to be trained to work with young men and boys in order to make violence unacceptable.

"If you are a leader in the community, by definition you need to be knowledgeable, and you need to use your platform to talk about the issue.

"Silence is complicity, and Jews have suffered for eons while others have looked on. The concept is basic. We need good men to step up."

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MITZVAH DAY: Students from both campuses of Leo Baeck Day School painted a mural to brighten the walls of Baycrest. The project was part of Mitzvah Day, a tzedakah event run jointly by Leo Baeck's parents' association and Holy Blossom Temple. Students, parents and temple members also put together care packages for the homeless; planted, decorated and delivered potted plants to people who are unwell, and wrote letters in support of Israeli soldiers and humanitarian efforts in Darfur, among other projects. Pictured, from left, are Nikki Burstein, Kaitlyn Luepann, Layla Gutmann, Ben Horwitz and Paul Rotman.

Gala to raise money for thyroid centre

Compiled by CJN Staff

The fourth annual DaVinci Gala in support of the Joseph and Mildred Sonshine Family Centre for Head and Neck Disease at Mount Sinai Hospital is set for May 27 at La Primavera Hospitality and Convention Centre in Woodbridge, Ont.

Under the direction of doctors Paul Wolfish and Jeremy Freeman, the centre is a state-of-the-art facility for the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid cancer.

The most common endocrine gland malignancy, thyroid cancer affects three times as many females as males, but with modern detection techniques and treatments, the disease can be cured in more than 85 per cent of affected patients.

Mount Sinai Hospital has been a pioneer in applying thyroid ultrasound and fine needle aspiration biopsy to achieve its earliest detection.

Gala honorees are Ginetta and Ron Barbaro. For information, e-mail jren@mtsinai.on.ca or visit www.davincigala.com.

Benefit concert set for May 13

Save a Child's Heart (SACH) and Canadian Friends of Hebrew University will be hosting a benefit concert on May 13, 8 p.m. at The Toronto Centre for the Arts, featuring live performances by the world-renowned quartet, the Canadian Tenors, and international jazz sensation, Sophie Milman.

Proceeds from the evening will support Save a Child's Heart and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Canada's own quartet, the Canadian Tenors, will take centre stage in a live and intimate vocal performance. Dubbed "Canada's National Treasure," the group will perform a mix of music and sounds from alternative world pop, Canadian folk music and operatic arias.

Guests will also enjoy a performance by Juno Award winning jazz vocalist, Sophie Milman, who is critically acclaimed for her musicianship and popular standards. In an ensemble performance, the Toronto Heschel School Children's Choir will join the Canadian Tenors on stage for the final two performances of the evening.

Masada Siegel with her mother

A day at the spa with Mom

By MASADA SIEGEL
Special to The CJN

Tears welled in my eyes, but nonetheless, I continued with my mission.

One day, I was focused and determined, and standing in my sister Audrey's kitchen, in Boca Raton, Fla., following instructions to chop onions! My mom, Audrey and I were cooking up a storm when Mom grinned broadly and said, "This is what memories are made of." I wiped a tear from my eye and started to laugh.

Most mothers would think an exotic family vacation or a spa day is a memorable event, but for my go-getter, no-nonsense Israeli mom, a former sergeant in the Tank Division, the concept of pampering is preposterous and being productive is positively the name of the game.

Mother's Day is encompassed by one of the Ten Commandments, "Honour your mother and father." While celebrating your mother should be an everyday occurrence, it's great to have that one day a year to focus on the woman who gave us life. Most Jewish mothers are obsessed with making sure everyone is happy, eating healthy and being productive, and never take time out to look after themselves.

It was early January – not the traditional time to celebrate Mother's Day, but in the name of productivity, that is, writing an article, Mom joined me on a story. The topic was spending Mother's Day at a spa. Well, my mom, who has never spent a day at a spa in her life, agreed, shaking her head, most likely wondering how we could be related! Truthfully, I knew if it was for a work reason, she would oblige to a little pampering.

We got an early start, driving north to Carefree, Ariz., to the Boulders Resort Golden Door Spa. The spa, surrounded by huge boulders, is the ultimate relaxation resort. It includes swimming pools and scenic walking paths, and purple and pink bougainvillea adorn the garden area.

Our day at the spa got off to a slow start. We basked in the warm sunlight, and I happily munched on low-fat muffins and an egg-white omelette, while sitting by a small bubbly stream. Mom looked at me helplessly, not sure what to do. She seemed tense about relaxing, as she's not well versed in sitting around and being served.

Soon, Mom found her comfort zone, as I showed her the day's activities – yoga, Pilates, a shiatsu massage for her and a hot rocks one for me, and afternoon tea.

Moments later, we walked into the yoga room. It was mirrored and calming – well, until a limber-looking woman walked in. She introduced herself, and then to my chagrin, I realized I was in an advanced class.

Slightly mortified, I thought positive thoughts, hoping the good energy might help me survive the next hour. The class commenced. My mother, who avidly practices yoga, immediately immersed herself. People twice my age were smiling at the mirrors and posing gracefully. Meanwhile, I was wondering if I was going to be able to peel myself off the floor. Mom was grinning, putting herself in pretzel positions, while I was simply trying to breathe. Most of the class, I counted down the minutes, wondering how to stylishly contort myself into the positions, while keeping in mind that I wanted to make sure I would be able to untangle myself!

My mother, always one who makes the most of everything, took a second hour of yoga. I looked at her admiringly and said, "I'm going to have to sit this one out and take notes for the story." Truthfully, I was thinking, I'd have a better chance to survive bungee jumping off the highest bridge in South Africa than another hour of yoga!

The rest of the day consisted of more classes, amazing massages and a British-style tea. Mom was more relaxed than I have seen her in ages. She nearly ran a red light on the way home, because she was so chilled out.

My mission was complete – bond with my mother, spend the day being pampered and create some fun memories – and have a good story to write.

There are many options for Mother's Day – spending time together, sending a card to your mother or phoning her. Just fulfil one of the basic commandments.

Truthfully, I'm still not quite so sure what made me cry more, the yoga or the onions, but spending time with your mom, whether in the kitchen or the yoga room, is how memories are created. The key is having fun and being productive… Wait, did I just say that? I'm starting to sound like… well, Mom!

Happy Mother's Day!

Masada Siegel is a freelance writer living in Scottsdale, Ariz.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov Helen Bernstein on your 80th birthday. Love, Irving, Ellen & David, Jeff, Mitch & Samantha, Gail, Josh, Jenna and Maria & Albert, Alyssa and Wendy.

Mazel tov to Jack Cooper on his 90th birthday, with love and best wishes from his wife Sybil, their children, family and friends.

Happy 61st wedding anniversary to our parents Paul & Mollie Finewax, married May 9, 1948. Mazel tov!

Michelle Rodak & Joshua Otis were married in Toronto on March 15. Proud parents are Bonnie & Paul Rodak and Sandra & Jeffrey Otis.

Happy third birthday to Phoebe, daughter of Marla & Ronald Struminger. Grandaughter and great-granddaughter of Betsy & Lou Fruitman and Mary Dale & forever missed, David Dale.

Happy fifth birthday to Jarod, son of Marla & Ronald Struminger, grandson and great-grandson of Betsy & Lou Fruitman and Mary Dale & forever missed, David Dale.

Mazel tov to Brian Baum & Mandy Au on their recent wedding. Proud parents are Shirley & Louis Baum and Rita & Charles Au. Brothers Dave Baum & Jeff Baum.

Marvin & Renee Rubinoff announce the arrival of Elinor (Goldie) Zahavah, on Feb. 23. Daughter of Nicola & Jeffrey Rubinoff, granddaughter of Ray Jones of Wales.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!
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or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and
click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
• Features • Heebonics
• Breaking News • Contests
• Past Issues and much more!

What's New deadlines: Monday, May 11 is the deadline for the May 21 issue and Monday, May 18 is the deadline for the May 28 issue. Calls are received on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 235, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Saturday, May 9

PARTNERSHIP MINYAN

The Toronto Partnership Minyan meets at 9 a.m. for a shiur and 9:30 a.m. for services at Reena Battle Developmental Centre, 927 Clark Ave. tpmthornhill@gmail.com

PULPIT EXCHANGE

Adath Israel Congregation hosts a pulpit exchange with **Rabbi Wayne Allen** of Beth Tikvah Synagogue, speaking on "The Strange Case of the Ambidextrous Priest." Services 9 a.m. Luncheon, $10, reservations required, 416-635-5340 or louise@adathisrael.com.

Sunday, May 10

TEL AVIV AT 100

York University presents "From Sand Dunes to Skyscrapers: Tel Aviv at 100" with **Barbara Mann** of the Jewish Theological Seminary and author of Tel Aviv, Holy City, and **Maoz Azaryahu**, of Tel Aviv University and author of Tel Aviv Remembers. 2 p.m. Schulich School of Business, room N109. 416-736-5823 or cjs@yorku.ca

MOTHERS DAY CHAI TEA

Beth Tzedec Congregation celebrates all women with a traditional high tea and entertainment. 3 p.m. $36. RSVP **Avital**, 416-781-3511.

CELEBRATE JEWISH MUSIC

Adath Israel Congregation presents "A Celebration of Jewish Music" with the Lachan Choir conducted by Cantor **Benjamin Maissner** with cantors **Marshall Loomer, Eliezer Kirshblum and Eric Moses**. 7:30 p.m. $10. 416-635-5340

TOLERATING OTHERS

Em Habonim Smecha, in support of single-parent families in Israel, hosts the **David Rosenzweig** Memorial Lecture for women with **Chana Juravel** on "Tolerating Others, Tolerating Ourselves." 8 p.m. at Beth Jacob High School. $36. 416-631-9966.

Monday, May 11

TEEN LAG B'OMER EVENT

Chabad Markham invites teens grades 9-12 to an afternoon of paintball, BBQ and bonfire in Niagara. Depart 4:45 p.m. Return 12:30 a.m. Paintball $25, BBQ and transportation $35. RSVP, 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND

The Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation presents the Chief Rabbi of Poland **Michael Schudrich** on "The Revival of Jewish Life in Poland: Is It Really Happening?" 7:30 p.m. at Beth Habonim Congregation. www.pjhftoronto.ca

BETH TZEDEC BOOK CLUB

Beth Tzedec Library Book Club hosts **Heather Kassel** discussing the movie Counterfeiters. $15. 416-781-3514, ext. 225

Tuesday, May 12

LUNCH AND LEARN

Gerald Ziedenberg discusses "Winston Churchill and the Jews." Lunch 12:15 p.m. Learn 12:45 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $20. By reservation only, 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

LAG B'OMER BBQ

Russian Community Centre hosts a Lag b'Omer family BBQ with a clown, acrobat show, mountain bounce, face painting, music and bonfire, 6 p.m. at Earl Bales Park. Free.

AUSTIN CLARKE

Author **Austin Clarke** will be reading from his novel, More, at the Barbara Frum Library. 7 p.m. 416-395-5440

YOUTH UNITED IN RHYTHM

Ve'ahavta, The Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee, spon-

Continued on page 31

HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE
MUSICAL HERITAGE
Concert Series
NEW AGE OF JEWISH MUSIC
In Celebration of Yom Yerushalayim
Thur. May 21, 2009, at 8 p.m.
Mattan Klein and Seeds of Sun

Mattan Klein (second from right) and Seeds of Sun

Seeds of Sun is the leading Israeli jazz ensemble in North America, fusing ancient Israeli music with contemporary compositions and original jazz. The group, with 6 leading Israeli Chaim performers in the jazz and pop genres, has played on prestigious stages all over the world, bringing a new and exciting sound to its audiences.

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Keynote Address followed by Dessert Reception and Book Signing. Book Signing sponsored by: Chapters Indigo

May 25th, 2009
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Sephardic Kehila Centre
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A Jewish Woman's Voice: Literature and Faith
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Yaldeinu ילדינו — The Marcos Soberano Society for Jewish Education and Camping.

Continued from page 30

sors a concert of youth musicians promoting harmony featuring The Renanim Youth Singers and The Swansea Youth Drum Squad. 7:30 p.m. at York Woods Theatre, 1785 Finch Ave. W. $15, seniors/students $10. 416-398-0289 or www.veahavta.org

BOOK REVIEW

The Adath Israel Book Review series hosts **Heather Kassel** reviewing The Book of Negroes by **Laurence Hill**. 8 p.m. $10, non members $15. 416-635-5340

PEACE, REALITY & DESTINY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue presents the rabbi emeritus series with **Rabbi Avraham Feder** on "Peace, Reality and Destiny," the pursuit of some kind of non-violent arrangement with the Palestinians and the threat of a nuclear Iran, the economic meltdown, and the ongoing challenge to Israel's morale. 7:30 p.m. 416-221-3433

ARE YOU PREPARED?

Beth David Sisterhood hosts "Emergency: Are You Prepared?" with a speaker from the Canadian Red Cross. 8 p.m. Non-members $5.

Wednesday, May 13

WINTER IN ISRAEL

Find out about spending 2 to 7 weeks in Israel from January 10-March 1, with Jewish National Fund's Canadian American Active Retirees in Israel program. Includes community service, touring, visits to museums and archeological sites and lectures on current issues. Information session 2-4 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El. RSVP, **Anice**, 416-665-2482.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Join **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich** as he continues to delve into key life cycle and ritual skills and practices that are central to Judaism. Tonight and May 20, 7:30 p.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholom.net

SURVIVAL SEMINAR

Jews for Judaism offers a counter missionary survival seminar with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. Learn to respond to any missionary who challenges your faith. Tonight-June 17, 8 p.m. at Clanton Park Synagogue. Free, register, 416-789-0020.

MUSICAL LEGACY SERIES

Temple Sinai Musical Legacy series, a concerts of works from the classical repertoire and by Jewish composers, presents **Ben Steinberg** musical legacy award winners **Inga Filippova-Williams**, soprano, and **Alex Mirzoev**, pianist. 8 p.m. Free. 416-487-4161 or www.templesinai.net

AUTISM 101

National Council of Jewish Woman presents "Autism 101" with **Abbie Solish**. 8 p.m. 4700 Bathurst St. Non member $5. RSVP 416-633-5100.

Other News

BEN-DOR ON ISRAEL

Holy Blossom Temple presents **Prof. Gabriel Ben-Dor** on "Strategic Problems Facing Israel Today," on Monday May 11, 8 p.m. and "Society and Politics in Israel Today: The End of an Era or The New Israeli Republic" on Wednesday, May 13, 8 p.m. 416-789-3291

HOLOCAUST SEMINAR

The Holocaust Centre hosts a seminar with **Dr. Karen Shawn**, of Yeshiva University, on "The Call of Memory: Teaching About the Holocaust Through Narrative." Thursday, May 14, 4-7 p.m. $35, includes a copy of The Call of Memory Anthology and a light dinner. 4600 Bathurst St. Reserve, 416-635-2883, ext. 5153 or hschwartz@ujafed.org.

AN EVENING OF SONG

Beth Tikvah Synagogue presents "An Evening of Song," the joy of Israel and the world of being Jewish. Thursday, May 14, 8 p.m. 416-221-3433

CONCERT & SILENT AUCTION

The Pride of Israel Synagogue hosts "Celebrating Israel" with the Renanim Youth Singers, the Nirkoda Israeli Dancers and a silent auction. Tuesday, May 19, 6:15 p.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Members, seniors and children $10, non members 18-64, $15. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

STRESS RELIEF DAY

Baycrest's Wagman Centre hosts "Stress Relief Day" with keynote presentation "Learning to Enjoy Stress" and workshops on yoga, aromology, massage therapy, NIA martial and healing arts of dance. Wednesday, May 20, 1-3:30 p.m. $15, guests $20. Register, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2267.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care is in need of volunteers to escort seniors to appointments and on shopping trips on a one-time and occasional basis. They will either arrange for transportation or reimburse mileage and parking. 416- 635-2860, ext. 462 or pedwards@circleofcare.com.

OTTAWA CONFERENCE

The University of Ottawa's Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program will host a community day highlighting different aspects of the Jewish Canadian experience including Yiddish politics, Jewish Canadiana, ethnicity and intercultural encounters, and the Holocaust and the Canadian experience. No prior registration is required. The day will conclude with a kosher banquet featuring songwriter-performer **Shelley Posen**. Sunday, May 24 at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private. For banquet ticket and information visit www.acjs-aejc.ca.

LICHTENSTEIN ON ZIONISM

Canadian Friends of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Ulpanat Orot, Yeshivat Or Chaim and Shaarei Shomayim Congregation host an evening of conversation with Yeshivat Har Etzion Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein** discussing "Teaching Religious Zionism in North America." Sunday, June 7, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest Centre Library needs volunteers to help check books in and out, sort and shelve library materials, assist with special projects and assist visitors wishing to access online health information. A good command of the English language is necessary as are computer skills. Training provided. Contact 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 or alefkovitz@baycrest.org

JF&C GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child, 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215 for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

All programs at the Lipa Green Building.

Effective Parenting. A four-session group to help parents learn what they can do to raise a happy, motivated and well behaved child. For parents of children ages 2 to 11 years. Discuss nurturing self esteem, encouraging problem solving, increasing communication and setting limits. Begins Tuesday, May 19, 7-9 p.m.

Parenting Speaker Series, It's OK to say No." A workshop for parents of children of all ages to understand how to say no to their children in a yes culture and how this can benefit their children. Discuss parental authority and discipline. Tuesday May 26, 7-9 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

Chai Society holds a Wellness Day, Wednesday, May 13, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. The day includes drumming, a presentation by a retirement home, lunch, a presentation on public health and dental care and a senior yoga session. $15. Reserve, 416-783-6103 ext. 228.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program hosts a "Music for a Spring Afternoon" with The Toronto Saxophone Quartet, Wednesday, May 13, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Sunday dance, May 17, 7-9; Casino Rama, May 20; movie day, May 21, 1:30 p.m.; seniors walking group, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Wheelchair accessible. Other programs, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC. "The Seven Vitalities to Longevity," **David Garshovitz**, pharmacist and compound specialist, shares insights for positive, healthy aging, integrating mainstream and natural medicine. Thursday, May 14, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

A panel on "Can Media Make a Difference: An Investigation of the Role of the Press in Upholding Human Rights" with **Michael Enright**, **Paul Knox** and **Amanda Grzyb**. Tuesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m. Free. 416-901-3831 or leora_schaefer@facing.org

"Conversations About Conversions," a 6-week Kolel course about the history, challenges and rewards of conversion. Wednesday, May 13, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Register, 416-636-1880, ext. 235 or www.kolel.org.

Mircea Popescu: Foreign and Familiar Exhibition in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Through June 15. Ext. 133

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Join "Shabbat in the Atrium" every Friday at 11:30 a.m. for songs, stories, challah, a 15-minute celebration of Shabbat for all ages. Free.

Conversation Café, a joint program with Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m. offers newcomers to Canada a chance to practice their English in a social environment. 416-636-1880.

CHANGES TO WHAT'S NEW

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 34

Cuisinart 4-in-1 Stainless Griddler
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HOLIDAY HOURS
BRIDAL REGISTRY

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Sylvia Shapiro	Apr 12/09	4001 Bayview Avenue
Morton Yaffe	Apr 12/09	65 Skymark Drive
Sophie Solms	Apr 12/09	25 Brunswick Avenue
Sandra Richie	Apr 14/09	20 Hammok Crescent
Ricci Sigler	Apr 13/09	57 Ridley Blvd.
Jeffrey Gordon	Apr 17/09	86 Bradbeer Crescent
Norman Shiffman	Apr 15/09	7825 Bayview Avenue
Sybil Brown-Hertzman	Apr 15/09	10479 Augusta Court
Morris Nusyna	Apr 17/09	79 Montressor Dr.
Syd Feldman	Apr 17/09	16 Somerset Drive
Chana Greenberg	Apr 19/09	1131 Steeles Avenue W
Rosa Smulovici	Apr 20/09	7 Plum Tree Way
Adelyn Zacks	Apr 19/09	10 Senlac Road
Leah Feinman	Apr 18/09	10 Mayfair Avenue
Paul Firestone	Apr 19/09	335 Hidden Trail
Jack Korman	Apr 22/09	80 Harrison Garden Bl
Raisa Zilberberg	Apr 21/09	1121 Steeles Ave. West
June Fried	Apr 21/09	9 Deer Park Cresent
Morris Appleby	Apr 20/09	33 Erskin Avenue
Edith Lanton	Apr 25/09	3560 Bathurst St
Mildred Miller	Apr 24/09	16 Brockington Cres
Robert Kushner	Apr 25/09	170 Red Maple Road
Judith Gluck	Apr 26/09	30 Greenfield Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Weisberg, Albert	April 15/09	150 Neptune Dr
Vizelter, Alexandre	April 15/09	Private
Elbaz, Hassiba	April 15/09	49 Danby Ave
Hascal, Brana	April 16/09	3560 Bathurst St
Dombrofsky, Shirley	April 17/09	3000 Dufferin St
Luftspring, Sydney	April 17/09	47 Combe Ave
Balilty, Eliyhau	April 18/09	
Wolfson, Kreina	April 19/09	601 Clark Ave. W.
Kay, Jack	April 18/09	1121 Steeles Ave. W.
Shapiro, Harold	April 18/09	Private
Gershkovich, Sara	April 18/09	Private
Eker, Solomon	April 20/09	11 Holita Road
Klarman, Arthur	April 20/09	3560 Bathurst St
Adamson, Heather	April 18/09	
Gutman, Eduard	April 20/09	Private
Silver, Robert	April 21/09	115 Sciberras Rd
Gryfe, Estelle	April 21/09	205 Cummer Ave
Teitel, Miriam	April 21/09	3560 Bathurst St
Weisbrod, Jean	April 22/09	3560 Bathurst St
Weitzman, Morris	April 22/09	100 Antibes Dr

HEBREW DASIC

Helen Freedman	Apr 22/09	35 Canyon Avenue

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of our beloved
BERTHA LAPIDUS ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17TH
2:00 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Dufferin St. N. of Major Mackenzie
Temple Sinai Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling.

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SIGALITE CHERYL ADWOKAT ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 10 at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Phase 5
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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QUALITY MONUMENTS... FACTORY PRICES

Coast to Coast

Boycott rejected

Continued from page 1

they should continue to send e-mails to the company expressing their feelings about the issue after the vote," Elterman says.

MEC, which calls itself "Canada's leading supplier of quality outdoor gear, clothing and camping equipment," has stores in Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec and Halifax. Anyone who buys an item at the co-op becomes a voting member.

The boycott motion was put forward by members of a group called B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Education. Jewish groups had urged their supporters to attend the meeting to vote against it.

Tim Southam, public affairs manager for MEC, said the company had been apprehensive about antagonism at the meeting. "We're glad it proceeded in an orderly, civil manner," he said. "There were people expressing strongly held views both for and against the resolution, but it was very respectful."

He added: "The defeat of the motion is an affirmation and endorsement of our existing sourcing policies, which emphasize the factory floor and an ethical sourcing program, one we believe serves us well and serves those who make our products well. We intend to have that policy guide us in the future and improve it as best we can over time."

Elterman said the defeat of the resolution was "an important win for us, because we certainly didn't want to see the opposition encouraged."

It's not CIC Pacific region's first victory. In recent months, the organization has rallied against three demonstrations held outside B.C. liquor stores aimed at dissuading people from buying Israeli wine.

"We launched a counter-campaign to buy out Israeli wines from Vancouver-area stores, and on each of the three occasions, Israeli wines have been sold out. As a result of the demand for the product, Israeli wines are now displayed in a special section next to those made in other countries, with their own distinct identity," Elterman said.

Still, he thinks the "boycott Israel" movement won't go away.

"We'll have similar challenges in other cities in Canada and on other issues," he said. "There are so many products being made in Israel these days that there are going to be further challenges. But they will be different from this one at MEC, because the latter is a co-op and many of the other products are made for privately owned companies."

The CIC plans to urge the B.C. Teachers' Federation to more closely examine who is speaking in the name of B.C. teachers in the future, Elterman said.

British MP sues Jewish leaders, Kenney

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

British MP George Galloway is suing Immigration Minister Jason Kenney and the heads of two major Jewish groups over remarks they made about him when he was barred from entering Canada in March.

Galloway was scheduled to appear on a speaking tour in Canada but the Canada Border Services Agency denied him entry. Kenney refused to override that decision, saying he would not give special treatment to someone who gave financial aid to Hamas.

In addition to Kenney, Canadian Jewish Congress co-president Sylvain Abitbol and CEO Bernie Farber, as well as B'nai Brith Canada executive vice-president Frank Dimant were served with formal notices of a libel action.

"I welcome robust criticism, but the comments made about me crossed the line. They are not only untrue, they are outrageous," Galloway said in a statement.

Farber said "we pored over all our statements. All appear to be fair comment. It's difficult to understand what his thinking is in the libel case."

Ottawa celebrates with three-day Israel marathon

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — The community came out in full force in support of Israel, mourning its losses and celebrating its 61st birthday.

For three days in a row, Ottawans were in "Israel mode," beginning with a Yom Hazikaron memorial ceremony at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) last Monday evening, April 27.

The following evening, the embassy of Israel hosted a lavish reception at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel for members of the diplomatic corps, politicians of all stripes, Jewish community leaders and various friends of Israel.

"This evening, we have actually passed from a memorial day. When we still have a tear in the corner of our eye, we move on to the celebration," said Ambassador Miriam Ziv as she welcomed her guests.

"This year marks 60 years of formal relations between Canada and Israel," Ziv said, adding that she expects this year to reinforce and strengthen this relationship, which is based on shared values between the two countries.

On Wednesday evening, April 29, hundreds of people of all ages celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut with a huge party at the Ottawa Civic Centre. There were activities for all ages: children enjoyed mini-cirque performers and a hockey shoot-out. There were also casino tables and, of course, Israeli music and dancing.

The hall was decorated with palm trees and street signs, creating an atmosphere of being in Israel. Despite a straggly group of protesters outside the building, people streamed in to join others in a feeling of solidarity and celebration.

Event chair Penny Torontow welcomed everyone. "The SJCC and Vered Cultural Centre go to such great lengths to ensure that the Ottawa community celebrates with Israel on this momentous occasion. I am honoured to be part of what has become the largest event of the year. In these troubled times for Israel, it is so important to stop and celebrate," she said.

And celebrate they did. There were line-ups at the food kiosks, and people cheerily greeted friends as they strolled along "Israel's streets." Tables were set up throughout the hall with information from various groups and organizations, and there was lively Israeli dancing to the music of Yosi Levy and the Sabras.

Some of the hundreds of young people who came to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut in Ottawa. [Peter Waiser photo]

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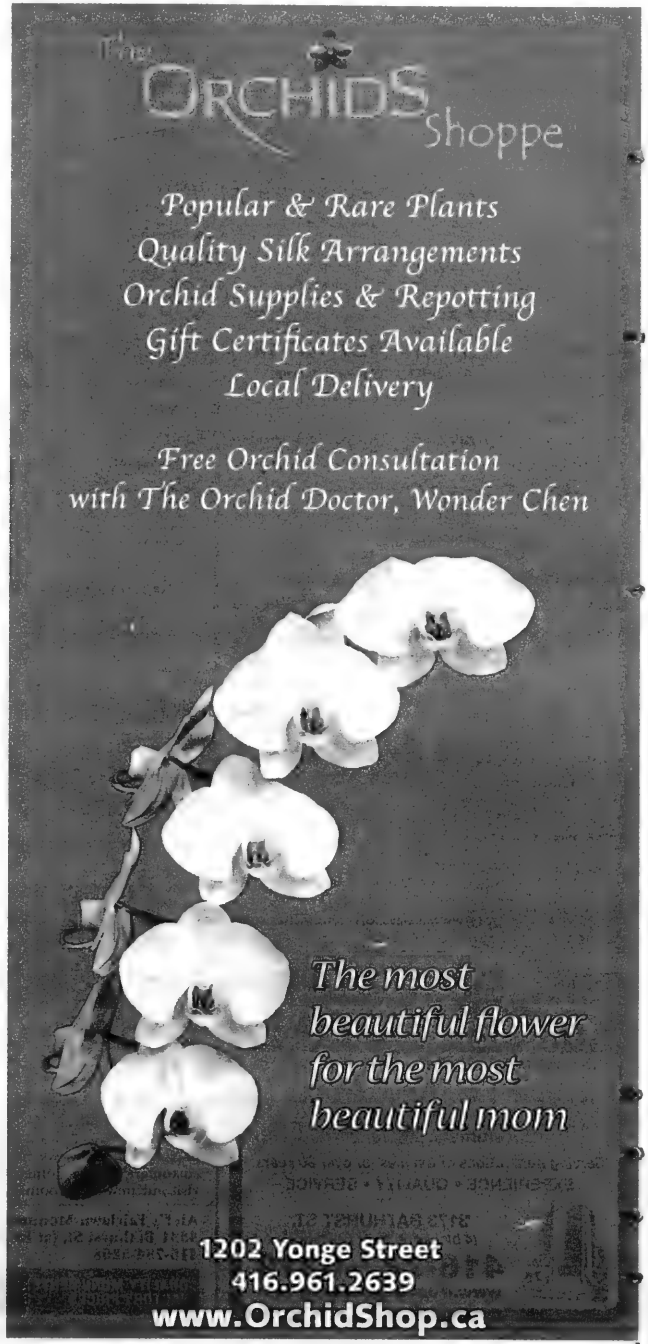
The school is a member of the OTPP.

Applications should be submitted by email to:
hisrael@tanenbaumchat.org
not later than Friday, May 15, 2009.

We appreciate your interest but regret we can contact only those selected for an interview.



Berlin rabbi compares present to 1930s Europe

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — For years, Rabbi Chaim Rozwaski preached vehemently against Jews going to Germany.

Recently, at the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada's fourth annual Sol and Florence Kanee Distinguished Lecture Series at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, he explained how he became Berlin's chief rabbi.

"It was almost by accident, I ended up in Germany," said the child Holocaust survivor and former Winnipegger at the April 26 lecture.

In 1998, he was invited by Ron Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, to move to Berlin to become the dean of the new Lauder Jewish Institute and acting rabbi of the historic Rykestrasse Synagogue.

"I asked three rabbis for their advice [about accepting Lauder's offer]," Rabbi Rozwaski said.

"One said that I should go because the Germany of today is not the same Germany that was ruled by the Nazis and that I shouldn't hold the sins of the fathers against the children. A second told to me to go because I was needed and that I was the right person for the job. The third recommended that I go because I would know what to do and how to do it."

In 2000, Rabbi Rozwaski was appointed the rabbi of the Jewish community of Berlin.

Just as the Germans of today are not the same Germans of the war years, so also does the Jewish community in Germany differ considerably from that of the prewar and postwar Germany, Rabbi Rozwaski said.

During a recent visit to Winnipeg, Rabbi Chaim Rozwaski, centre, met up with his childhood friend Sid Halpern, left, and Leon Berger, his Talmud Torah teacher 60 years ago. [Myron Love photo]

The German Jewish community that emerged after the Holocaust numbered about 30,000 and included several thousand who either spent the war in hiding in Germany or were somehow exempt from arrest and execution. Those survivors were augmented by German Jews who returned from Israel and elsewhere after the war. They stayed because they were in mixed marriages or had built up successful businesses or were too sick to leave.

Of that community, there are only 7,000 to 8,000 people left, Rabbi Rozwaski said. Most of their children have immigrated to Israel, America or elsewhere.

Since the early 1990s, however, about 100,000 Russian Jews have settled in Germany. Many of them may have preferred to go to the United States, Rabbi Rozwaski said, but the Clinton administration closed that door when it ruled that Russian Jews were no longer in need of political asylum.

"Most of the Russian Jews who came to Germany have relatives in Israel," Rabbi Rozwaski said, "but they were afraid to go to Israel because of the potential for violence.

"In Germany, they were given housing, free schooling and financial assistance from the government. Germany was a viable alternative, and the level of anti-Semitism is much less than what they faced in Russia."

For older Russian Jews, though, with memories of the war, coming to Germany, – in many cases following their children – was still a hard choice. Rabbi Rozwaski recalled one elderly immigrant who broke down and cried at a Holocaust memorial event because he remembered being forced by the Nazis to shoot his own parents.

Rabbi Rozwaski presided at a funeral for a Russian Jew who had served as deputy commander of a Russian paratrooper military camp during the war.

When Rabbi Rozwaski first arrived in Berlin, the major issue under debate was whether it was still important to remember the Holocaust or whether it was time for the new generation of Germans to move on, he said.

Ten years later, the Holocaust has not been forgotten in Germany – a new Holocaust memorial was recently built by the German government – but anti-Semitism in Germany and across Europe is on the increase, he said.

He attributed the substantial growth in anti-Semitism in Europe to a process he referred to as a "de-Europeanization" of Europe. With the growth of the European Union, Europeans are losing their sense of nationality, he said.

Then there is the tremendous growth in the number of Muslims immigrating to Europe, a large population in many European countries that refuses to assimilate or integrate and become Swedish or Dutch or French or German.

"The growing Muslim population is changing Europe," Rabbi Rozwaski said. "They have also brought with them a new anti-Semitism, which is finding fertile ground on the left and the right in Europe. This presents a serious problem, not only for the Jewish people and Israel but also for the entire world."

He noted that Germany is currently Israel's best friend in Europe. There are four times as many Israeli-owned businesses in Germany now than there were when he arrived.

"The German government stands by the Jewish community and Israel politically, financially and socially," he said. "But who knows how long that will last. The German government doesn't control public opinion. I receive a lot of hate letters and am on a 'threatened persons' list. This is a time not unlike the 1930s. Everything is in a state of flux and the Jews are at the centre of it.

"We have to trust in God that He will continue to take care of us."

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JGH on alert for swine flu

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — The Jewish General Hospital (JGH) elevated its level of emergency preparedness, following the confirmation of swine flu cases in Canada.

The hospital is taking various precautions to keep patients, visitors and staff safe and well informed.

Hospital staff have been told to be particularly vigilant for symptoms among patients and visitors. Stations in certain clinical areas of the hospital are also screening people who have recently arrived from areas affected by flu and are exhibiting the respiratory symptoms associated with it.

Instructions to patients and visitors have been posted throughout the hospital, displayed on the hospital website and listed on a telephone hotline.

"Safety is a top priority at the JGH," said executive director Dr. Hartley Stern. "Coordinated teams throughout the hospital are taking all necessary measures to ensure that patients, visitors and employees have the guidance, support and tools to protect their health – not only when heightened vigilance is required, but at all times.

"The JGH recognizes the paramount importance of a clean and safe environment, having previously launched a cleanliness campaign that has boosted staff by 10 full-time housekeeping positions on weekdays and 11 part-time positions during the weekend. These efforts have been further enhanced by an extensive hand hygiene program."

The JGH is advising anyone who has been to the areas affected by the flu or been in contact with someone who recently returned from those areas, or has fever, cough, shortness of breath, severe headaches or muscle pain to go immediately to the nearest emergency department. Updated information is being posted on the website at www.jgh.ca.

YIDDISH CORNER

Edited by: ALEK SILVER

ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פון: אַלעק סילווער

[This column is the last edited by Alek Silver before he passed away.]

רוּווּ־מענדל הרדוף (1918-2009)

(סוף פון פּריערדיקן „ווינקל")

פון שמחה סימכאָוויטש

אין משך פון די לעצטע יאָרן האָט דוד־מענדל הרדוף זיך אונטערגענומען אדורכצופירן א גאַר גרויסן לעקסיקאַגראַפישן פּראָיעקט, וואָס אירע אים וואָלט גע־דאַרפט אַרבעטן אַ גאַנצער שטאַב געלערנטע, נעמלעך: „הרדופס סראַנסליטעריסטער ענגליש־העברעישער וויר־טעבוך". ביז אירצו זיינען שוין דערשינען 18 טיילן פון אָט דעם ווערטערבוך, וואָס דערגייט דערווייל ביזן מיטן פון אות S און פאַרנעמט שוין 2088 זיינען.

די וועדטערביכער וועלן אויסגעזעצט אין מדינת־ישׂראל און נעדרוקט אין קאַנאַדע אויף א ספּעציעל לייזונג־פאַפּיר, מיט גרויסע בּרחבהדיקע אותיות, אויף גרויס־פאַרמאַטיקע זיינען. נאָך יעדן ענגליש וואָרט וועלן געבראַכט א גאַנצע רייִ ציטאַטן און דוגמאות פון דער קלאַסישער און מאָדערנער העברעישער ליטעראַ־טור, ווי אויך ענגלישע טראַנסליטעראַציעס פון די העברעישע עיקר־באַגריפן. די דאָזיקע גרויסע אַרבעט פון קאַנאַדער תּלמיד־חכם האָט אַרויסגעוראָפן באַנייטערטע אָפּרופן פון א צאָל יודעי־דבר אין דעם נעביט.

ס'איז כדאי צוצוגעבן, אַז דוד־מענדל הרדוף האָט אויך בייגעטראָגן אין נעביט פון יידישער לעקסיקא־גראַפיע. אין 1983 איז אַרויס זיין יידיש־ענגליש ענגליש־יידיש וועדטערבוך אין טאַשך־פאַרמאַט. דאָס ביכל איז באַזירט אויף די באַרימטע לעקסיקע אַרבעטן פון אלכּסנדר האַרקאַווי, אוריאל ווייניריך און מרדכי צאָנין, און שליסט איין א ספּעציעל יידישן וואָקאַבו־לאַר. דער אויסלייג איז געבעבן געווארן לויט די כּללים פון „ייוואָ" און די ענגלישע טראַנסליטעראַציע פון אַלע יידישע וועדטער און נישט בלויז פון די העברעישע, ווי בייַ אוריאל ווייניריך. דאָס איז א גרויסע פאַרלייכטערונג פאַר אַנהייבדיקן און מיטנדיקן סטודענט, צו דערלערנען דאָס לייענען און דאָס קאָרעקטע אַרויסרייד־ן פון יידישן וואָרט. די דאָזיקע טאַשך־אויסגאַבע איז שפּעטער אַרויס אין א פאַרגרעסערטער פאָרעם און אין האָרטע טאָוולן.

דער „אַמעריקאַנער רעפערענץ־בוך" פאַר 1955 שרייבט: „הרדופס וועדטערבוך וועט דינען אַבּסאָלוט די יענקע, וואָס זיינען פאַראינטערעסירט אין די ליטעראַרישע מקורים פון די וועדטער אין דער העב־רעישער ליטעראַטור". אין דעם הינזיכט קען הרדופס וועדטערבוך פאַרגרעסבט ווערן ווי א צוגאָב און א המשך פון אליעזר בן יהודהס זעכצן־בענדיקן „פּולער וועדטערבוך פון אלטן און מאָדערנעם העברעיש".

מיכאל ווידלאַנסקי, דער רעצענזענט פון „דושע־רושאלעם פאסט" שרייבט: „מען קען זאָגן, אַז דוד־מענדל הרדוף איז פאַרליבט אין העברעישן לשון און אין זיינע ביכלישע וואַרצלען. דאָס זעט מען אין די פאַרשיידענע אָספּעקטן, וועלטלעכע און סאַקראַלע. ריסטן, וואָס האָבן נעלערנט העברעיש, וועלן אויך אויסגעפינען, אַז צוגלייך מיט די תּנ"כישע און תּלמודישע אויסדרוקן נעמט הרדוף אין ענגלישן טייל קלאַסישע באַגריפן פון דער קינגס דזשעימס ביבל".

דוד־מענדל הרדוף איז געווען א שטילער און באשיידענער מענטש, וואָס האָט זיך נישט נעאָגט נאָך כּבוד און פּירסום. נישט נעקוקט אויף זיין היכן עלטער האָט ער ביז די לעצטע טעג פון זיין לעבן געאַרבעט אויף זיין גרויסן ענגליש־העברעישן וועדטערבוך, וואָס וואָלט געווען זיין 19טער באַנד און וועט אַרויס קרוב:

חבל על דאבדין!

Coast to Coast

Winnipeg Jewish seniors centre loses major funder

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — As if facing a $25,000 deficit for its kosher meals-on-wheels program wasn't enough in the way of tzuris, the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre has just been dealt another financial body blow.

On April 7, the day before Pesach, the Gwen Secter's executive director, Marilyn Regiec, received a letter from the north Winnipeg Jewish senior centre's major funder, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Winnipeg section, notifying her that as of June 1, it will no longer pay for the bulk of the centre's operating costs.

"Our operating costs for our building [utilities and taxes] come to $50,000 a year," Regiec said. "The National Council has always paid 80 per cent of those costs. Their withdrawal of support means that we have to find as much as $40,000 more a year to replace their contributions."

The NCJW has been supporting Jewish seniors programs in Winnipeg since 1949. Gwen Secter's was one of the first seniors drop-in programs in Canada, said Diane Glass, speaking for NCJW Winnipeg.

"We have done a lot over the years," said Glass, who is also NCJW national president. "We [the Winnipeg section] bought and renovated the current building [with the help of private donors such as the Secter family and the estate of Hinda and George Gratz] primarily as a centre for seniors programs."

Glass said NCJW, which maintains its own office in the Gwen Secter building, never intended to be the principal funder for the building in perpetuity. "We have invested $800,000 in this building over the last 20 years," she said.

"It has used up 95 per cent of the money we have raised over that time. We haven't been able to afford to fund any other projects. And now we can no longer afford to support the Gwen Secter at the rate that we have in the past."

The decision to substantially reduce funding for the Gwen Secter Centre is a reflection of the financial difficulties being faced by the NCJW's Winnipeg section. The organization's primary sources of income for the past few years have been membership dues and its second-hand store, Just a Second.

Laura Richman, the longtime store chair, reports that sales were slower than usual at the store this past winter.

"Our store sales always drop after Christmas," she said. "It was worse this year, in part because of the longer winter and also because we let our charitable status lapse last fall. [She added that its charitable status would be reinstated by the end of May.] Because we were unable to issue charitable receipts, some people who might have made donations in household goods to the store may have held off until we regained our charitable number."

Richman added that the store's business is picking up now.

NCJW membership also isn't what it once was. Richman recalls that when she was president of the Winnipeg region in the mid-1980s, National Council had 600 members in Winnipeg. Now membership is just over 300, with two local chapters still operating. As is the case for most service organizations, NCJW is having difficulty attracting younger women.

"Younger women [and men] are more focused on their careers and families," Richman said.

"We had a financial cushion, but it's gone now," she added.

Glass said that National Council is still committed to contributing $5,000 a year to the building's operating expenses, but she added that the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and the community as a whole should fund the Gwen Secter Centre.

Regiec and some of Gwen Secter's board members; Glass; Bob Freedman, federation's executive director; Faye Rosenberg-Cohen, federation's planning co-ordinator, and several community business leaders and philanthropists met on April 20.

"We have been aware for several years that this day would come," Freedman said. "Now that National Council is no longer able to act as the principal funder, we have to come up with other solutions."

However, he said that there is no need to panic. "The Gwen Secter is a very important institution in our community. I am confident that we will come up with a solution."

For the short term, Regiec has put out calls to the centre's 300 members, asking them to contribute $200 each, or whatever they feel they can afford, to help cover costs. Membership currently is $40 per person annually.

Regiec is also approaching the provincial government to see what funding may be available for seniors programs.

However, help from federation will take a while.

Glass, who is a former vice-president of the federation's budget and allocations committee, said that the committee is just beginning to determine its allocations for the year. The money doesn't start flowing until September, she said.

She said she is confident that a solution will be found that will keep the Gwen Secter Centre operating in the black for years to come.

Richman also said she is confident that the community will come to Gwen Secter's aid. "The centre is a very important asset in our community."

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Coast to Coast

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'Anti-Semitic' play make Canadian debut

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Quebec Jewish Congress (QJC) has denounced a short play that is to be presented in Montreal in the strongest terms, calling it anti-Semitic and hateful.

Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza by English dramatist Caryl Churchill is scheduled to make its Canadian debut in English and French on May 3 at the Espace Geordie, under the sponsorship of Independent Jewish Voices Montreal (IJVM), a group that is critical of Israel's presence in the Palestinian territories and treatment of the Palestinians.

"QJC is very disappointed that the play is being staged here," said incoming president Adam Atlas. "We think it is anti-Semitic and full of hatred… It culminates with a depiction of Jews as ghoulish, bloodthirsty and heartless killers.

"On top of that, there is the implication that Jews have a long history of lying to and indoctrinating their children, which is shocking."

As the son of a Holocaust survivor, Atlas said he is personally offended by the play's early scenes in which a parent or other adult relative is apparently preparing a young girl to leave Europe for a new life in Israel. "Tell her, of course tell her, tell her everyone was driven out and the country is waiting for us to come home… Don't tell her who used to live in this house… don't tell her Arabs used to sleep in her bedroom."

The play unfolds entirely as if a Jewish adult is equivocating between what to tell a child about the Jewish presence in Israel and relations with Arabs in order not to frighten them. That desire to protect the young descends into a frantic effort to whitewash what is too unpalatable even for the grown-up to face head on.

The play, whose script is readily available on the Internet, depicts Jews who emigrated to Israel as self-righteous and with a strong sense of entitlement to the land. They have a condescending, dismissive attitude toward Arabs.

As the scenes reach into modern times, Israelis are depicted as repressive and brutal, but still claiming the moral high ground.

By the end, there are inflammatory lines such as, "Tell her they want their children killed to make people sorry for them… Tell her we're the iron fist now, tell her it's the fog of war, tell her we won't stop killing them till we're safe… Tell her they're animals living in rubble now, tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out."

The play culminates with "[T]ell her we're the chosen people, tell her I look at one of their children covered in blood and what do I feel? Tell her all I feel is happy it's not her."

Atlas thinks the play trivializes the Holocaust and amounts to Holocaust revisionism "by its not-so-subtle" parallel between the Jewish tragedy and Israel's military action in Gaza this past winter.

He is concerned the play will only reinforce the views of those who already do not like Jews. The fact that Seven Jewish Children is being presented by a Jewish group does not mean that it can't be described as anti-Semitic, he said.

QJC, however, is making no attempt to block the production here, nor has it contacted the IJVM to express its disapproval.

Seven Jewish Children, which runs about 10 minutes, had its premiere in February at London's Royal Court Theatre, amid considerable controversy. The Board of Deputies of British Jews accused Churchill of being "anti-Israel," while the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland termed it "a modern blood libel."

Sixty well-known British Jews published a letter in the Daily Telegraph saying the play reinforces "false stereotypes" about Jews.

Churchill, 71, who lived with her family in Montreal for a while after World War II, attending the private Trafalgar School, is associated with the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign.

The play was mounted in March at the Washington, D.C., Jewish Community Centre, but only after Ari Roth, artistic director of its Theatre J, had to defend his decision to opponents in the community. He also modified the program by adding two pro-Israel plays and a panel discussion.

The Montreal production is directed by Rose Plotek, who teaches drama at York University's Glendon College. There is an intention to bring Seven Jewish Children to Toronto at some point.

Devora Neumark, speaking for IJVM, doesn't deny the play is "difficult," but she rejects labelling it anti-Semitic. "As the mother of two children, I know how challenging it is to know what to tell and not tell them. This play is about how we pass information on to the next generation.

"It also is asking us as a society to talk about difficult questions. Art is there to push buttons and boundaries. This play promotes a dialogue in which we can investigate our ethics."

Neumark said she wouldn't hesitate to bring her 16-year-old daughter, but that's because she has visited Israel and the Palestinian territories with her mother and has an understanding of the situation.

The staged reading at Espace Geordie will be followed by a discussion period. The event is co-sponsored by Teesri Duniya Theatre, which in 2007 presented My Name is Rachel Corrie, which critics viewed as one-sided Israel-bashing. Other sponsors include Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights and Medical Aid for Palestine. Entry is free, but a collection will be taken for the latter organization's work in Gaza.

PREMIER PERFORMANCE: Grade 4, 5 and 6 members of the Bialik Hebrew Day School Choir performed, by special invitation, at a recent ceremony at Queen's Park. The event was organized by the Yad Vashem Society to honour a group of Holocaust survivors. Premier Dalton McGuinty, centre, was in attendance and shook hands with all the Bialik students.

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Michael Oren tapped as Israel's envoy to U.S.

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JERUSALEM — A university professor who advocates for Israel to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank is set to be appointed the country's next ambassador to Washington.

Michael Oren, who is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's candidate for the position, received Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's endorsement after separate meetings with Netanyahu and Lieberman.

The approval of the candidacy by the cabinet Sunday was considered a formality. Oren would then take up the position before Netanyahu's expected meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington on May 18 or 19.

Oren, a dual U.S.-Israel citizen who currently is a visiting professor at Georgetown University in Washington, has earned plaudits for his extensive scholarship on the 1967 Six Day War.

In a recent lecture at Georgetown University, he said, "The only alternative for Israel to save itself as a Jewish state is by unilaterally withdrawing from the West Bank and evacuating most of the settlements."

Netanyahu has resisted calls for a West Bank pullback, warning that Palestinian extremists could take over and endanger Israel.

He emerged over several high-profile candidates for the position, including ex-Likud MK Zalman Shoval, who served twice before as ambassador to the United States; Dore Gold, who served as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations from 1997 to 1999, and Alon Pinkas, who served as consul general in New York from 2000 to 2004.

Oren received a PhD in Near East studies from Princeton University in 1986. He has lectured as a visiting professor at several leading American universities, including Harvard and Yale.

Michael Oren

During Israel's January offensive against Palestinian militants in Gaza, Oren volunteered as a military liaison officer, briefing reporters outside Gaza.

Oren has written several books, including a 2002 study of the 1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Sinai desert, and a 2007 view of U.S. policy in the Middle East from 1776 to the present era, called Power, Faith and Fantasy.

In an analysis last year, Oren wrote that an Obama administration was likelier to clash with Israel on certain policies than one led by Senator John McCain, then the Republican candidate. Some critics of Israel in recent weeks have depicted the analysis as an attack on Obama, but Oren's defenders say it was a dispassionate and scholarly assessment of how each candidate's stated policies would play out.

Unlike other postings, made at the discretion of the foreign minister, the Washington envoy is usually chosen by the prime minister because of the sensitivity of the post. Oren would replace Sallai Meridor, who was known to be close to Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert.

Iranian candidate wanted in attack on Argentine Jews

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JERUSALEM — A candidate for president in the upcoming Iranian presidential elections is wanted by Interpol in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish centre in Argentina.

Mohsen Rezaei, who is wanted by Interpol in the bombing of the Jewish centre, is one of five candidates in the race.

Rezaei, speaking to reporters in Tehran last Sunday, said that if elected he would be willing to co-operate with the United States on regional security matters.

He also criticized hardline Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for his handling of the faltering economy and said his questioning of the Holocaust "has no benefit."

He made no mention, however, of the Argentine bombing case, which he has never discussed publicly.

Rezaei, who led Iran's Revolutionary Guards during the country's war with Iraq in the 1980s, is on a list of five Iranian officials sought by Interpol since 2007 for the Buenos Aires bombing that killed 85 people. Iran has rejected any link to the bombing.

He is not considered a strong challenger to Ahmadinejad in the June 12 vote. But if elected, Iran would have a leader who could be shunned by other nations and whose travel would likely be limited due to Interpol's decision to add him to its most-wanted list.

Rezaei is positioning himself as a candidate aiming to reverse what he calls Ahmadinejad's harmful foreign policy.

On Sunday, he addressed the Obama administration's efforts to engage Iran, saying his country should respond and test whether Washington is serious.

"We are ready to have interactions with foreign countries on preserving security, peace and tranquillity in the region," he said.

Rezaei said Iran should not wait for the U.S. to make the first move. He also hinted at a willingness to co-operate with the U.S. in Afghanistan, as Iran did before former U.S. president George W. Bush labelled the country part of an axis of evil.

Continued on page 38

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Executive Director
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HAR EL

Congregation Har El, encompassing the North Shore Jewish Community Centre and the Har El Synagogue exists to help build community, strengthen family life, and promote Jewish identity in Vancouver's North Shore and surrounding communities. Located in beautiful West Vancouver, the organization is at a pivotal point: the facility is world-class, the congregation consists of a growing number of young families, the volunteer base is highly committed and professional, the Rabbi is thoroughly well-liked and effective, and a comprehensive strategic planning process has been undertaken with a clear vision for the future. With over 500 individual members from 20 nationalities, Congregation Har El provides quality experiences through a mix of formal and informal Jewish educational, recreational and cultural activities.

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Government moves to dismiss AIPAC case

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

WASHINGTON — Prosecutors asked a judge to drop charges against two former AIPAC staffers accused of passing along classified information.

In a May 1 statement, the acting U.S. attorney in the eastern district of Virginia said restrictions on the government's case imposed by Judge T.S. Ellis III made conviction unlikely.

"Given the diminished likelihood the government will prevail at trial under the additional intent requirements imposed by the court and the inevitable disclosure of classified information that would occur at any trial in this matter, we have asked the court to dismiss the indictment," Dana Boente said.

The motion all but guarantees a dismissal.

"Intent requirements" refers to an earlier Ellis ruling that the government must prove that Keith Weissman, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's former Iran analyst, and Steve Rosen, its former foreign policy chief, intended not only to assist Israel but to harm the United States.

Weissman and Rosen were charged under a rarely used section of the 1917 Espionage Act that makes it a crime for civilians to receive and distribute closely held defence information. Both men were later dismissed by AIPAC, with the organization claiming the two had violated its rules. Rosen has filed a multimillion dollar lawsuit against AIPAC.

Lawrence Franklin, a former mid-level Iran analyst at the Pentagon, admitted to leaking information to Rosen and Weissman in 2003 because he wanted his concerns about the Iranian threat to reach the White House.

His Pentagon colleagues were focused on Iraq, and Franklin believed AIPAC could get his theories a hearing at the White House's National Security Council. He also leaked information to Naor Gilon, the former chief political officer at the Israeli Embassy.

By the summer of 2004, government agents co-opted Franklin into setting up Rosen and Weissman. He allegedly leaked classified information to Weissman about purported Iranian plans to kill Israeli and U.S. agents in northern Iraq.

Weissman and Rosen allegedly relayed that information to AIPAC colleagues, the media and Gilon. AIPAC fired the two men in March 2005.

Franklin was sentenced in January 2006 to nearly 13 years in jail.

Reached by phone, Rosen told JTA he was "ecstatic" and was "still absorbing a life-changing moment." He said he had been on the phone Friday morning nonstop with family and friends.

"There was a great injustice here, but thank God we live in a country where the courts can correct this kind of injustice," he said.

For the immediate future, Rosen said, he would focus on a book he is writing on government leaks.

Baruch Weiss, Weissman's lawyer, told JTA that the decision is a "great victory for the First Amendment and for the pro-Israel community." Anything the defendants did "was to the benefit of Israel and the United States," he said.

The dropping of the case came just before the start of AIPAC's annual policy conference in Washington on May 3.

URGENT

If you have any information about the **Family of Arlene Cotler,** who lived at 4315 Melrose Ave. in Montreal, in 1952.

Please call Sima 514-909-1777

Spain approves Israeli bombing probe

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Spanish National Court judge Fernando Andreu announced Monday that he will pursue his investigation into a 2002 Israeli bombing in the Gaza Strip, despite contrary advice by prosecutors at the court.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Ehud Barak said he would call on the Spanish government to prevent the investigation, reiterating Israel's stance that the Israel Defence Forces is the most "moral" army in the world.

"I intend to appeal to the Spanish foreign minister, the Spanish minister of defence and, if need be, the Spanish prime minister, who is a colleague of mine in the Socialist International, to override the decision," said Barak.

"No army is as moral as the Israel Defence Forces, and I have no doubt that the people who were involved in eliminating [alleged Hamas member Salah] Shehadeh acted with a clear mind and towards a single goal – to protect the citizens of Israel."

Six senior IDF officers and security officials are the subject of investigation over their involvement in the 2002 bombing in densely populated Gaza City. That attack, using a one-ton bomb dropped from an Israeli F-16, targeted and allegedly killed Shehadeh along with 14 other people.

Andreu said the 2002 bombing might constitute a crime against humanity. The suspects named by Andreu include former defence minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, former IDF chief of staff Dan Halutz and five current or former army officers or security officials.

On Monday, the Spanish judge wrote that Israel's military conducted an internal investigation, but Israeli military and civilian prosecutors declined to open proceedings of their own. He said for this reason Spain has jurisdiction to keep investigating.

"In Israel, there has not been, nor is there now underway, any legal proceedings aimed at investigating the Gaza bombing," the judge wrote.

The National Court has become known for its inquiries into alleged human rights abuses in other countries, including Chile, Argentina and Tibet, as well as the western Sahara.

Andreu's initial decision to investigate infuriated the Israeli government. Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said in response that Spain planned to modify its law to narrow the scope of universal jurisdiction cases to those with a clear link to Spain.

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UNITED JEWISH APPEAL OF CANADA INC.

Notice is hereby given that the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the above corporations will be held on

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2009 (14h30)

(Following the Meeting of the Board of Directors)

Soloway Jewish Community Centre
21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa

Agenda will include:

Presentation of Audited Financial Statements
Appointing Auditors and authorizing the Directors to set their remuneration
Election of Directors
To consider and, if thought appropriate, enact and confirm By-law 109, to be enacted by the Board of Directors and being a By-law to amend parts of By-law 108, details of which can be obtained from the office of United Israel Appeal of Canada Inc., during business hours, at the aforementioned address.
Ratification of Acts of the Officers, Board of Directors and Executive Committee since the last Annual Meeting
Such other business as may properly come before the Meeting

Barbara L. Farber, President

Iran refuses to hand over the suspects

Continued from page 37

Argentine prosecutors allege that senior Iranian officials orchestrated the bombing and entrusted the Lebanon-based militant group Hezbollah to carry it out.

A van packed with explosives blew up on July 18, 1994, levelling the seven-story Jewish centre. It killed 85 people and wounded 200. No one has been brought to justice in the attack.

In 2007, Interpol issued special notices for the five Iranians, the equivalent of putting them on its most-wanted list. The notices cannot force countries to arrest or extradite suspects, but can put government leaders on the spot and limit suspects' travel.

Iran has refused to hand over the suspects and has rejected the allegations, calling them political fabrications resulting from U.S. and Israeli pressure.

Besides Rezaei, the other suspects wanted by Interpol are former intelligence chief Ali Fallahian; Mohsen Rabbani, former cultural attaché at Iran's embassy in Buenos Aires; Ahmad Reza Asghari, a former diplomat; and Ahmad Vahidi, a Revolutionary Guards general.

Hezbollah militant Imad Mughniyeh, once one of the world's most sought terrorism suspects, was also named in the Interpol notices. He was killed in a car bombing in Syria in 2008 that Hezbollah blamed Israel for. Israel denied it.

Despite some support in his home region in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan in southwestern Iran and among Iran-Iraq war veterans, the 57-year-old Rezaei is not considered likely to win in June.

Israel Briefs

Israel warns EU

Israel warned the European Union to tone down the criticism of its new government or be cut out of the Middle East peace process. The warning came prior to the meeting this week between Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and the head of the EU rotating presidency during a visit to the Czech Republic. The EU's commissioner said that her organization would freeze a planned upgrade of relations with Israel until the government commits to peace talks with the Palestinians.

Israel not on airline map

Israeli passengers complained to a British airline after Israel was not included on the in-flight map. The BMI airline runs two low-cost flights from London to Tel Aviv daily and also flies to countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Iran. The airline said the map, which showed the distance to Mecca and other Muslim holy sites, and identified Haifa as Khefa – the Arab name for the city before 1948 – was tailored to passengers destined for Arab countries. The two planes bound for Israel that featured the controversial maps originally had been scheduled to fly to an Arab country, according to reports. A company statement called the showing of the map on a flight to Tel Aviv a "logistic failure" and said the map will be removed from planes flying to Israel.

Turkey ends investigation

Turkey has closed an investigation into war crimes allegedly committed by Israel during its Gaza offensive earlier this year, the Anatolia news agency reported. According to the report, the probe was the result of an initiative by an Islamist human rights group, Mazlum-Der. Relations between Jerusalem and Ankara, which both governments view as strategically crucial, have been strained by the Gaza war and the discontinuation of Turkish-mediated peace talks between Israel and Syria.

Police question Lieberman

Israeli police questioned Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman for the fourth time. The questioning, part of a corruption probe against him, lasted for eight hours. Police have said they believe they have enough evidence to charge Lieberman, who heads the Yisrael Beiteinu party, with money laundering, fraud and breach of trust. Police will hand their findings to prosecutors soon. Meanwhile, Lieberman was named to Time Magazine's list of the world's 100 most influential people in 2009. Lieberman appears in the "Leaders and Revolutionaries" category.

IDF attacks tunnels

Israeli Air Force aircraft on Friday bombed two smuggling tunnels along Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip, in response to a Qassam fired from the coastal territory the previous day that hit the western Negev. The rocket, which struck an open field, was the first to hit the Negev after a period of relative calm. No injuries or damages were reported in the Qassam strike.

Bibi makes Schalit vow

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that Israel will do all it can to bring home kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit. Speaking at the annual Independence Day reception at the president's residence for past and present Israeli army commanders, Netanyahu said "we are committed to bringing Gilad Schalit home in one piece to his parents. Every combat soldier knows that we will do all within our power to bring him home alive and well." Schalit was abducted by Hamas in June 2006.

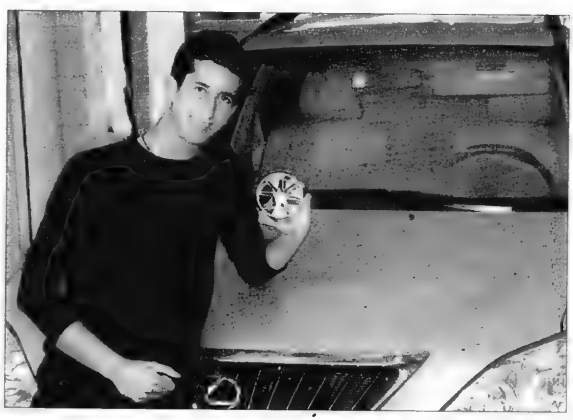
Hijacker released

Youssef Magied al-Molqui, the Palestinian man who led the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship was released from an Italian prison last Wednesday and ordered to leave Italy. He was released early for good behaviour after serving 24 years of a 30-year sentence. Palestinian guerrillas hijacked the Achille Lauro in 1985. The four hijackers shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly American Jewish man who was in a wheelchair, and threw his body overboard.

– from JTA and Ha'aretz

Israeli whiz kid's invention lowers gas consumption

By KARIN KLOOSTERMAN
Israel21c



Inventor Zion Badash

TEL AVIV — If you could spend $208 (US) on a small device for your car engine that lowers gas consumption up to 40 per cent, reduces pollution and gives your car more power, you might think that it sounds too good to be true.

Well, this is what the Z5, invented by Israeli teenager Zion Badash when he was 16, promises to do.

An air filter, the Z5 is fitted onto the the car's engine. It changes – for a fraction of a second – the way air behaves when going into the combustion chamber. This change allows the engine to use air more efficiently, saving fuel and giving more thrust at the same time.

After working on it for two years, Badash started selling the Z5 a few months ago. Car manufacturers around the world are lining up for stakes in the new device.

Badash came up with the idea for the Z5 while he was walking down a smoggy street in Tel Aviv one day and noticed the pollution belching out of the cars. "That bothered me," he said. He didn't have a driver's licence and had no idea about fuel costs. It was the environmental cost of pollution that put his gears in motion.

"Especially being a young kid, I had no idea what was the cost of gas or the fuel consumption for regular cars," said Badash, now 18. "I realized if [the solution] comes before the combustion itself, the effect will not only be on emissions – it will also affect emissions, save fuel and make the car more powerful," he said.

Of course, more energy saving is "a big and important effect," he added, but it "wasn't my main concern."

Badash, who studied physics in high school and is taking math at university, is about to be recruited into the army.

After developing the prototype of the Z5, he went on to found a three-person company. It's a family business run by his brother-in-law, Eli Mor, with headquarters in Tel Aviv and a manufacturing and distribution outlet in Turkey.

The Z5 is now available through mail order via the company's website, and thousands of units have been sold so far.

The world's large car manufacturers have been in touch with Mor, Badash told ISRAEL21c. They are looking for ways it can be fitted directly into their vehicles.

"Ford, Mazda, all the large companies have been in contact with us, and we are in talks with them," says Mor, who sees the environment as the main priority for the business. "This is the top of the work. We don't look at fluctuating gas prices."

Road tests on emissions show that his invention does work, Badash said. It can be fitted onto new cars, or old ones, diesel, hybrid, buses – basically any combustion engine, even power plants, he added.

"Using it in an open combustion chamber brings a maximum effect. You can see fuel consumption [go down] very clearly. It can be used everywhere."

President/Chief Operating Officer

Soloway JCC of Ottawa

Principal Responsibilities:

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre of Ottawa (SJCC) is looking for an experienced individual to serve as president/executive director in this highly visible and important leadership role. The successful candidate will be able to provide leadership and vision to the Board and professional staff as they lead the SJCC into the future while managing the day to day responsibilities of a full service program and facility with an operating budget of almost $5 million. He or she will have demonstrated expertise in strategic goal development and achieving those milestones.

The successful candidate will have personal and professional qualities that will allow him/her to work in and with a group and build community partnerships by representing the agency and its vision and mission. He or she will have responsibility for the enhancement of critical relationships with key stakeholders, board members, communal agencies and staff members.

The Soloway SJCC of Ottawa has been a long-standing, integral part of the Jewish and secular communities. Offering a multitude of programs and services, learning opportunities, and athletic facilities--for all demographics--this SJCC serves to fulfill the needs of an educated and active community. The successful candidate understands the dynamics of Jewish community leadership and the role that the SJCC plays in the broader community.

For more information about the SJCC go to www.jccottawa.com.

Minimum Qualifications:

The successful candidate will demonstrate strong leadership and management capacity, with a proven record of straegic goal development and achievement. Candidates must possess effective communication skills and the ability to lead, influence and engage others both inside and outside the SJCC. The SJCC seeks proven experience in fund and program development and experience with committee, board and staff development. Previous experience in the management or involvement of a JCC or similar agency/experience is an asset. A master's degree is preferred.

Interested applicants should send their resume and salary requirements to execposition@jcca.org no later than May 22, 2009.

Filmmaker considers taking a break from Israel

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

By his own admission, Igal Hecht is burned out.

The Toronto filmmaker behind such documentaries as Not in my Name, Disengaging Democracy, Shield of Solomon and My Flag has done 28 films about Israel or Judaism in the last seven years.

"I'm tapped out," he says. "It's time to do something else. I think. I've run out of ideas."

Also, he says, the current economic climate doesn't help. "It's tough to get funding. Right now, especially, it's like a drought."

From October 2007 to December 2008, Hecht figures he's made 14 films in Israel, flying to Israel every six weeks.

"That's an insane amount – it works out to one film a month," he says. "I wouldn't have been able to do it without Lior Cohen [a filmmaker he works with in Israel]. You need someone as persistent as yourself."

It was after filming My Flag, which screened at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival last month, that Hecht started to consider taking a break.

In the documentary, Hecht embarked on a journey across Israel to discover what the country's flag means to Israelis. The Israeli carefree, and at times hateful, attitude toward the flag visibly angered him. In one scene Hecht, wearing an Israeli flag around him, is seen being harassed by anti-Zionist religious Jews in the Mea Shearim neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

"The flag means so much to me. I wanted to do the film because I feel passionate about Israel. I loved making the film, but I got the impression that Israelis don't know what is happening in their country. I came back from there and said to myself, 'I need a break from that place'"

Even though Hecht may stop making Israeli documentaries for the time being, he hasn't lost any of his passion. Once we start talking about politics, the Israeli-born filmmaker gets on a roll.

"There's a lack of leadership and vision in Israel. Leaders are borderline – not even borderline – they are corrupt. I realize as I sit here in the Diaspora passing judgment that I sound like a hypocrite, but I think it's fair to point this out."

He says with so many Knesset members being investigated for sex scandals, fraud, etc., Israelis feel they can do what they want.

"It's like chaos there right now. You get the sense people don't know where they're going. Leaders change their minds every five minutes. There's a lack of vision – a lack of inspired leadership."

Hecht is also stressed out by the reaction to his films. He's been accused of being both too left and too right wing. Recently, CTV Television refused to run one of his latest films, 35 Acres, because, he said, the slant it takes wasn't what they wanted. "They said it was too right wing," Hecht says.

35 Acres follows three right-wing Jewish extremists who try to gain access to the Temple Mount and destroy the Al Asqa Mosque. He films them being harassed by security forces and searched. Hecht says the film didn't sympathize with them but does ask a valid question: Is it right for people to be banned from going somewhere because they're Jewish?

Hecht said he doesn't like to be pigeonholed. "My politics change with the topic that I'm filming. I've got a soft spot for the southern part of Israel [like Sderot for instance]. People think I'm a right winger, but those people are overlooked. I really get angry and want to champion their cause."

But then, he says, when you go to the West Bank and see the checkpoints and the soldiers behaving rudely, your sympathies switch to the other side "It's hard to say if I'm this or that. It's hard to be dogmatic. I try to maintain a balance."

Through his company, Chutzpa Productions, Hecht still has several films coming down the pipeline, including Shunned, a film about gay Palestinians airing on Out TV on June 14.

Filmmaker Igal Hecht appears burned out after filming a scene overlooking Jerusalem.

He's also finished work on Theatre of Conflict, a seven-year look at the Jewish-Arab conflict at York University. He started the project when he was a student. "They still have the same chants they did seven years ago when I was a student. It's always the same thing."

He's also finishing the third instalment of a trilogy on the messianic movement in Israel, a sequel to The Chosen People and In The Shadow of the Messiah.

His first non-Israeli project took him to Cambodia recently to film Beer Girls, a look at women's rights in Cambodia. "It was amazing to film there," he says. The film shows how beer companies exploit the female workforce.

Meanwhile, sometime in May he hopes to have chutzpafilms.com running. The website will showcase all the films made by Chutzpa Productions, including 35 Acres.

"I'm putting them online and, following the iTunes model, people can stream them for 99 cents each. There will be a variety of films. I hope it generates enough to fund my next movie."

What that is, he's not sure yet, though he's got a couple ideas in mind. He's buoyed by the fact that one of his documentaries, Shield of Solomon, chronicling the struggles of Sudanese refugees in Israel, was aired on CBC.

"It was my most successful film. The CBC Documentary Channel is the Canadian mecca for documentaries – it was a pinnacle for me. I've tried to get a film on there for years."

He also says he's dying to project a different side of Israel, one that the majority of filmmakers ignore. When filming My Flag, for instance, he came across a group of people who go deep in the forest and sing Israeli folk songs around bonfires.

"That's the image of Israel I want people to have. Israel is a very safe place. Most filmmakers concentrate only on the bad.

"I don't need every film I make to be controversial," but, he adds, "I think I have some controversy in me left."

For more information about Chutzpa productions, visit www.chutzpaproductions.com.

Clarification

The article "Inside Hana's Suitcase director brings a message of hope" (CJN, April 23) should have made clear that Fumiko Ishioka and George and Lara Brady use the Holocaust story about Hana's suitcase to teach adults and children about accepting others' differences, standing up for people who are singled out and about ways to make a peaceful world. Their focus is not religious tolerance or Holocaust education.

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Arts & Travel

Adoration explores the nature of terrorism and martyrdom

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

In his 12th feature film, Adoration, Canadian director Atom Egoyan veers off into the harsh terrain of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Scheduled to open in Toronto on May 8, Adoration is Egoyan's first overtly political movie since Ararat, which turned on the 1915 Armenian genocide.

Adoration is based on a terrorist incident in April 1986 in which a Jordanian national of Palestinian origin, Nizar Hindawi, attempted to plant Semtex plastic explosives aboard an El Al plane en route from London to Tel Aviv.

Rachel (Rachel Blanchard) and Sami (Noam Jenkins) in their bedroom.

Hindawi, who had ties with Syria's intelligence services, placed the bomb in the handbag of one of the passengers, Ann-Marie Murphy, his pregnant Irish girlfriend.

A simple, apolitical person, she had no idea that she was cynically being used as a pawn in a deadly struggle. If Murphy had made it past security guards, Hindawi would have detonated the bomb, killing some 400 people.

This is Egoyan's point of departure. In a series of scenes that frame Adoration, the Irish woman, known here as Rachel (Rachel Blanchard), faces an Israeli guard as she tries to board flight 016. In a thick Israeli accent, he asks her a number of routine questions. Her answers set off alarm bells, and she is not permitted to get on the aircraft.

Fast forwarding, Egoyan focuses on Sabine (Arsinee Khanjian), a tormented Toronto high school French teacher from Lebanon who gives her students a translation exercise on the Hindawi affair.

Much to Sabine's consternation, the assignment has an unsettling effect on one student, Simon (Devon Bostick), an orphan who pretends to be the son of the Irish woman, and on her career.

Simon reads his essay in class and then posts it on the Internet. The reaction triggers an emotional debate on chat lines: is Hindawi a monster or a hero?

After a Holocaust survivor condemns Hindawi, a neo-Nazi praises him as a hero. Their respective opinions symbolize the gamut of views on this explosive issue.

At once dark and mysterious, and distinguished by understated performances, Adoration shifts between the terrorist incident and its unforeseen repercussions in Toronto two decades later.

Egoyan's film, which is typically opaque and detached, explores interlocking themes ranging from the complexities of convoluted relationships to the nature of terrorism, martyrdom, victimhood, western penetration of Muslim lands, Islamic extremism and modern technology.

In touching on these diverse but connected topics, Egoyan adopts a cool, neutral tone, refraining from declaring his own sympathies.

His neutrality may be disturbing to some viewers, but it heightens tensions and endows Adoration with a certain edge.

Attention Jewish Professionals

Jewish - Somali Mentorship Project

דרושים מתנדבים להדרכה

The Canadian International Peace Project is seeking mentors from the Jewish community to participate in an innovative mentorship project between the Jewish and Somali communities. Mentors will assist Canadian Somali university/college students and young professionals to pursue their professions.

Interested applicants may contact Ebyan Farah at 416-384-0123 or via email at: ebyan.farah@canadianipp.org

This is a joint initiative by the United Jewish Appeal, Canadian Jewish Congress, Canadian Somali Congress, Canadian International Peace Project and Canadian Heritage. For more information, visit: www.canadianipp.org

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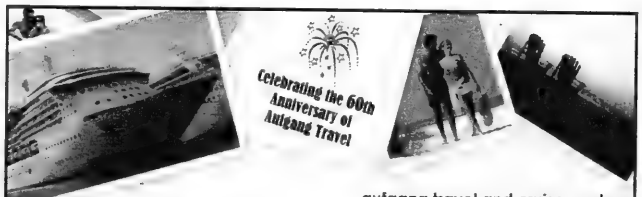

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CJN Profile

Juno Award-winning composer/arranger influenced by Africa

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Decades have elapsed since Juno Award winner Hennie Bekker lived in Zambia. Yet childhood memories of Africa have left an indelible impact on his musical sensibility.

As a boy growing up in the remote copper-mining outposts of Nkana and Mufulira, Bekker would run barefoot through the bush with his African friends, listening to the sounds of birds high in the trees and to the rustle of wild animals deep in the jungle

At sunset on some days, he would hear the haunting beat of African drummers communicating with each other from many kilometres away.

"This made a lasting impression on me," said Bekker, who immigrated to Canada in the late 1980s.

"The complex rhythms of the drums were sensational," he recalled. "I can still hear them in my head. They gave me an appetite for African music."

Such primal influences formed Bekker, a composer and arranger who has a phenomenal 45 albums to his credit.

Chief among them is the African Tapestries Collection, which consists of a box set of five CD albums: Temba, The Smoke That Thunders, Kusasa, Jabula and Amani.

Bekker won a 1997 Juno – presented by the Canadian Academy of Recording Artists and Sciences – for Astroplane, the best dance recording.

In addition, he has been a Juno Award nominee three times each in the best instrumental artist and best dance recording categories.

"Canada has been very good to me," said Bekker in an interview one recent afternoon.

On Thursday, May 28, at 8 p.m., he showcases his wares at a concert to be held at the Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts.

Billed as "a journey through the majesty and mystery of the African continent," the show will underscore his ability to fuse ambient, New Age and world music.

Purely instrumental, Bekker's music lends itself to introspection. "You can sit back and shut your eyes to it," he said.

A pianist by trade, Bekker launched his career as a recording artist after leaving South Africa and settling in Canada in 1987.

In Johannesburg, his base from 1962 onward, Bekker was the musical director of a large record company.

He arranged and produced scores for a succession of television dramas and documentaries commissioned by the South African Broadcast Corp. He was also active in the local film industry, working with, among others, South African director Jamie Uys and American actor Anthony Quinn.

As well, Bekker composed theme music for commercials for Aquafresh and Colgate toothpaste, Barclay Bank credit cards, Brylcream brilliantine, Carling Black beer, Datsun automobiles, Hertz car rental, Dunlop tires, Bols brandy, Holiday Inn, Kodak cameras, Jhirmack shampoo, South African Airways, Lucky Strike cigarettes and Schweppes beverages.

Hennie Bekker

In Canada, he continued composing music for commercials, landing jobs from Burger King, Canon, Hyundai, Kraft, Sani Flush, Toshiba, Sensodyne, Stelco Steel, Toshiba and Ultra Slim Fast.

But in the main, he devoted himself to making recordings. Thanks to a lucky break, he met Dan Gibson, a Canadian filmmaker and naturalist who was looking for a composer familiar with the acoustics of nature.

Scouring stock libraries, Gibson chanced upon Bekker's name. It was a good fit. Bekker and Gibson collaborated on 14 Solitude albums, some of which were quite successful.

Harmony, Breaking Through the Mist and Pacific Suite won double platinum, platinum and gold awards, while Great Lakes Suite, The Classics, Algonquin Suite, Rocky Mountain Suite and Appalachian Mountain Suite cleaned up, too.

Bekker also achieved success with CDs like Spring Rain, Summer Breeze, Autumn Magic and Winter Reflections and with the Tranquility series.

Although these albums have been popular in countries as far away as Russia, Bekker has not always reaped the financial rewards of his creativity.

"The whole music scene is suffering from file sharing and downloading," he said. "I'm surprised something hasn't been done about it."

Bekker, 75, was born in Nkana, a town in Zambia's copper belt more than 200 kilometres north of the capital, Lusaka.

It was not uncommon to find Jewish families like the Bekkers in places like Nkana or Mufulira. "Most of the Jews were shopkeepers," he said.

When he was 10, his father, Hennie, a mining supervisor from South Africa, bought him a piano. Bekker was a self-taught pianist. "I never went to music school."

At the age of 11, the Bekkers moved to Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia. They settled down in Bulawayo, the country's second-largest city.

Bekker joined an itinerant band as a pianist, and the gig took him through Africa, including the Congo.

Eventually, he settled in South Africa, finding the musical scene in Zimbabwe too small and confining for his talents and ambition.

In Johannesburg, the country's cultural hub, Bekker established himself as a regular in fusion-jazz clubs, all the while tending to his day job as a record company musical director.

Ultimately, he tired of South Africa. He hoped to to stretch himself out musically and had grown weary of its stifling racial segregation apartheid system.

"It was getting me down. It was a situation that could not last," said Bekker, a soft-spoken man of few words. "I felt an answer had to be found to it in the form of a more democratic society."

In retrospect, he is surprised that South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy was non-violent.

"For that I'm very thankful."

He left Johannesburg in the early 1980s, landing in London, where he composed and arranged for such figures as Freddie Cole, Magna Carta and Stanley Black.

Feeling the need yet again to reinvigorate himself, Bekker immigrated to Canada, where he and his family have been ever since.

He and his third wife, a South African from Johannesburg, feel quite at home in Toronto.

Though he is well past retirement age, Bekker has no immediate plans to retire.

"I enjoy working in my studio," he said, adding that he is currently in the throes of developing yet another album.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TOP ISRAELI MUSICIANS TO PLAY AT GLENN GOULD STUDIO

The Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation presents Israel Makes Music, a concert featuring some of Israel's most talented musicians – pianist **Gili Loftus**, violinist **Hagar Maoz**, oboist **Natti Amrany** and cellist **Bernice Keshet** – all of whom have won the coveted Keren Sharret scholarship and other prizes. $20, includes post-concert reception. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Tuesday, May 19, 8 p.m. www.ticketweb.ca, 416-932-2260

* * *

Play Features Russian-Jewish Family: The Sputniks is a "deceptive puzzle-box" of a play that starts as a comedy centred around a Soviet-Jewish family, but adds the totalitarian horrors that drive the family to plot a dangerous escape to the West. The piece was conceived by Russian immigrant **Elison Zasko**, a "true chameleon of a performer," who impersonates the full cast of characters. A hit of the 2008 Fringe circuit, it runs at the Lower Ossington Theatre, 100A Ossington St., May 12 to 17. A Ten Foot Pole Production. $19. 416-915-6747, www. tenfootpole.ca

Rabbi Bernard Baskin

* * *

Ten Green Bottles: Te-Amim Music Theatre presents the stage première of Ten Green Bottles – From Vienna to Shanghai: A Journey of Fear and Hope, the true story of one family's strength in the face of persecution. The play is based on the book by **Vivian Jeanette Kaplan**, as adapted and directed by **Mark Cassidy**. $20-$25. Al Green Theatre, MNjcc, May 16, 21, 23 and 24. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org. School bookings also available by contacting 416-642-0430 or www.te-amim.com.

* * *

Audition Notice: Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre, now in its seventh season, is seeking actors for a production of the **Neil Simon** comedy, Brighton Beach Memoirs, to be directed by artistic director **Ari Weisberg**. A variety of characters are required. The production is scheduled for November, and rehearsals begin in late August or early September. To book an audition, contact Weisberg at teatron@sympatico.ca or 416-781-5527.

* * *

The Press & Human Rights: "Can Media Make a Difference – An Investigation of the Role of the Press in Upholding Human Rights" is the title of a panel discussion to be chaired by **Michael Enright**, with **Paul Knox** and **Amanda Grzyb**. Sponsors are Facing History and Ourselves Canada and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Free admission. MNjcc, Tuesday, May 12, 7:30. Reservations, Leora Schaefer, 416-901-3831 or leora_schaefer@facing.org.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Mark Eisenman Trio** and the **Reg Schwager Duo** perform at Whisky & Music, Toronto's annual whisky gala. Roy Thompson Hall, May 8, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. www. spiritoftoronto.ca

• **Four** Voices, No Walls is a staged reading of works by four members of the Playwrights Guild, presented by the "GLBT" writing group OUTwrites. The playwrights are **Caroline Azar**, **Don Bapst**, **Bruce Bell** and **Sonja Mills**. Miles Nadal JCC, Saturday, May 9, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606 or www.outwrites.org

• Show One Productions presents three teenage virtuosi from the former Soviet Union – Georgian pianist **Luka Okrostsvoridze**, Armenian clarinettist **Narek Arutyunyan** and Russian violinist **Yuri Revich** – as part of its series on Young Stars of the Young Century. $35, $30. Glenn Gould Studio, Saturday, May 9, 7:30 p.m. 416-872-4255, www.roythomson.com

• Israel's Judaica Centre presents the launch of From Couscous to Kasha: Reporting from the Field of Jewish Community Work, a memoir by **Seymour Epstein**. Epi, as he is known to many, has written a humorous and moving account of his 18 years of service in the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and his diverse adventures in Morocco, Europe and the former Soviet Union. Free admission, kosher refreshments. 870 Eglinton Ave. W. Sunday, May 10, 7:30 p.m.

• Singer-songwriter **Arlo Guthrie** performs at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St. May 11, 8 p.m. 905-787-8811, www.richmondhill.ca

* * *

At the Galleries

• Selected works by American artist **Leonard Baskin** from the collections of **Rabbi Bernard Baskin** and the McMaster Museum of Art are on view at the MMA until Oct. 17. A reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 6 to 8 p.m. Sterling Street at University Avenue, Hamilton. http://mcmaster.ca

• Two new exhibitions are currently on view at the Loop Gallery, 1174 Queen St. W. The North York Project (Child is Father of the Man), by **Adrian Fish**, is a series of photographs that explore the mostly recreational environments of North York, where Fish grew up. **Yael Brotman**'s The Mountain in Our Living Room uses **Delacroix**'s Diary of Morocco as impetus for a reflection of her teen years in Winnipeg. Until May 24.

AMBITIONS OF A DREAMER

AN EVENING OF CONVERSATION WITH ISADORE SHARP

In honour of the publication of his new book,
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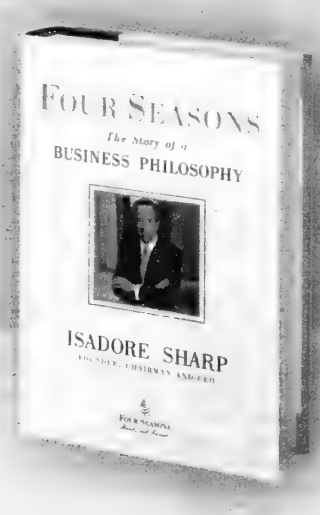
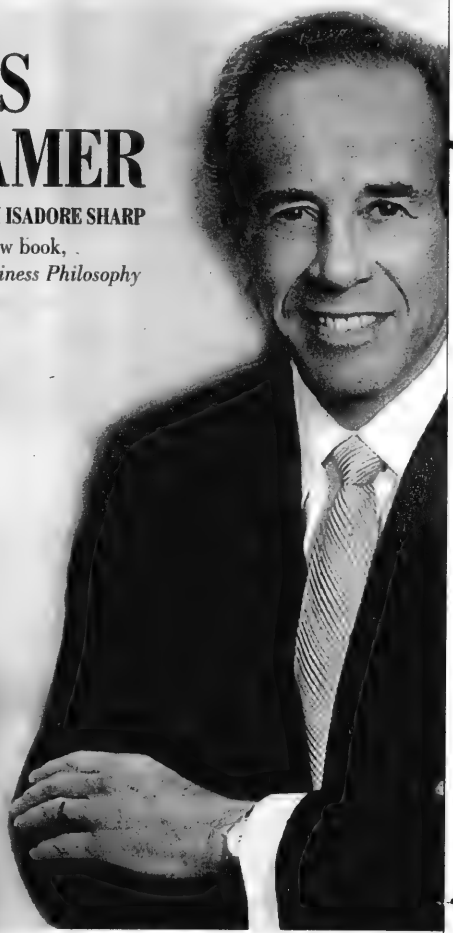
Heather Reisman—Moderator
George Cohon—Event Chair

Wine Reception and
Book Signing to follow





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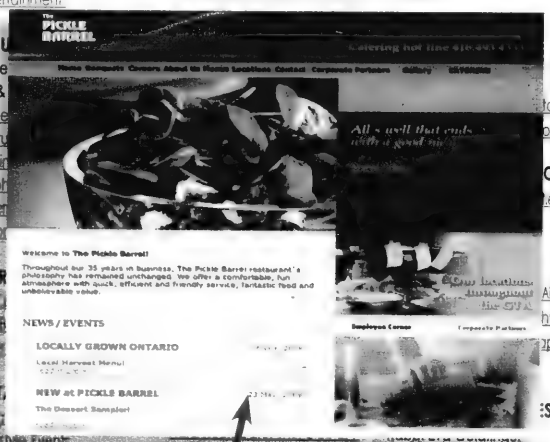

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Arts & Travel

Tuesdays with Morrie stars Barney Miller actor Hal Linden

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Hal Linden

Hal Linden, best known to television audiences as the police captain Barney Miller in the 1975-82 sitcom of the same name, is starring as Morrie Schwartz in The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's production of Tuesdays with Morrie.

Tuesdays with Morrie is based on newspaper columnist Mitch Albom's conversations with his former professor, Morrie Schwartz, who was dying from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Their tape-recorded conversations about life's lessons resulted in a New York Times bestseller. The initial purpose for publishing the conversations was to cover Schwartz's medical bills.

"Impending death is the norm of everybody's life," Linden, 78, says. "The way you live your life… that is the distinction, I think that is what the play is about."

Linden says that we are all dying; it is only a question of how much time we've got to think about it. "It is more immediate with him [Morrie]. It has to do with not your philosophy of death, but your philosophy of life, and how you spend the time until you do die. Which if I were a heavily philosophic man, I would start now…or maybe 20 years ago," he said with a chuckle.

Both Schwartz and Linden are Jewish. Linden, born Harold Lipshitz in New York City, grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household. Although he can't speak the language fluently, there are phrases he remembers from childhood. When Linden had a question regarding a Yiddish phrase in the script, he was pleased that a Yiddish speaker was brought in to explain what the phrase meant and how to pronounce it.

Linden has worked in Jewish theatre before, in two productions of Lessons for the West Coast Jewish Theatre in Los Angeles. "What makes it a Jewish theatre company is that it selects plays with Jewish themes. We do need a place to examine those themes and this company [The Harold Green Jewish Theatre] will hopefully fill that need," he said.

The theatrically-trained Broadway veteran won a Tony Award for his performance in The Rothschilds and loves every medium he works in. "The theatre is an actor's medium, opposed to films and television, which are directors' mediums. You get input in theatre that you may never get in film," he said.

"What I like most about the theatre is rehearsal because that is where you discover and where you make words into flesh. That's where you do your work… once the show opens, it's execution, but in rehearsal it's creation."

The L.A.-based actor said he's grateful to have been successful in the acting profession and feels it is a rare thing. "It is like being in college the rest of your life, because what you are doing is learning somebody else's life every day. That is the most broadening experience you can have… In order to play a character, you have to know the character. You get a much greater understanding of human behaviour from living everybody, rather than just talking about it."

Linden has been married for 51 years to wife Frances, a former actress, singer and dancer. When not acting, the thespian loves to golf. "I'm trying to go through all the golf courses in Toronto," said Linden. "I have performed in Toronto many times and I've played most of the golf courses here, but I've missed a few and I'm trying to rectify that oversight."

The play is directed by Ted Dykstra and co-stars Rick Roberts'as Mitch Albom.

Tuesday With Morrie runs May 8 to 30 at the Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St. For tickets, call Ticketmaster at 416-872-5555 or online at www.ticketmaster.ca.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Investment banker quits day job to climb Everest and world's other highest peaks

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

It's a feat that few have attempted and fewer still have accomplished.

But 28-year-old Alex Iscoe quit his job as an investment banker at Goldman Sachs to be one of the 230 people who have climbed the Seven Summits – the highest mountains in each of the seven continents.

"I was working for three years in New York and two in Hong Kong for Goldman Sachs, and I resigned in April of last year," said Iscoe, who grew up in Toronto.

"Things in the industry were not very good at that time... It struck me as a good time to take some time out to accomplish personal goals that I always wanted to do and never had a chance to."

Iscoe said he began his expedition last summer by climbing Europe's highest peak, Mount Elbrus in Russia.

By December, he had reached the summit of Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, and a month later, he had climbed Mount Vinson Massif in Antarctica, the highest peak in the region.

Iscoe said that of the three peaks he's already reached, the climb in Antarctica took the longest because of the logistics.

"It's a five-hour flight, and they don't fly unless the weather is really great, because the plane is landing on an ice runway. If there is any cross wind, they can't land," he said.

Attempting the climb in January, which is summertime there, meant they enjoyed 24 hours of sunlight.

"At three o'clock in the morning, the sun was as high in the sky as you would expect it at noon."

When asked if he ever felt like he wanted to give up, he said, laughing, "Yeah, pretty much every day."

But what keeps Iscoe motivated to move on to Mount Everest in Nepal, Asia, Mount McKinley in Alaska, Mount Kosciuszko in mainland Australia and Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, is, of course, to be one of a few people in history to complete the tour, but also to raise funds for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"I've been working with UJA Federation for years, serving underprivileged children, working with a group of friends in honour of a friend of ours who was killed in a car accident in university."

In honour of his late friend Jordan Propas, who died in 2001, Iscoe and his friends created the Jordan Propas Camp Scholarship Fund.

But the funds raised as a result of this initiative will go to the Ethiopian community in Bat Yam, Israel, to help them integrate into Israeli society through educational programs for school-aged children.

"I've always been very impressed with the professionalism and the work that is done at UJA, and it was a natural fit for me to go to them," he said.

Iscoe, who spoke to The CJN the day before he travelled to the base camp at Everest, said he's wanted to attempt Everest for about 10 years, but didn't have the opportunity to tackle it until now.

"Climbing is one of those things that you really need to have a combination of time and energy and resources. You need money to accomplish this. It is not an inexpensive endeavour, and it takes a lot of time out from your personal life," he said.

Iscoe added that it is a possibility that he'll return to investment banking after his tour, but finds humour in the interest people have in what he'll do when he's achieved his goal.

"The truth is, I haven't really thought about it. For the last [five] months, since I've known that I'd be attempting Everest, that has been the main thing on my mind. I haven't thought much past it. I'll have to start thinking about getting a job, as you can imagine sometime in late summer, but between now and then, I have a really high mountain to climb."

Iscoe, his guides and his team left for the base camp at Everest on March 25 and spent weeks training, getting acclimatized to the environment, preparing the camps and climbing the highest mountain in the world.

As of the end of April, according to the UJA Federation website, they had ascended nearly 22,000 feet of the 29,000-foot-high mountain.

All in all, Iscoe said he expects to be on Everest for a total of two months.

"The reason the climb takes so long is that you're trying to acclimatize to the drop of oxygen and the drop in the pressure in the atmosphere. As you're doing that acclimatization, you're really pushing your body to be able to work at a level that it is not used to working at, it is not comfortable working at," he explained.

"There are countless stories of people who try to push themselves too hard and then don't have the energy to get back down and the descent becomes the most dangerous part of the climb."

He said that although the remaining mountains on his tour are smaller than Everest, he is still motivated to complete all seven by the end of this year.

"It's certainly not a cakewalk. None of these mountains are a cakewalk."

To follow the progress of Iscoe's team, visit www.alpineascents.com/everest-cybercast.asp.

Alex Iscoe, who is on a mission to climb the seven highest peaks in each of the seven continents, is motivated by the desire to become one of just 230 people to accomplish the feat and to raise funds for UJA Federation.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Disraeli's ideas played into hands of anti-Semites

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-188}), still the first and only British prime minister of Jewish ancestry, was not only a canny politician but a recognized man of letters whose novels were all the rage in his day.

Adam Kirsch's relatively concise but penetrating biography, Benjamin Disraeli (Random House), examines both facets of his extraordinary life.

Described by his rival, William Gladstone, as "diabolically clever," Disraeli achieved fame at the age of 21 with his first novel, Vivian Grey, whose theme of boundless ambition would haunt him.

Disraeli wrote 17 more novels. Coningsby and Sybil were bestsellers, while Alroy and Tancred promoted proto-Zionism in the mould of George Eliot's novel, Daniel Deronda.

Yet accomplished as he was in literature, Disraeli left his greatest impression on politics. He sat in Parliament as a member of Parliament for some 30 years and led the Conservative party to power.

Adam Kirsch

Opposed initially to universal suffrage, he won plaudits for the passage of the second Reform bill, which granted most male heads of households the right to vote.

But in his greatest achievement, forged in 1868, he rose to the position of prime minister. It was an office he would hold yet again from 1874 to 1880.

During this phase of his glittering career, he dazzled friends and disheartened foes by audaciously buying 44 per cent of the shares of the Suez Canal after securing a loan from the Rothschilds.

He accomplished this feat despite the objections of his own cabinet and without the consent of Parliament.

Basking in a glow of contentment, he told Queen Victoria, "It is just settled. You have it, madam."

Kirsch rates Disraeli's purchase of Suez Canal shares, a triumph of British colonialism in the Middle East, as possibly the most celebrated episode in his illustrious career.

He adds that most of the shares, nonetheless, remained in the hands of France, Britain's competitor in the scramble for imperial influence in the Middle East.

For Disraeli, as Kirsch succinctly observes, his Jewishness was both "the greatest obstacle to his ambition and its greatest engine."

Though his father, a historian, literary critic and descendant of Spanish Jews, had him baptized as a teenager, Disraeli was generally regarded as a Jew and thus an outsider in British society.

"And that meant that he had to turn his Jewishness from a handicap into a mystique," writes Kirsch, an American book critic.

"He had to convince the world, and himself, that Jews were a noble race with a glorious past and a great future. He had to turn anti-Semitic myths to his own account."

Equal to the task, Disraeli reinvented himself as one of the 19th century's "chief points of reference for thinking about Jews and Judaism."

When Disraeli was born, Britain was inhabited by 15,000 Jews. Having been expelled from Britain in the 13th century, Jews were permitted to return in the mid-17th century by Oliver Cromwell. Yet few British Christians had ever laid eyes on Jews.

Given their alien image, and plagued by the anti-Semitic notions of such renowned British authors as Chaucer, Marlowe and Shakespeare, Britons were supremely receptive to myths and stereotypes about Jews.

Disraeli's father, Isaac, was affected by this state of mind. Kirsch contends that Isaac – whose family settled in Britain in 1748 – was painfully ambivalent toward Judaism, while his mother, Sarah, was downright hostile to Jews.

Their son, Benjamin, could have shunned his Jewish background. Instead, he cleverly gloried in it. Disraeli remained a member of the Church of England, while maintaining that Judaism and Christianity were essentially one faith.

Realizing that he could never "pass" an an ordinary Christian, Disraeli developed a public persona that allowed him to be a Jew while enjoying the civic rights of a Christian.

An aristocrat at heart, he concocted an idealized and self-aggrandizing portrait of Jews, both in his novels and in his speeches.

"Disraeli's understanding of Jewishness was deeply distorted by his disconnection from the collective Jewish life of his time," Kirsch writes.

He adds, "But Disraeli's imagination of Jewishness did what he needed it to do. It gave him the confidence to compete with the best-born men of England. It gave him the dignity he sustained through the most wounding attacks."

Through a devious character named Sidonia, who appears in several of his novels, Disraeli created an image of the Jew that, while designed to uplift and dignify Jews, played into the hands of anti-Semites.

The archetypal wandering Jew, Sidonia was a figure of immense power who controlled and manipulated governments from behind the scenes.

"With a few slight changes, you could easily turn the Sidonia scenes in Conigsby and Tancred into an anti-Semitic tract to rival The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," Kirsch writes. "And, as a matter of fact, the most vicious anti-Semites… all reprised Disraeli's ideas, sometimes giving him explicit credit."

Karl Eugen Duehring, a major anti-Jewish theorist in Germany, subscribed to Sidonia's racial doctrine: "The Jews are to be defined solely on the basis of race, and not on the basis of religion."

Wilhelm Marr, who coined the enduring phrase anti-Semitism, gladly embraced Disraeli's suggestion that Jews secretly pulled the strings.

The British writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a hero in Nazi eyes, subscribed to Sidonia's belief that racial excellence is "a positive fact."

Adolf Hitler, well aware of their corrosive rantings, expropriated them into his racist canon.

Reflecting on Disraeli's unintended legacy, Kirsch writes: "By the end of [his] life, anti-Semitism had mutated into something much more virulent, based no longer on contempt but on fear and hatred. The myth of Jewish superiority, which Disraeli had advanced to counter the fact of social inferiority, now interacted with the paranoid suspicions of anti-Semites to disastrous effect."

More than a century after his death, one wonders what Disraeli would have said had he known that his ideas were cynically used to defame, marginalize and murder Jews, particularly during the Holocaust.

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FEATURE HOME OF THE WEEK

BATHURST / LAWRENCE
Immaculate, bright & spacious 3 + 1 bdrm bungalow on quiet cul-de-sac. 3 baths, renovated kitchen. 50 ft lot, separate entrance to in-law suite. Prime central location close to parks, schools, shops, TTC. ONLY $749,900 — ACT NOW! David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

SOLD FOR 95% OF ASKING PRICE

BATHURST / HILLMOUNT
Huge 4 + 3 bdrm backsplit on 50 x 135 ft lot. 5 baths, modern renovated family-size eat-in kitchen, generous 30 ft family room, fireplace, w/o to deck, separate entry to two self-contained in-law suites, attached double garage. Close to TTC, shopping, schools, shuls. MUST SEE! Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

SPRING GATE / THORNHILL BEAUTY — NEW LISTING
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E. SIDE OF BATHURST / LAWRENCE — NEW LISTING
Spacious 3 + 1 br bung, 50' lot, $599K. David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

BEDFORD PARK
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HILLHURST EAST OF BATHURST — STEPS TO CORTLEIGH PARK
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BATHURST / HILLHURST
Spacious 3 bdrm raised bung on fab 50 ft lot. Plans & permits for 4,000+ sq. ft. home. $799,000. Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

CONDOS AND HOUSES FOR RENT
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• AVE / BATH / LAW Renovated, immaculate 3 + 2 br bung, separate entry to huge bsmt, hrdwd, 2 eat-in kitchens, parkette side & back, $2,800 / mo.

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3 Bdrm, 3 Bths, Mn Flr Fam Rm, 2 Bdrm Apt, 60' Frontage on Great St, Dbl Grge. F. Sversky** 416-488-2875

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4 car grge! Gated w/2 auto entries! Upscale fin's t/o! Gour kit+serv+w/in Pantry! Mstr w/f/p+sit rm+boudoir! Sharon Bobkin*416-226-1987

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Kingston Frontenacs' centre suits up for Team Canada

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Like other elite-level hockey players, Ethan Werek of the Kingston Frontenacs would rather have continued playing well into the spring rather than see his season come to an abrupt end.

So when the Frontenacs were eliminated from Ontario Hockey League playoff contention, Werek jumped at the opportunity to join Team Canada for the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) under-18 tournament in Fargo, N.D.

Suiting up with other Canadian Hockey League players who missed the playoffs, Werek scored four goals and added two assists in six games. Unfortunately, Canada dropped a 2-1 quarter-final match to the eventual gold medallist Americans and, in the bronze-medal game, lost to Finland 5-4 in a shootout.

Werek, who ended the season playing on an injured ankle, said "it was kind of disappointing" to come away without a medal, but the 18-year-old will likely have something to grin about soon.

His rookie season – in which he scored 32 goals and added 32 assists – has attracted the attention of National Hockey League scouts. The NHL's Central Scouting bureau has him pegged as an almost karmic 32nd pick among domestic skaters.

Werek plans to make the trek down the 401 to Montreal for the draft. "To soak in the experience will be amazing," he said.

At six-foot-two and 195 pounds, Werek brings a lot to the table for any NHL club, said Frontenacs assistant coach Darren Keily. "I think he has NHL potential for sure."

Werek did well as an OHL rookie, he has a good work ethic and is knowledgeable about the game. "He works hard, is tenacious and watches lots of video. He uses his size – he's a big kid. He wants the puck all the time. He's not afraid to go in the dirty areas [in front of the net] and score goals," Keily said.

Werek led the team in power-play goals, and though a centreman, he's stronger at scoring goals than setting them up, the coach said.

Coming from Tier II junior hockey meant he had to improve his defensive game, "and he did it… There really is no downside to his game," though he "needs to keep his feet moving and not take penalties," Keily said.

Playing with Team Canada, Werek was asked to score goals and be "an energy guy." But "I try to be an all-round player – energy, toughness, scoring touch," he said. "I'll do whatever I have to do to get the puck."

If you haven't seen him play, he suggests his style is closest to Philadelphia Flyers' Mike Richards – "a real good two-way centreman who's physical and is a leader."

Ethan Werek

One of the highlights of his OHL season came in a game versus London Knights, home of highly touted John Tavares. In front of 6,000 screaming London fans, Werek scored the winning goal with four seconds left on the clock. In another match against the Frontenacs' main rival, the Belleville Bulls, he scored the winner in overtime in the only game of eight against the Bulls won by Kingston.

The year before he joined the Frontenacs, he played for the Stouffville Spirit of the Ontario Provincial Junior Hockey Leage (OPJHL) – a junior A team his Israeli father owns – scoring 70 points in 37 games. Before that, he played minor hockey with the Toronto Marlies, and he once had an offer to play for the Israeli national junior team but turned it down so as not to jeopardize his eligibility to play for a Canadian team. He and his childhood buddy, Daniel Erlich, who plays for the Knights, did work out with the Israelis during one of the junior team's tours in Los Angeles.

While in Kingston, Werek has taken a couple of political science courses at Queen's University. It's something encouraged by his parents. "Hockey is only one part of life and school is definitely a big thing," he said.

But right now, his childhood dream of playing in the NHL appears to be getting closer to reality. Come the conclusion of day one of the draft, June 26, Werek will begin training in earnest for his first NHL camp.

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Swedish teen jailed for anti-Israel rioting

JTA

NEW YORK — A Swedish teenager was sentenced to 15 months in prison for rioting at an anti-Israel protest during a Davis Cup tennis match in March.

The Malmo District Court sentenced the 18-year-old for throwing paving stones at police outside the arena where Sweden and Israel were playing behind closed doors. He also was found guilty of drug possession.

Police detained nearly 100 people and arrested 10 during the March 7 riots.

Spectators were not allowed at the matches because Malmo city officials said they could not guarantee security due to the Israeli army's operations in Gaza.

The Davis Cup Committee fined the Swedish tennis federation $25,000 (US) and banned Malmo from hosting Davis Cup matches for five years.

Maccabi Tel Aviv to play Knicks, Clippers

JTA

NEW YORK — Maccabi Tel Aviv will hit both U.S. coasts for exhibition games against NBA teams.

The team announced Wednesday that it will play the New York Knicks and Los Angeles Clippers in October.

Both games will benefit the Migdal Ohr organization, which provides shelter and education for thousands of abused, impoverished and orphaned children in Israel.

Maccabi returns to Madison Square Garden on Oct. 18 to meet the Knicks. In 2007, a crowd of 18,000, mostly Maccabi fans chanting the team's name, saw the Knicks defeat Maccabi, 112-85.

Two days later, the Israeli squad will play the Clippers at the Staples Center.

Tel Aviv has five victories in 18 games against NBA teams, according to the Jerusalem Post. Its 105-103 win over the Toronto Raptors in 2005 marked the first time an international team defeated an NBA squad on North American soil.

Inside Back

Food for thought

By MICHAEL GORDON

We live in an era in which everyone is very conscious of food.

We are bombarded daily by comments, articles, advertisements, medical opinions and experts of all sorts telling us what we should eat or should not eat for our health. It can be a daunting task to just find something to eat without having to worry about what is really inside the product and whether it's good or bad for us.

The Senior Side of Life

One would think that during one's later years, the concerns about the content of food would become less important to the eater and those loved ones who feel compelled to take "healthy" actions. Doctors and nutritionists and swallowing specialists may focus on immediate health-related concerns of food, while family members may focus on the long-term risks and benefits of foods.

Some years ago, I was visiting an elderly patient who I knew quite well. She had been hospitalized for a heart ailment. I walked into the room to say hello, and she looked at me and gloomily said, "Taste this!" pointing to a mound of french fries (or as she called them chips).

"Why?" I asked her.

"Just taste one!" she said emphatically.

I took a chip into my mouth. It had no flavour because it was saltless.

I said, "It has no salt and no flavour."

"Exactly! They told me I can't eat any salt because of my heart. I'd rather die than have chips without salt. I have eaten them all my life with salt and am too old to change now."

After some discussion with the responsible physicians, it was decided to address this issue by increasing marginally the salt in her diet and raising her dosage of diuretic.

Two days later, I visited and she said, smiling, "Thanks, they gave me some salt, and all I have to do is pee a bit more – no big deal!"

I recently heard of the situation of a frail 94-year-old nursing home resident who is still able to participate in some activities and eat by herself. She could also choose her meals from the menus presented to her. She had met with the dietitian and had expressed special preferences. The physician felt that despite some medical problems, she was competent to make many personal decisions, including the choice of food. She requested that she be given gefilte fish and chopped liver every day, or at least a few times a week.

She said, "They are my favourite foods and bring back wonderful lifetime memories and all the wonderful holidays I used to cook for."

Apparently, her daughter had told the dietitian that she wasn't happy with her mother eating so much gefilte fish and chopped liver because of the salt and fat content.

Many attempts were made to impress upon the daughter that the mother could actually make her own decisions, to which the daughter replied, "My mother really does not know what is good for her."

The mother told the dietitian, "My daughter always worried about my health, but at 94, I think I can take a few chances."

At the end, the mother got her way. Staff did their best to help the daughter understand the importance of respecting her mother's wishes and food preferences, especially at this late stage of her life.

All I can say is, when my time comes, if there is Scottish shortbread, rugelach or strawberry cheesecake on the menu, just let me enjoy all of them!

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

STRAWBERRY CITRUS SALAD

3 c sliced hulled strawberries
3 lg navel oranges, peeled, thickly sliced crosswise, cut into 1/2" pieces
2 tblsp brown sugar
2 tblsp thinly sliced fresh mint leaves

Toss all ingredients in large bowl.
Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes.

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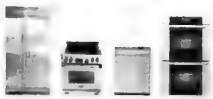

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Probiotics can reduce bloating

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Q. I often notice that my stomach looks and feels bloated. Are there any foods I could be eating to reduce this?

A. This is a very common complaint among people of all ages, and while this symptom can be caused by a number of gastro-intestinal ailments, some foods may provide relief. Make sure to also mention this symptom to your doctor.

Probiotics, which I have praised before, are the good bacteria in such products as yogurt and kefir. Probiotics are fabulous for soothing and rebuilding the gastro-intestinal tract. Have about one cup of yogurt or kefir a day, and after a few weeks, you'll notice a difference. Include both soluble and insoluble fibre in your diet. Get fibre from cereals with bran buds or cereals with psyllium added, as well as high-fibre breads. Reduce sodium intake as it causes water retention and drink eight cups of water per day, which is essential to allow the fibre to move freely, to help flush out excess sodium and for hydration. You should notice a reduction in constipation, bloating, gas and discomfort.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Noah River Porter Rosensweig is 3

He was born on April 24, 2006, at 4:48 a.m. Miriam, his mom, did the work while, from the sidelines, I encouraged her to count and watched in utter amazement as our baby, God's newest creation, came into our world. He was magnificent. I was watching a miracle from within and (what seemed) from outside nature, a moment tantamount to the rainbow painting the sky once the waters have calmed.

URBAN WRITER

Three short years later, Noah has learned to walk, talk, sing, play, run, eat with a spoon and fork, say "cinnamon" (or actually "cimamon") and create a circle of love by extending his right hand to his mom and his left hand to me, at the same time. Noah has given us a new way of gauging time outside of the seasons, and of understanding what growth is all about.

Our little guy has also made us feel young again. Recently, I received an e-mail from his mom that said, "Make a butterfly with Noah this weekend."

Man, when was the last time I was encouraged to engage in lepidopterology with a toddler, sitting cross-legged on the floor, my fingers annoyingly sticking together from glue, surrounded by scraps of orange, red and green tissue while attempting to attach cutout wings to the paper body of a Monarch butterfly?

Never – not until my Noah came along.

I received another e-mail a short while later from Miriam stating: "Noah woke up saying both his knees hurt. I said, 'Like Daddy's?' and he said 'Yes.'" How lucky am I that a little person wants to be like me – even if it means figuring, in a Pickwickian sort of way, that his knees are bugging him like mine do sometimes?

And Noah makes us wonder about stuff. He will request (strongly) that we stop in front of countless storefronts along Eglinton Avenue, stare inside and let him know what everything is and is for, and how much it costs. And guess what? Right now everything costs "nine dollas."

Noah makes us laugh boisterously at his darling articulations and definitions. The elevator is as an elegator. Toothpaste is blue water, a cellphone was a celltone, socks were shoes, and red buses were yellow buses – in fact, every vehicle was.

Our gift from God, our Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, turned three years old and reminds Miriam and me how sad it is when a brown yaya (cat) falls off our wagon and "blows away."

His little brave heart encourages us to face our fears as he faces his, such as the time the alarm in my car went off without notice. We jumped back nervously.

I asked, "Noah, are you scared?" and he responded excitedly, "Yes! Do it again Daddy." So I pressed the panic button on my car remote. Our diminutive soul of a child stopped in his tracks and asked me to do it again, again and then again. So I did it again, again and then again.

I watched Noah as he worked through his fears. I know I must do the same. That's what he's telling me.

"Daddy, am I Jewish?" Noah asked me.

"Yes, you are little man," I responded, and we are proud of that.

"Daddy, I don't want to wear a kippah," my boy says.

"Yes I know Noah, I'm not big on that either, but let's wear it when we make a brachah [blessing]."

So he does. Sometimes.

Our Noah is three years old. Yesterday he was two, and the yesterday before that he was two, too. Before that he was in his mother's womb, and before that… well, he was somewhere. Today he has been entrusted to Miriam and me, and our village.

Happy birthday Noah. We love you. Thank you, God, for our special gift. We'll do our best.

See Avrum's blog at avrum.net. Darfur?

Adam Block, grateful patient and donor

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A salute to our community and its volunteers

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OF GREATER TORONTO
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Volunteerism at its best

It has been said that volunteers are the lifeblood of any successful organization and perhaps nowhere is that adage more true than at United Jewish Appeal.

As two people who have been actively involved in both Toronto's vibrant Jewish community and UJA Federation for many years, we have witnessed – firsthand – the passion, vision, selflessness and compassion of our volunteers. Whether it's the hundreds of volunteers who help make our telethons an annual success, those who give their free time to make our Walk With Israel one of the Diaspora's most successful annual Israel solidarity events, or those who help us make community rallies the successes that they are - we simply couldn't accomplish what we do without you – our community's true heroes.

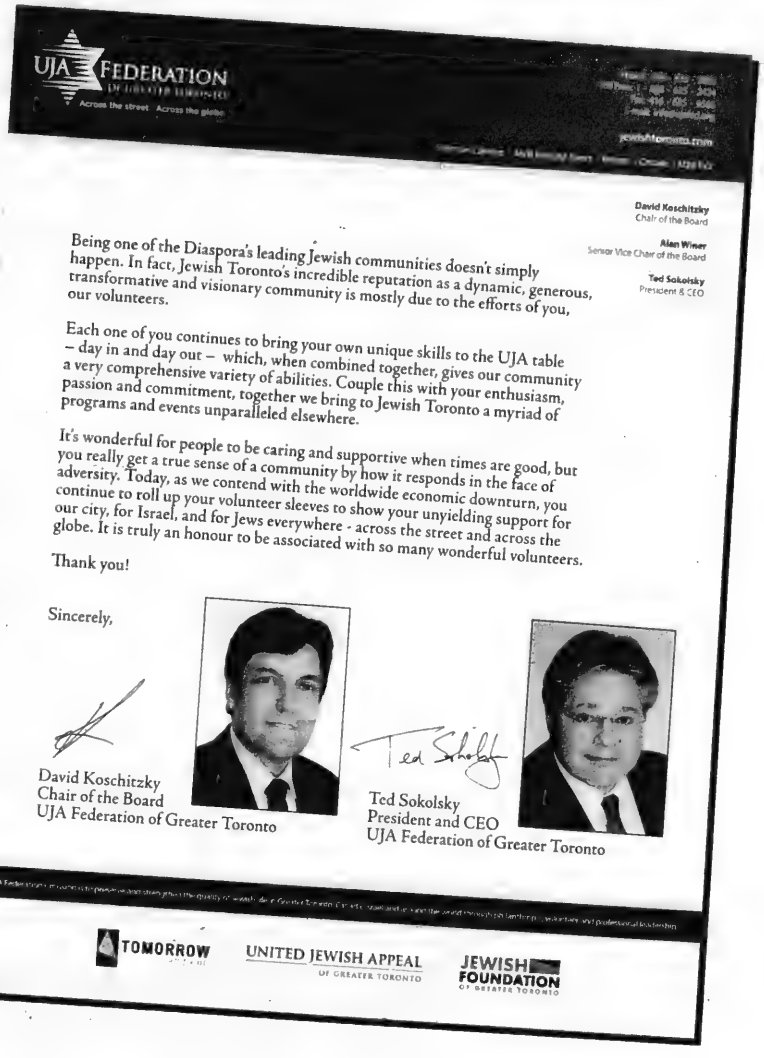
These times make what we do both more challenging and more important than ever and, as a result, make your contributions more essential than ever as our community responds to the needs of the most vulnerable among us.

As the incoming Chairs of United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010, we consider ourselves fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Jewish Toronto's talented and passionate cadre of volunteers over the next year, and we look forward to accomplishing great things by working together as one.

Sincerely,

Debbie Kimel
Chairs, United Jewish Appeal Campaign 2010

Ken Tanenbaum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Ted Sokolsky
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Being one of the Diaspora's leading Jewish communities doesn't simply happen. In fact, Jewish Toronto's incredible reputation as a dynamic, generous, transformative and visionary community is mostly due to the efforts of you, our volunteers.
Each one of you continues to bring your own unique skills to the UJA table – day in and day out – which, when combined together, gives our community a very comprehensive variety of abilities. Couple this with your enthusiasm, passion and commitment, together we bring to Jewish Toronto a myriad of programs and events unparalleled elsewhere.
It's wonderful for people to be caring and supportive when times are good, but you really get a true sense of a community by how it responds in the face of adversity. Today, as we contend with the worldwide economic downturn, you continue to roll up your volunteer sleeves to show your unyielding support for our city, for Israel, and for Jews everywhere - across the street and across the globe. It is truly an honour to be associated with so many wonderful volunteers.
Thank you!
Sincerely,
David Koschitzky
Chair of the Board
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
Ted Sokolsky
President and CEO
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
TOMORROW
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL OF GREATER TORONTO
JEWISH FOUNDATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Not what we have - but what we give

Although news about the economy is pretty gloomy in recent months, it has not changed a basic belief that we all share about what being Jewish means: Life is about what you give, not what you get.

The essential Jewish value of tzedakah motivates us on a daily basis, as it always has. Tzedakah, similar to the word for "righteousness" says: no matter what I have, I'll share it with you. It's the right thing to do."

Time is our most precious resource. Money comes and money goes, but a minute, once spent, can never be recouped. That is why volunteering is so precious and vital to the life of our community: it is a resource very well spent that makes every moment count.

In the Torah portions we are reading these days, we read a lot about what happens in the *mishkan*, the portable sanctuary that the Jewish people carried around with us for those 40 years in the desert. The Torah readings are filled with detailed descriptions of animal sacrifices, priestly clothing, construction plans for the *mishkan* itself, and a host of other seemingly small details. At first glance, these may seem far-removed from our daily concerns. Yet the message here is clear and reiterated in so many different ways that we all ought to be able to hear it: opportunities for reaching for something higher surround us all the time, and from every direction.

Life is full with chances to take even the most minute and seemingly insignificant parts of our day and use them for a holy purpose: to serve the Jewish People, to serve G-d. Particularly in troubled times, when the need to give through volunteerism may be greater, opportunities to give of ourselves are plenty. The kind of people we are and the kind of community we are depends not on what we have, but on what we give.

- Rabbi Joe Kanofsky, Ph.D., is Consultant, Community Capacity Building, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Volunteer Israeli emissaries make their mark on Toronto

Young emissaries with MAKOM Director Sarah Mali at the Jewish Agency Training Seminar in Jerusalem last summer. (l-r) Bar Shani, Tslil Zilberstain, Elinor Shtrull, Gal Ben Haim, Sarah Mali, Tal Grinbaum, Eran Shpigelman, Ori Unterman and Moran Dinur.

As he stood before the sea of students, all gathered at Toronto's Bialik Hebrew Day School for an assembly to remember the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Eran Shpigelman felt a wave of emotions. "I've never seen anything like this before," said the 19-year-old Israeli. "These kids really participated in the assembly. - they really connected with us."

And that is precisely the point of why Shpigelman and seven other young volunteer emissaries from Israel, have ventured to Toronto for a year.

The dynamic group is part of an initiative of MAKOM - The Israel Engagement Network - a partnership of Jewish communities and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). MAKOM's partner in Toronto is UJA Federation and is chaired by long-time UJA leader Michael Diamond.

MAKOM endeavours to provide young people and broader Diaspora Jewish communities with hands-on, experiential learning about what Israel really is.

"The aim of MAKOM is to bring Israel in different ways to the Toronto Jewish community," said Director Sarah Mali, from UJA's Community Capacity Building department. "They are here to be compelling and innovative and really speak to people in a way that creates new relevance in their relationship with Israel."

"Simply put, MAKOM exists to encourage the North American Diaspora to keep Israel in their consciousness; to see Israel as being part of their experience of being Jewish and being part of the Jewish People," said Diamond.

Shpigelman and his fellow emissaries, all of whom are pre-army teens, are being hosted by families from five different Toronto Synagogue congregations. Throughout the year, working six days a week, they organize, lead and participate in a wide variety of Synagogue activities, as well as Jewish day and supplementary programs, initiatives at Jewish camps in the summer months and events with Israeli Scouts.

Qualifying as one of these volunteer emissaries was by no means a simple process. In fact, candidates went through screening procedures to determine whether or not they had what it takes to bring a bit of Israel to Toronto. After they were selected, the new volunteers underwent intense training under the direction of JAFI.

The wait was worth it for these young men and women who, besides serving their country in the Israel Defence Force, wanted to give back to the Diaspora for supporting the Jewish State.

"Wherever the members of Toronto's Jewish community see the emissaries, be it at schools, prayer services or in their homes, the young emissary is a metaphor for Israel," said Mali. "By connecting with them, the community is gaining insight into current Israeli culture, which the emissaries live and breathe."

For Shpigelman, being in Toronto is quite literally a whole new world. "I have never been exposed to real Jewish life outside of Israel," he related. "It is incredibly interesting to me to see how and what Jewish people need to do here to express their Judaism. And it has made me so proud to see how strongly people here are connected to Israel."

Although the focus is on enriching the local community's concept of and relationship with Israel, Mali points out the experience has the potential to make an indelible mark on the Israelis, too. "Being in Toronto provides these young people with a unique opportunity to develop and enrich their Judaism," she said. "It will give them a more nuanced relationship with their religion and equip them with excellent training for the future."

The MAKOM young emissaries will be in Toronto until the fall when the next team of eight young volunteer emissaries arrive.

Volunteer emissaries with Michael Diamond at a retreat outside of Toronto. (l-r) Eran Shpigelman, Bar Shani, Gal Ben Haim, Elinor Shtrull, Tal Grinbaum, Michael Diamond, Tslil Zilberstain, Moran Dinur and Ori Unterman.

Students go "loonie" for the community

During the first week of December, TanenbaumCHAT's northern branch was home to a number of loonies running wild through its halls. Fortunately, the chaos happening inside the Kimel Family Education Centre on the Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus was all for a good cause.

Volunteer organizers of TanenbaumCHAT's UJA Week (l-r) Arielle Goldfarb, Alana Streisfield and Jaime Greenspan present a cheque to 2009 United Jewish Appeal Campaign Chair Fran Sonshine.

It was part of TanenbaumCHAT's UJA Week, which saw students and staff pitch in to raise money for United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2009. Organized by student volunteers Arielle Goldfarb, Jaime Greenspan and Alana Streisfield, UJA Week raised money from a variety of unique and fun initiatives.

"Every morning, lunch and afternoon volunteers sold blue and white sprinkled donuts which went like crazy," enthused Streisfield. "Throughout the week we had different activities running, including Shabbat-o-grams, themed lunches, which included an Israeli dance party, an Israeli *shuk*, and a raffle with great prizes like Raptors tickets and ipods supplied by UJA."

As for those loonies roaming the halls, fortunately they were part of "loonie for a loony", an initiative which saw strangely dressed students run around holding baskets, collecting spare change.

"The Grade 12 auction was our most successful event of the week," said Goldfarb. "Students from all grades were able to 'purchase' different grade 12 students to hang out with for a week. The students really enjoyed this, so much so that the highest bid was $250!"

"The opportunity for me to be presented with a cheque from the young people at TanenbaumCHAT was one of the highlights of my term," said Fran Sonshine, who along with Henry Wolfond chaired Campaign 2009. "The organizers did an amazing job of rallying support from the student body in a fun and creative way. At the same time, these hard-working and enthusiastic kids brought home the message to their peers that TanenbaumCHAT is part of a larger community and that they, too, should feel a responsibility to help others. We can all feel great pride in our youngsters and know that the future of our community is in good hands."

"Our goal was really to raise awareness of UJA within the school, and have full participation from the students, which we achieved," said a proud Greenspan. "All students and staff appreciate all that UJA has contributed to our education, including our new, beautiful building, and we feel that participating in UJA is a way in which we can thank UJA while giving back to the community through its annual United Jewish Appeal campaign."

One COOL Day warms hearts across the GTA

Working together with one common goal – to help others – more than 100 members of UJA Federation's Impact Toronto turned a recent Sunday in March into One COOL Day.

Impact Toronto participants pose at the Toronto Wildlife Centre volunteer site. [back row, l-r] Yael Manor, Charlene Somer, Kelly Becker, Kevin Rosenfarb and Annat Scheinbach. [front row] Brett Selbo and Kip Parker, TWC's Project Manager.

This semi-annual mitzvah-making initiative - chaired by Richard Goldhar – provided opportunities for volunteers roll up their sleeves at a number of community organizations, including several UJA Federation partner agencies dealing with the vulnerable, including Reena, JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto, Zareinu Educational Centre, Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living and Ve'ahavta.

"The clients certainly enjoyed their time with the volunteers, and they were a great help to myself and my staff as they helped with a carnival for clients of the agency," said Michelle Anbar, Program Coordinator for outreach and respite services at Reena.

"We all had fun playing bingo with the members," explained Jennifer Brodlieb, the One COOL Day volunteer Project Coordinator at the Bernard Betel Centre. "Positive feedback has been offered from not only the volunteers and the agencies, but the beneficiaries of the volunteer day as well."

After hours of volunteering, the day culminated in a "Food and Shmooze" at The House. Opening its doors about three years ago on Toronto's Eglinton Avenue, The House has quickly grown into one of the city's most popular and relaxing interactive places to explore Judaism as it pertains to the 21st century. Over pizza, participants had a chance to interact with one another, share their stories of the day and engage with Rabbi Rafi Lipner, The House's Director, in a discussion about random acts of kindness.

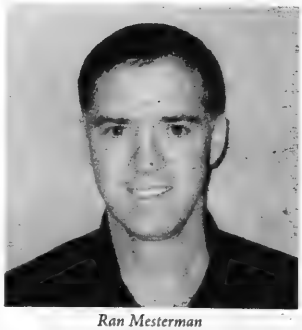
"One COOL Day was a tremendous success this year," explained Steven Ekstein, Chair of Impact Toronto's Hands on Toronto (HOT). "This event gave young Jewish adults an opportunity to help those in need and gave them great exposure to the organizations supported by their donations. The hope is that the introduction to these agencies has whetted the appetites of those interested in helping out, and has offered them the chance to learn about how they can further their commitment to the community."

One COOL Day volunteers Keren Tanentzapf [c] and Jessica Davis with Dovid Friedman at Zareinu.

Volunteers building bridges

By Ran Mesterman

As an Israeli who now lives in Canada, I am proud to be part of this wonderful Jewish community of Greater Toronto. I am a volunteer who combines a passion for Israel and *tikun olam*.



Ran Mesterman

I immigrated to Canada five years ago with my wife and three children. After the first year of hard work and getting settled, I felt a strong urge to be involved in the community. I started volunteering in the Israeli Forum and was quite amazed to see how the growing Israeli community appeared to be separated from the Toronto Jewish community. I realized we must connect these two Jewish communities, as only together can we ensure our children's future. Out of this understanding, I decided to start volunteering at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto as well.

My vision was to unite the Israeli Canadians with the Toronto Jewish community to become one strong and proud community. We turned vision into action and, together with a very dedicated team of volunteers and UJA staff, we started building bridges between Israelis and Toronto Jewry. The establishment of the Israeli Division within the United Jewish Appeal annual campaign offered the opportunity to put key Israeli volunteers into various committees. More than two years of hard work, trust, confidence and dedication enabled us to become an integrated part of UJA's 2008 and 2009 campaigns.

Today I am Co-Chair of the Newcomers Committee of the Israeli Forum and, as an Israeli Canadian, am very honoured to have been asked to become a member of the Board of Directors of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

I hope that many more Israeli-Canadians will follow my vision and be active participants in the various UJA Federation committees. It really feels great to be able to give to the Jewish community in Toronto, Canada and, of course, Israel.

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For more information, contact
Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto
PHONE: 416.635.5600 E-MAIL: jinfo@ujafed.org
VISIT: www.jewishtoronto.com and follow the link to
Doing Jewish in Toronto

Volunteer Excellence: The Community Honours Its Own

The men and women on pages B5-B7 have made tzedakah and community involvement constant priorities in their lives. Their unrelenting commitment to Jewish values helps enrich the lives of so many. They will receive their awards at a UJA Federation Awards Night on May 7.

BEN SADOWSKI AWARD OF MERIT

UJA Federation created the Ben Sadowski Award of Merit in 1960, the single most prestigious acknowledgement the Jewish community bestows upon a volunteer with outstanding leadership qualities and years of involvement in the Jewish and general communities. With his unwavering commitment to people, Ben Sadowski z"l, the first President of the United Jewish Welfare Fund (predecessor to UJA Federation), embodied the definition of a natural leader. This award is his legacy to the Jewish community.

SHOEL SILVER

A born and bred Torontonian, Shoel has demonstrated his extraordinary commitment to tzedakah, *tikun olam* and volunteerism to Jewish Toronto for much of his life. However, his commitment to improving the lives of Jews doesn't stop with this city. Shoel's commitment to bettering the lives of Jews knows no boundaries.

Shoel is President of the Canadian Friends of the Menachem Begin Heritage Foundation, affiliated with the Heritage Foundation in Jerusalem. He also serves on the Board of the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada, and the Lands of the Bible Archaeology Foundation. From 2003 to 2005, he served as National President of UIA Federations Canada. He serves today as a member of the Board of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), and is a Board member of UJA Federation's Israel and Overseas Committee.

Since October 2007, Shoel has made Jewish Canada even prouder thanks to his role as Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) – the first Canadian to ever hold this prestigious position. He is also a member of JAFI's Committee for the Unity of the Jewish People and he formerly chaired JAFI's Committee for Partnerships.

"Every Shabbat, just after we read the Torah, we ask Hashem's blessing on 'those who devote themselves faithfully to the needs of the public.' My experience has been that working in the community is itself a blessing. Very few experiences can be as enriching as contributing in a meaningful way to the Jewish future, and doing so in the company of dedicated volunteers and professionals. My involvement in JAFI has added a new dimension – the chance to work with colleagues from around the world. In working for the benefit of Israel, I am fulfilling the vision passed on to me by my parents, a vision Eileen and I pray we will instill in our children as well."

Past Chairs Lederman Award

This award, named for Harold Lederman z"l, is presented to an outstanding philanthropic leader and volunteer who is also a past Chair of the United Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign. Lederman, driven by a keen social conscience and strong support for Jewish communal life, believed in the importance of continuity. His message to future generations was to be responsible, a legacy of a real philanthropic leader.

HONEY SHERMAN

Year after year, Honey raises the bar when it comes to volunteerism, leadership and tzedakah within Toronto's Jewish community and the community-at-large. She truly personifies philanthropy.

As a past Co-Chair of United Jewish Appeal's Annual Campaign (2006), Honey's willingness to do whatever it takes for the community she cares so deeply about helped lead an astounding campaign. Today, Honey continues to lend her remarkable talents to UJA as the Chair of its bequest and endowment arm, the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. She also sits on the Boards of Mount Sinai Hospital, Baycrest, and the York University Foundation and is also involved with the Jewish National Fund, Technion and the Weizmann Institute.

"Nothing affects change quite like all of us working together toward a common goal. Together we can change the future. No matter how much you do as an individual, you cannot be as effective. We are each a thread in the canvas of our community and, only together, can we change the landscape of that canvas and the future of our community."

Phil Granovsky Award for Campaign Excellence

This award honours individuals who exemplify the best in United Jewish Appeal campaigning. When it came to the welfare of world Jewry, few were more committed than Phil Granovsky z"l, who saw Israel and the Diaspora as an extension of his family. Granovsky's selfless legacy continues to help countless people in the community every single year.

DR. HOWARD PRICE

As a respected physician, and an equally respected, dedicated and compassionate community leader, Howard is literally – and figuratively – doing all he can to make the value of *tikun olam* – repairing the world – a reality. Howard, whose love for Jewish Toronto and Israel is evident in everything he does, embodies many of the same qualities of the late Phil Granovsky.

Howard has co-chaired United Jewish Appeal's Physician's Division and Professions Cabinet. He served as Vice Chair of the United Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign for two years, as well as being the founding Co-Chair of its Maimonides Society. He is the founding and current Co-Chair of the annual Physicians, Dentists, and Friends Mission to Israel, where Toronto's finest medical professionals meet their Israeli counterparts. Howard currently serves as the Co-Chair of UJA's Partners Circle. He has also lent his talents to Ve'ahavta as a past President and Board member and currently sits on the Boards of Hillel of Greater Toronto and Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue.

"I have always felt that our community must not allow any one of us to stand alone in times of need. By becoming involved in UJA Federation, I have had the honour to share that goal with many dedicated professionals and volunteers."

Gordy Wolfe Award in Jewish Communal Professional Leadership

This award honours the memory of Gordy Wolfe z"l, the consummate professional who served as Executive Director of Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) for 22 years. The award recognizes a visionary professional communal leader who, like Gordy, has made a substantive difference in the life of Jewish Toronto.

STEVE AIN

Since beginning his career with Canadian Jewish Congress 39 years ago, Steve has held every senior professional position in the UJA Federation field.

After serving as Soviet Jewry and Youth Services Director in the early 70s, Steve went on to assume the position of United Jewish Appeal Campaign Director, and in 1985, became the youngest person ever appointed to lead the Toronto Federation.

In the early 90s, Steve became the Executive Vice President of UIA Federations Canada. He also served as Interim COO of the fledgling United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization representing Jewish Federations and independent communities in North America based in New York. He came back to Toronto and was the UJA Vice President for Integrated Development before assuming his current position as Senior Development Officer for UJA's Tomorrow Capital Campaign. During his career, Steve has taught at numerous Professional Development Institutes across North America, and recruited many of the current professional leaders of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"Gordy Wolfe was one of my very early mentors in Jewish Communal Service. Receiving this award, named for him, makes the honour even more meaningful. I can only hope that my years of service and leadership serve as an example to younger professionals and encourage them to continue this great tradition of working for our community and Klal Yisroel."

Volunteer Excellence:

Leadership Development Awards

The Leadership Development Awards, established to encourage young men and women to assume community leadership roles, are presented to those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary commitment and service.

DANIEL DAVIAU

Dan has been active in United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto for several years, holding such leadership roles as Chair of Major Gifts in 2004, Chair of New Gifts in 2007 and 2009 Chair of Top Gifts. He also served on UJA Federation's former JTT and Family Philanthropy Committees.

Dan has also assumed leadership roles with a variety of other organizations, including The Crones and Colitis Foundation of Greater Toronto, The Hospital for Sick Children (Industry Leader), Mount Sinai Hospital Development Committee and the Joint MBA/LLB Alumni Association.

"Through UJA so many people give so much of their thought, time, effort and resources to our community - the central point of which is the word 'community.' Over the years, I have become involved because I want to help make our community as good as it possibly can be, whether here in Toronto or more broadly in Israel and elsewhere in the world. It is this sense of community that we want to pass on to our children so that it can continue to grow stronger and assist even more people in the future."

JEFF ROSENTHAL

Having begun his volunteer involvement as a canvasser in the United Jewish Appeal's Finance Division, Jeff has gone on to many prominent leadership roles. He has co-chaired both the Finance and Major Gifts Divisions, co-chaired the 2008 Campaign Launch, and led a number of missions to Israel. Along with Sherry Firestone, he will serve as Co-Chair of the 2011 United Jewish Appeal campaign.

In addition, he is a member of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto Investment Committee, is actively involved with Mount Sinai Hospital, and is the current Chairman of the Board and Past President of The Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation.

"Working with UJA over the years has really opened my eyes to the needs of the community both locally and in Israel. It has been an absolute pleasure and an education to work with the outstanding professional staff and so many truly dedicated volunteers who are like-minded in their philanthropic pursuits. One of the real rewards for Lori and I has been to see our young children acknowledge and embrace the idea of helping those in need and engage in their own projects. The community experience has become a large part of our lives. ... We look forward to continuing our family's involvement and support."

Professional Advisory Committee Award of Excellence

The PAC Award of Excellence of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto recognizes the outstanding contribution made to the Foundation by professionals in our community. It also recognizes the long-term impact their contributions make to lawyers, accountants, estate planners and especially to the charitable organizations who reap the benefit of their efforts. The award honours professionals who encourage their clients to consider charity as part of their estate planning process and who are the ardent ambassadors and champions of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto.

BARRY CORBIN

Barry has been a member of the Jewish Foundation's Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) for more than twenty years.

He served as its Chair between 2001 and 2004. As an award-winning estates practitioner for 27 years, he has made presentations at PAC educational programs offered to professional advisers. Barry is certified by the Law Society of Upper Canada as a specialist in Estates and Trusts Law and is the recipient of the Ontario Bar Association's 2008 Award for Excellence in Trusts and Estates.

Barry has regularly provided advice and assistance to the staff of the Jewish Foundation with respect to individuals wishing to include the Jewish Foundation in their philanthropic goals.

In addition for the past five years, he has been a member of the Rules and Regulations Committee of Toronto Hebrew Memorial Park (Pardes Shalom).

"It has been a privilege to count myself among the group of professionals who regularly donate their time and efforts to carry out the mandate of the Jewish Foundation's Professional Advisory Committee. In doing so, they have contributed to the ability of their professional peers and of the Jewish Foundation to assist the broader Jewish community in effectively meeting its philanthropic goals."

Volunteer Excellence: Shem Tov Honourees

The Shem Tov Awards are presented, in partnership, to leaders representing the highest level of excellence in volunteer service in Toronto's Jewish community.

VERNON BALABAN
Kehilla Residential Programme

Vernon has participated in community affairs since the early 1970s. He is currently a Director of the Kehilla Residential Programme and was instrumental in writing its by-laws. He has previously volunteered with Hillel of Greater Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress, the Mizrachi Organization of Canada, the Canadian Zionist Federation, She'arim, Or Chaim Yeshiva, Ulpana Orot High School and United Jewish Appeal's Lawyers Division.

"I have been involved with numerous agencies, schools and, for the last twenty-five years or so with Kehilla, which is an agency whose mission is to provide affordable housing for the Jewish community. I take great pride in my participation with Kehilla and the role I have played in accomplishing that mission. I thank Kehilla for nominating me for this award."

TAMI BERMAN
Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Thanks to Tami's leadership as Co-Chair of the Hamifgash Program, part of the SRC and Israeli Forum, she has been instrumental in running the program successfully for three years. With her tireless energy, she has helped with the welcoming and engagement of the Israeli-Canadian community. Tami is a founder of the Hamifgash Community Theatre and was Chair of the Ilan Ramon Street Festival.

"Ever since I moved to Toronto from Israel in 1981, I have volunteered to give back to my community. I am grateful for the help I received from others and am constantly feeling that I am making a difference. I feel blessed to be able to do my part in creating a better world for our children."

HARVEY BERNSTEIN
Circle of Care

Harvey has been a member of the Board of Directors of Circle of Care since 1996. During this time, he has held a number of prominent leadership roles, including Treasurer from 1999-2002, Chair of the Strategic Development Committee, the Business Development Committee and currently serves as Secretary. In addition to his involvement with Circle of Care, Harvey was a long-time canvasser with United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto.

"Volunteering at Circle of Care is an important way for me to keep my life in balance: appreciating the many blessings I have enjoyed over the years and giving back."

ELLIOT LARMAN
Chai Tikvah Foundation

Over a 20-year period, Elliot has served in many volunteer capacities at Chai Tikvah, including Chair of the Admissions Committee and Vice President of Social Affairs. He has also volunteered at the Metro Toronto Branch of the Ontario Association of Social Workers, the Ontario Board of the Ontario Association of Social Workers and was a founding member of the College of Professional Social Workers, which became the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

"In the proud Jewish community of Toronto, Jewish adults with mental health problems, in need of continuing support and supervision in a Jewish milieu, have too few resources. However, this is less so now thanks to the Chai Tikvah Foundation where I volunteer as a Board member. There, I can help make a difference in this community from a different perspective than in my day-to-day work as a professional social worker."

STANLEY ROSENFARB
Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa

Stanley has been a part of every aspect of the services and administration of the Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa (TJFLC). He is currently Past President and Chairman of the Board of Directors. His volunteer experience with TJFLC has exemplified the understanding that "when the chips are down you can always count on the assistance of the Jewish community."

"Unlike any other charitable organization, TJFLC provides its clients and volunteers with IMMEDIATE results, beneficial for the client and gratifying for the volunteer. From the interview process to the issuance of a loan cheque can take as little as overnight."

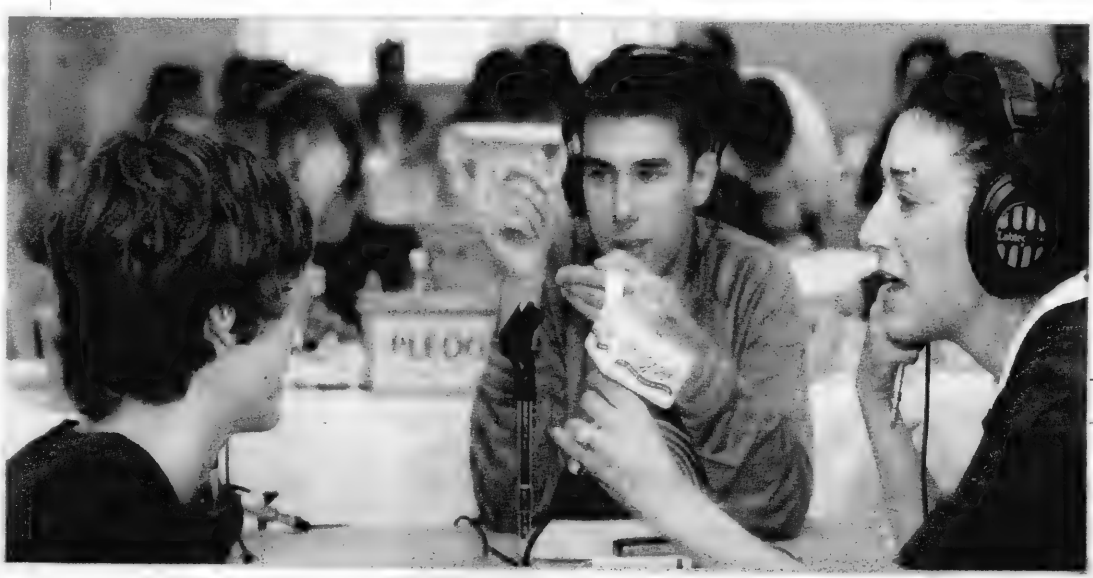
SARA ZAGDANSKI
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Sara's volunteer involvement with UJA is long and extensive. In 2005 and 2006, she co-chaired the Walk With Israel, and the Walk Festival in 2003 and 2004. With her deep connection and commitment to Israel, she has co-chaired numerous missions to Israel, including last year's Israel@60 year-long community celebrations. In addition, she has volunteered with State of Israel Bonds, Association for the Soldiers of Israel and Associated Hebrew Schools.

"Volunteering is an immensely rewarding experience. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to give back to the community and extremely important for each of us to do our part. The strength of the Jewish People is based on an unbreakable bond between Israel and the Diaspora, and UJA Federation leads by example, answering the call to action, nurturing our strength as a community and ensuring our Jewish future, both here and in Israel. I am proud to belong to such a richly diverse and proactive community which collectively embraces the essential Jewish values of tzedakah, chesed, tikun olam and ahavat Yisrael."

More than 15,000 walkers, sponsors and volunteers, forming a sea of blue and white, took to the streets of downtown Toronto at the United Jewish Appeal's Walk with Israel 2008. The massive turnout expressed the Toronto Jewish community's support of the people of Israel.

Our Community Ca



ANSWERING THE CALL

Close to 350 dedicated canvassers participated in telethons during an exciting week in September (Super Sunday/Super Week) to raise funds for United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2009. A highlight of Super Sunday was the presence of Toronto's EZ ROCK 97.3 and personality Jessica Baker, who broadcast live from the Lipa Green Building on the Sherman Campus. "It's amazing to see how both canvassers and donors come together for this event. It says a lot about Toronto's Jewish community," Baker noted.

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REMEMBERING THE PAST Torrential rain and strong winds couldn't keep away more than 2,000 people from attending the annual Yom Hashoah Community Commemoration, making it one of the largest single-day gatherings of its kind outside of Israel. Held under a tent at Earl Bales Park, participants of all ages took part in a program that honoured the memory of the 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

res.

r Community Shines!

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
Across the street. Across the globe.

NG FOR ISRAEL In an overwhelming display of solidarity and pride, the Jewish community of Greater Toronto gathered for a in support of the people of Israel. Over 5,000 people poured into Beth Tzedec Congregation, filling the sanctuary and banquet hall and spilling into ms equipped with large video screens broadcasting the event. A host of other Jewish communities across Canada- including Montreal, Halifax and athered for simultaneous rallies, watching the Toronto program via closed-circuit television. The Rally for the People of Israel and Freedom from Terror ed by UJA Federation with the support of its partner agencies and dozens of community sponsors.

Adath Israel Congregation

Perpetuates and promotes Conservative Judaism and the Jewish way of life.
www.adathisrael.com

AVROM W. BROWN
"Local synagogues meet the life cycle needs of thousands of people each year – both members and non-members. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to serve as President of Adath Israel Congregation."

Ashkenaz Foundation*

A community-based non-profit organization dedicated to fostering an increased awareness of Yiddish and Jewish culture through the arts.
www.ashkenazfestival.com

ILANA SHNEIDER
"I regard the Ashkenaz Festival as one of the most important cultural events in the life of the Toronto Jewish community. Getting involved with the organization was a wonderful opportunity to contribute to a cause I strongly believe in and, at the same time, strengthen my ties with the community."

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto*

Provides students with an excellent Jewish and General Studies education based on Torah values in a safe and supportive environment.
www.associatedhebrewschools.com

MAYEER PEARL
"Associated has been part of my family for four generations. My grandparents worked passionately to build Associated into the great institution it is today. I continue this legacy by chairing the Budget and Tuition Committees."

Association for the Soldiers of Israel – Canada

Only non-profit organization in Canada that supports Israeli soldiers on active duty, partnered with the Aguda Lemaan Hachayal. Funds social, education, and recreational programs to ease the burdens faced by young soldiers on duty, their loved ones, and when the unfortunate need arises, their survivors.
www.asiecanada.org

KATY KORMAN
"I am privileged to lead a life of relative safety and security due, in large part, to the actions and dedication of the brave men and women of the IDF. ...They are our front line in the preservation of Israel and Jewish communities around the world, our way of life, our morality, our democracy and our commitment to freedom. I am honoured to do whatever I can to enhance the well-being of these young people to whom we owe so much."

In good times our community cares. In tough times our community shines!

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto expresses profound appreciation to the countless individuals who selflessly volunteer their time and talents through our many community agencies, schools, congregations and organizations. Through their efforts, these dedicated men, women and young adults help build a more cohesive Jewish community which, in turn, preserves and strengthens the quality of Jewish life in Toronto, Canada and Israel.

The willingness of Toronto's Jewish community – in good times and bad – to volunteer and help one another makes it a model community – one emulated throughout North America.

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre*

A community organization providing quality programs and services that meet the social, educational, cultural, recreational and citizenship needs of constituents.
www.bjcc.ca

EDWARD YUDITSKY
"I have been volunteering as President of the Lay Senior Executive Board for over 10 years. I see myself as an Ambassador for the BJCC, promoting programs and encouraging seniors to get out, mingle, make new friends and enrich their lives."

Baycrest

Enriches the quality of life of the elderly guided always by the principles of Judaism.
www.baycrest.org

BRYNA FELLEN
"Baycrest's therapeutic recreation programs and Women's Auxiliary service programs greatly enhanced the quality of life for my late mother and I feel great satisfaction in being able to help bring these programs to others."

BBYO*

The leading pluralistic Jewish teen movement aspiring to involve more Jewish teens in more meaningful Jewish experiences through unique opportunities to connect with one another, serve their communities, develop their leadership skills and travel the world.
www.bbyo.on.ca

DANA GLICKMAN
"My 22-year journey with BBYO as a teen, advisor, and Board member has led me to realize the importance of Jewish identity-building, a feeling of belonging and a commitment to developing the next generation of Jewish leaders."

Beit Halochem Canada

Raises funds in Canada for Beit Halochem Centres and Programs in Israel; supports and increases awareness of disabled veterans in Israel; promotes recognition within Canada of Beit Halochem Israel and its role in the physical and emotional rehabilitation of the disabled veterans and their families; and establishes personal and meaningful relationships between the disabled veterans of Israel and the Jewish community in Canada. www.advi.ca

EMMA LIEBERMAN
"It is a great honour to volunteer for Beit Halochem. I have visited the Beit Halochem Centres in Israel many times and meeting the Israeli veterans has only reinforced my commitment to raising funds and awareness for this great cause."

Beit Rayim Synagogue and School

A family-oriented Egalitarian Conservative Synagogue that seeks to enrich the Jewish life of members and Hebrew School students through a celebration of Jewish tradition and love of learning.
www.beitrayim.org

BILL MANDELMAN
"I have been President of Beit Rayim Synagogue for the past three years. During this period I have met many wonderful individuals who have demonstrated unwavering dedication and commitment to our Synagogue. I am honoured and proud to have been associated with these volunteers."

Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living*

A learning and wellness centre, reflecting Jewish values, committed to maximizing the quality of life for seniors in the community.
www.betelcentre.org

SERGEY BRAVERMAN
"I'm Jewish and the Bernard Betel Centre is a Jewish community centre. I like computers and I want to help seniors. The Computer Lab is the perfect place to do it. I've learned so much about computers while volunteering."

Beth Chabad Israeli Community Centre

Addresses the needs of Israeli immigrants by providing programs, services, networking resources and a welcoming community for newcomers to develop a sense of belonging in Canada. Committed to supporting, guiding and facilitating their successful integration into the larger Canadian Jewish community.
www.chabadisraeli.com

HANNA SMILOVICI
"I volunteer in many different places and I am happy to help others in whatever way I can. It gives me great satisfaction, and I volunteer with the same dedication I would have for my own business. Volunteering at Chabad is good for the organization and good for me."

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am

Dedicated to cultivating, developing and sustaining Judaism and Jewish living in accordance with the ideas and standards of the Conservative Movement.
www.bethdavid.com

LEWIS LIGHTSTONE
"I feel humbled by my association with so many wonderful talented people within our congregation. Every experienced volunteer knows that teamwork is the key to getting things accomplished."

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue

Fosters a full and joyous way of life proudly rooted in a heritage of traditional Conservative Judaism, and committed to Jewish values, education, spiritual well-being and community.
www.beby.org

SONIA HENDLER
"The values handed down to me by my parents, and which I hope to instill in my children and grandchildren, are embedded deep in my heart and soul. Giving of myself reaps life's greatest reward."

* Denotes 2008-2009 beneficiary agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Beth Sholom Synagogue

Seeks to enrich the lives of our congregants and community through the ideals of Torah, *Gemillut Hasidim* (Social Action) and *Achdut* (Jewish Unity).
www.bethsholom.net

SHARON PLATT
"Being a volunteer provides me with the opportunity to give to others while being actively involved with my community. Volunteering at Beth Sholom has been the most rewarding experience and, at the same time, has given me an incredible sense of accomplishment."

Beth Tikvah Synagogue

Forward-looking Conservative Synagogue dedicated to fostering spiritual and Judaic growth and fulfillment through meaningful rituals, activities and exciting educational programs. A sensitive and caring congregation attractive to all ages and responsive to the individual needs of members.
www.bethtikvah.on.ca

MILLIE LEV AND JUDITH UROWITZ
"Culinary arts are the media we use to express our creativity. Volunteering behind the scenes at Beth Tikvah gives us the opportunity to express our passion and creativity by enhancing Synagogue events through food and décor."

Beth Tzedec Congregation

Founded to preserve Judaism, to inculcate belief in G-d and reverence for our heritage, to translate Jewish spiritual values into terms of present day thought and action, to revitalize Jewish traditional practices in synagogue and home, and to cultivate Hebrew language and literature.
www.beth-tzedec.org

WILFRED POSLUNS
"Maintenance and growth of synagogue life is essential to preserve the Jewish family in the Diaspora. By volunteering with Beth Tzedec, I help build and reinforce Jewish values in my family while helping build the community for the future."

Bialik Hebrew Day School* PTA

Volunteer parents work to enhance the experience of students at Bialik Hebrew Day School.
www.bialik.ca

CARYN LADOVSKY
"Why do I volunteer? Best involvement about learning, integrity, kindness = BIALIK."

Bnei Akiva of Toronto

Bnei Akiva of the U.S. and Canada, the Religious Zionist Youth Movement, inspires and empowers the Jewish youth of North America with a deep commitment to our people, *Am Yisrael*, our land, *Eretz Yisrael*, and our Torah, *Torat Yisrael* through a wide variety of informal education programs.
www.bneiakivatoronto.com

AZARI SHUMACHER
"Bnei Akiva has given me an opportunity to give back to the community. By running the weekly snif and organizing special programs, I have been able to share with the chanichim *the values of* torah v'avodah *that I learned as a* chanich. *I have also learned valuable leadership skills."*

Camp Moshava

A religious Zionist camp committed to instilling, nurturing and developing in campers and staff a dedication to and love for a Torah way of life, the State of Israel and the Jewish people, as well as stimulating intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth through a safe and enjoyable summer experience.
www.campmoshava.org

HOWARD L. WASSERMAN
"Camp Moshava provides significant benefits to the campers and counselors from a social and religious perspective. The camp has produced many leaders in the community. Helping the camp to survive and thrive is very rewarding."

Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University

Dedicated to the advancement of higher education and knowledge while contributing to the growth and vitality of Israel and the Negev.
cdnbgu@on.aibn.com

RAYMOND MOSCOE
"I enjoy working on behalf of Ben-Gurion University and am particularly interested in helping to provide scholarships for needy and worthy students who come from the Kibbutzim, Moshavim and development towns of the Negev."

" One glorious chain of life, of giving and receiving, unites all creatures."

- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

Canadian Friends of Haifa University

Aims to bring the University of Haifa to the forefront of Canadian awareness; to cultivate collaborative programs between the University and Canadian institutions of higher learning; to promote Overseas Programs for Canadian students; to encourage cultural exchanges between the University faculty members and students; and to assist the University achieve its financial goals.
www.haifa-univ.ca

PETER L. BIRO
"The unique social mission of the University, founded on pluralistic values and a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic demographic, is an inspiring example of peaceful coexistence, collaboration and cooperation between the diverse peoples who make up the community of nations."

Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital

Israel's foremost centre for geriatric and psychiatric medicine, treating the effects of advancing age and mental instability using advanced medical technologies, professional expertise, compassion and care.
www.herzoghospital.ca

LENA SHUGAR
"I have been involved with Herzog Hospital for many years. Knowing that our fundraising has helped so many people has been very gratifying. My involvement is also an important example for my children and grandchildren."

Canadian Friends of Israel Elwyn

Promotes the independence and dignity of children and adults with special needs throughout Israel.
www.israelelwyn.org.il

MOSHE GREENGARTEN
"I am proud to be associated with Israel Elwyn, a 'best-in-class' organization serving over 2,000 children and adults with special needs throughout Israel, and with a group of dedicated and caring volunteers in Canada."

Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital

Laniado Hospital serves over 250,000 people in Netanya, and is the only Israeli hospital with a no strike policy. Laniado's high standard of medicine is practiced with compassion and kindness. friends@laniado.ca

"We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication."

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Toronto Centre

Largest Zionist women's grassroots non-profit organization in Canada, dedicated to the support of Children, Healthcare and Women. Throughout Canada, enriches the lives of women, supports Young Judea camps and, in Toronto, partners with the Sunnybrook Foundation to support a Neo-Natal Intensive Care Patient Room.
www.chw.ca

SHARON POLLOCK
"Volunteering for this special organization honours the memory of my mother. I gain the opportunity to support Israel and the Toronto community while feeling fulfilled as part of a dynamic women's group."

Canadian Jewish Congress*

Works to foster a Canada where Jews, as part of the multi-cultural fabric of this country, live in and contribute to an environment of opportunity and mutual respect. Advocates on behalf of Canadian Jewry and works in partnership with other Jewish communal organizations to improve the quality of life for all communities in Canada. www.cjc.ca

MARK FREIMAN
"I give my time because I have some time to give. I believe strongly in the importance of working for the Jewish People and the Jewish community and, within that context, of the importance of what CJC stands for and what it is trying to achieve."

Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation

Allows supporters to connect to a meaningful cause in Israel and the good work that is being done in the hospital and, on a larger scale, to the ideologies it represents: compassion for all human life, no matter race, religion or political views.
www.hospitalwithaheart.ca

CHAIM BELL AND MICHAEL MILLS
"We should give back to our community and our people. Shaare Zedek Medical Center is an institution dear to our hearts that helps people get well in a challenging environment. Visiting and healing the sick and injured are important mitzvahs and we need to help the people at Shaare Zedek do their job."

* Denotes 2008-2009 beneficiary agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham

Non-judgmental and friendly philosophy, with the belief that, regardless of education background or affiliation, it is the inalienable right of every Jewish person to learn and participate in our heritage.
www.chabadmarkham.org

PAUL AND CHIPS KLEIN
"The Chabad Lubavitch of Markham community is such a warm, close-knit group of people who work together toward a common way of life. The members have become our friends and our extended family. It is a privilege to participate fully and to answer the call to volunteer. These experiences have served to enrich our lives and those of our family in ways we could never have imagined."

Chabad Torah Tots Pre-School

Offers a warm, friendly and creative Jewish environment where a child's unique style is valued and nurtured by caring teachers. Provides the excitement of new discoveries and development of responsible and independent thought. Children learn basic attitudes, skills and an ability to study that will always stay with them.
www.chabadmarkham.org

TERI COHEN
"It is my pleasure to volunteer and be involved with such a wonderful organization. The people who make this place so wonderful dedicate their time and energy to making it special for children, teens and adults alike. I feel honoured to be part of such a wonderful community. Volunteering for me is done from the bottom of my heart and I am truly honoured and thankful for the tribute received from Chabad Lubavitch of Markham."

Chai Tikvah Foundation

Provides support to psychiatrically disabled adults in Jewish residential settings, to enable them to lead more productive lives.
chaitikvah@chaitikvah.org

SHERRY GARBER
"As an occupational therapist who has always worked in the area of mental health, I am a strong supporter of community-based support groups. Chai Tikvah provides an important function to community members."

* Denotes 2008-2009 beneficiary agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Circle of Care*

Supports individual independence, and sustains and enhances quality of life in the community.
www.circleofcare.com

MYRON (MOISHE) WINNICK
"My family is my life. Volunteering with Circle of Care has enlarged my family to include them. Joking, laughing and sharing time with our clients give me a deep sense of worth and satisfaction."

Congregation Darchei Noam

Toronto's only Reconstructionist Synagogue blends traditional Jewish practice with innovative forms of Jewish expression. It is a place where love of tradition and appreciation of change meet. Weekly Shabbat services provide a range of opportunities to experience prayer, study and artistic expression.
www.darcheinoam.on.ca

MYER SIEMIATYCKI
"I volunteer to live a more Jewish life. Working with others at Congregation Darchei Noam on programming and social justice, I am connected and contributing to a vibrant, progressive and inclusive Jewish community."

Downtown Jewish Community School*

Provides Jewish students with a basis for Jewish identity in a pluralistic community. Students are taught the concepts and skills necessary to live a Jewish life and to feel comfortable within a Jewish setting.
www.djcs.org

MICHELE COLEMAN
"Helping the Downtown Jewish Community School is my way of reaching out to the Jewish community and supporting a wonderful school. I enjoy helping people connect with one another."

Emunah Women

The largest religious Zionist women's organization in the world. Aims to strengthen religious consciousness, provide social care and religious and secular education for children and youth, with selective vocational and academic training. Provides help to disadvantaged and abused children and provides counseling to dysfunctional families.
www.emunahcanada.org

LEONA LAKSER
"My 40-year association with Emunah Women has been uplifting. It is an altruistic organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of numerous children and adults in Israel – a mandate fulfilled with compassion and professionalism."

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

A Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach, and social action.

ALICE NUSBAUM
"It has been a privilege to volunteer for FSWC in its vital mission to train educators, law enforcement officers and students on issues of tolerance. It is most gratifying to apply my teaching skills in the pursuit of these important goals."

Habayit Shelanu Seniors Residences Corporation

A unique living environment designed and developed based on the recognition of the changing needs of older adults. Committed to providing an environment that fosters a positive Jewish identity, and opportunities that facilitate the concept of aging in place. afoss@circleofcare.com

"We would like to recognize and thank all our volunteers for their hard work and commitment to Habayit Shelanu Seniors Residences Corporation."

Hillel of Greater Toronto*

Through exciting and creative programming and events, Hillel promotes Jewish identity, student leadership and religious and political diversity in a dynamic and inclusive environment for all Jewish students.
www.hilleltoronto.org

MEYER MECHANIC
Hillel-City Wide Student Council
"I recall helping out planning students' reaction to IAW. It was inspiring seeing what we can do when we collaborate toward a common goal. It serves as motivation to foster growth in our community."

JORDAN FREIBERG
Hillel @ Seneca
"As a Jew living in the Diaspora, Hillel has given me the opportunity to feel more connected to Judaism and Israel. This spark has allowed me to pass on my devotion to my fellow students and community."

JORDAN DYMENT
Hillel @ U of T
"I made a commitment to building relationships with students, groups, and university administration. I also helped to organize the Israel on Campus Initiative and believe that Hillel offers Jewish students exceptional leadership opportunities."

DANIEL FERMAN
Hillel @ York
"Hillel has provided me the opportunity to engage with our community, improve my own leadership skills and, most importantly, advocate for Jewish students on York's campus."

IRENA KRAMER
Hillel @ York, Glendon Campus
"I enjoy helping connect students on small campuses to Jewish life around the city and giving them the services they need to feel at home. It's important to Hillel that Jewish students feel comfortable with their identity, while promoting a positive atmosphere for Jewish students to thrive at Glendon."

JOEL PEARL
Hillel @ Ryerson
"The past four years with Hillel have provided me with countless opportunities to stay connected to Jewish life and create positive student space. My involvement with Hillel has helped me identify with the Jewish community, for which I am thankful."

Holy Blossom Temple

A vibrant, liberal, religious Synagogue community.
www.holyblossom.org

JEFF LEVY
"I was taught by my parents, Rabbis, and teachers at Holy Blossom that doing Mitzvot is the essence of Judaism. It is a privilege and a duty to serve my community."

Israel Cancer Research Fund

ICRF has contributed nearly $35 million US for over 1,600 research grants involving all major hospitals, universities and cancer research projects throughout Israel. Research results have a significant impact in Toronto, across Canada and throughout the world.
www.icrftoronto.org

DAVID MATLOW
"With the financial support of ICRF, Israeli scientists can give the world a great gift: a cure for cancer. Israel is a land of miracles. Volunteering with ICRF in an effort to raise funds that support cancer research in Israel allows me to participate in the miracle of a cure, which we all hope to see very soon."

JACS (Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons & Significant Others)*

An organization led by volunteers dedicated to encouraging and assisting alcoholics, chemically dependent persons and their families, friends and associates to explore recovery in a nurturing Jewish environment. Provides support for Jews in recovery and to be an information resource on the effects that alcoholism and drug dependency have on Jewish family life.
www.jacstoronto.org

"We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication."

Jerusalem Foundation of Canada

An independent, apolitical community foundation that endeavours to respond to the changing needs of Jerusalem and all its residents.
www.jerusalemfoundation.org

MICHAEL SHINEWALD AND DIANA FRIDLYAND
"Having both traveled to and lived in Jerusalem, we feel a strong connection to the city and now help to maintain its history and beauty through our involvement with the Jerusalem Foundation."

Jewish Camp Council of Toronto*

Committed to making residential camp accessible to children in partnership with the Jewish community, and dedicated to providing a fun and safe environment for children to build Jewish identity, a love of nature, positive relationships, life skills and independence.
www.campnbb.com

DAVID BERGER
"Volunteering at the Jewish Camp Council provides me an opportunity to give back to the community responsible for significantly shaping my youth. My 14 years at Camp Northland were incredible, especially meeting my wife 37 years ago."

Jewish Canadian Military Museum*

Preserves our history and educates the public about the Jewish role in Canada's military.
arwings1@rogers.com

ERIC LEVINE
"Through volunteering, I have the opportunity to promote a legacy that Canadian Jews created in serving unselfishly and courageously in Canada's military since the 18th century, especially the magnificent contribution of Canadian Jewish men and women in securing freedom and peace."

Jewish Family & Child*

Supports the healthy development of individuals, families and communities in the Greater Toronto Area through prevention, protection, counseling, education and advocacy services, within the context of Jewish values.
www.jfandcs.com

SEAN FRIEDMAN
"The Homework Club is a place where I am able to help children learn and grow in a safe and secure environment, while still being able to interact with other volunteers my own age."

Jewish Family & Child – Chaplaincy Services*

PENNY MINZ
"I have always felt a strong connection with seniors and it is a privilege to have been able to cultivate inspiring, personal relationships with these special people over the years."

Jewish National Fund of Toronto

Given primary responsibility with regard to afforestation and reforestation in Israel. Involved in developing tourist infrastructure, providing employment for new immigrants and is the prime protector of Israel's environment.
tor@jnf.ca

MARILYN ABRAM
"I've been a volunteer for JNF since 1982, enabling me to raise funds towards reforestation, water development and urban and rural infrastructure improvements of Israel. Helping JNF contributes to a strong Israel."

Jewish Women International of Canada

JWIC is a force for social change dedicated to ending violence against women.
www.jwicanada.com

NANCY BEAUMONT-FRUITMAN
"Spreading the word about domestic violence, making new friends, while balancing my career and family have been at the forefront for me. The past 27 years volunteering for JWIC have been most rewarding."

Jews for Judaism*

Dedicated to counteracting the multi-million dollar efforts of numerous cults and missionary groups that target Jews for conversion, offering an extensive variety of preventive education programs, materials and specialized counseling services that keep Jews Jewish.
www.jewsforjudaism.org

GORD LINDSAY
"Jews for Judaism is a unique and very dynamic organization with visionary leadership and an important mission to fulfill. It is an honour for me to MC and perform at their annual fundraising concert."

JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto*

Welcomes, supports and integrates new immigrants today to build a strong Canada and a strong Jewish community of tomorrow.
www.jiastoronto.org

YOUTH TO YOUTH GROUP
"Volunteering has helped us learn about and contribute to our new community. It is also our way of giving back and thanking JIAS Toronto for organizing this group to help us meet friends and integrate."

JVS Toronto*

Working in strong partnership with government and business for over 60 years to assist people to achieve their educational and employment potential.
www.jvstoronto.org

DIANE WILSON
"I chose JVS Toronto because employment is at the centre of a person's life. JVS assists all individuals, regardless of background or barrier, to find meaningful jobs – a very compelling mission."

Kehilla Residential Programme*

Identifies and champions affordable housing initiatives responsive to the needs of the Jewish community. The Agency's mandate is fulfilled through research and education, project sponsorship, development consultation and property management.
www.kehilla.ca

ELLEN RAJZMAN
"My mother and mother-in-law were volunteers, as are my husband and sons, so volunteerism is a generational norm in our family. I know that whatever I contribute to Kehilla is worthwhile, recognized and appreciated."

Kehillat Shaarei Torah

Serving the Bayview-York Mills area, this modern Orthodox Synagogue prides itself on providing an open and welcoming setting where all feel at home. www.shaareitorah.com

PENNY MINZ
"Bringing a warm, meaningful weekly Shabbat service to a group of seniors home residents who are isolated from the Jewish community is inexpressibly rewarding to me and my small team of wonderful volunteers."

Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning

A pluralistic, Egalitarian progressive community adult education and outreach centre that, through the study of traditional texts, gives students an opportunity to enhance their identity and understand their heritage. www.kolel.org

GRANT SHERRITT
"I enjoy volunteering at Kolel. My life has been enriched by learning about our great traditions from terrific Jewish educators at Kolel."

L'Chaim Cancer Support Group for Jewish Women

A patient support group for Jewish women who are presently undergoing cancer treatment, offering informal peer support in a non-judgmental, caring and confidential manner, with an understanding of both the cancer experience and issues specific to Jewish women. In addition, L'Chaim is committed to raising cancer awareness in the Jewish community.
lchaim_group1@hotmail.com

CLARA SHORE
"I am proud to be part of an organization that provides peer support to newly- diagnosed women. I know how comforting it is to make that first connection with someone who's 'been there'."

"The Jewish people, ever since David slew Goliath, have never considered youth as a barrier to leadership."

- President John F. Kennedy

* Denotes 2008-2009 beneficiary agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Leo Baeck Day School*

A Reform Jewish Day School where families, professionals and Board members strive together to create a child-centered learning environment in which each student experiences a multi-faceted educational program. Students are prepared to be practicing liberal Jews and to participate effectively in a complex, ever-changing Canadian society. www.leobaeck.ca

BRIAN SIMON
"Educating young Jews to value and practice their heritage and traditions assures our future as a Jewish people. Volunteering at Leo Baeck has given me the opportunity to contribute to this great cause."

Limmud Canada*

Celebrates Jewish life and learning in all of its diversity by bringing together Jews of all backgrounds and all ages for a retreat experience where workshops, text-study sessions, exhibits, performances and much more are all planned by a community of volunteers. www.limmud.ca

SHARONI SIBONY
"Through Limmud, I have access to such diverse perspectives on Jewish life and religion, unbounded and unconfining. Being part of this project lets me create a space for intelligent and meaningful dialogue across the community."

Mazon Canada

Raises funds primarily from within the Jewish community and distributes those funds, on a non-denominational basis, to Canadian organizations battling hunger on the front lines. Based on the tradition of tikun olam (healing the world), our organization strives to link public awareness about the issue of poverty and hunger with the mitzvah of tzedakah.
www.mazoncanada.ca

SUSAN SILVERMAN
"It is a privilege to volunteer with MAZON Canada, initially in the office and currently as a Board member and Committee Chair. Working to ease the plight of the hungry is my way of showing gratitude for the abundance in my life."

Mercaz-Canada

Zionist membership organization of the Conservative Movement and the voice of Conservative Jewry within the Canadian Zionist Federation, World Zionist Organization, and Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael.
www.mercaz.ca

"We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication."

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Mount Sinai Hospital

A world-class health care facility discovering and delivering the best in patient care, teaching and research with the heart and values true to our heritage.
www.mtsinai.on.ca

ANNETTE ROSS
Annette has volunteered since 1970, contributing over 15,000 hours throughout the hospital.
"Patients are so anxious in Endoscopy and my job is to provide support and calm them down. The nurses and other staff are kind and wonderful and I love working in the hospital."

Na'amat Canada

The first to embrace feminist ideals, the women of Na'amat continue to be innovative leaders in meeting the needs of an ever-changing world.
www.naamat.com

REESE KARCH
"I am humbled and honoured to be working with the wonderful women in Na'amat. My father, Tommy Bacher, is my role model. He instilled in me, the 'Giving Back Gene', the importance of helping those less fortunate. Volunteerism is meant to be altruistic, but the more involved I become in the work of Na'amat the more enriched my life becomes."

NCSY

Dedicated to connecting, inspiring and empowering Jewish teens, and encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition.
www.ncsy.ca

MORDIE SHIELD
"I think that the most important issue facing the Jewish community today is assimilation. I volunteer for NCSY because they are completely dedicated to helping unaffiliated Jewish teenagers remain connected to Jewish life."

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada – Toronto Section

Committed to enhancing the lives of individuals within our community and in the broader multi-cultural community through education, service and social action.
www.ncjwc-ts.org

ELLEN ERENBERG
"I am most fortunate to work with people who feel as I do that giving of my time and energy enriches my life as much as the recipients. So I share this with all the volunteers on our team and truly hope that we may continue with these efforts for many years to come. Thank you to NCJW of Canada for the opportunity you have given me to serve our community."

Netivot HaTorah Day School*

An Orthodox Jewish Day School striving for excellence in a full program of Judaic and General Studies, incorporating the Zioni Dati philosophy and *Halacha* and *Halachic* principles.
www.netivot.com

MICHAEL ABRAMOVITCH
"I volunteer because I feel a part of the community of people who care about the school and want to see it continue, change, grow and improve. Also I hope my children learn the importance of giving to the community."

New Israel Fund of Canada

Promotes the development of a strong civil society and democratic institutions in Israel that reflect Judaism's long tradition of social justice. Raises funds for Israeli organizations that work to safeguard civil and human rights, bridges social and economic gaps, fosters tolerance for all Israel's citizens and residents, and creates an environment in which Judaism in its many forms of practice can thrive.
www.nif.org

DR. ISSER DUBINSKY
"My first trip to Israel did not take place until I was 28 with the intention to serve as a volunteer for a short time. In no time I found myself enthralled by the country.... My short stay rapidly transformed into a one- year sojourn, during which the fascination became tempered by an awareness of a young country wrestling with the development of a religiously pluralistic civil society in which true democracy flourishes. New Israel Fund has allowed me the opportunity to continue in that pursuit."

ORT Toronto

ORT's vision is to help people help themselves. ORT provides state-of-the-art technology, teacher empowerment centres, science labs, vocational and other assistance to disadvantaged students in Canada and around the world.
www.ort-toronto.org

JUSTICE SANDRA CHAPNIK
"ORT captured my imagination because it allows students to realize their dreams and become productive members of society, and enhances and preserves Jewish identity and values. I believe, as does ORT, the key to a better world lies in education."

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School*

Committed to academic excellence in a dynamic, supportive environment with a distinctive program that integrates Judaic and General studies, while encouraging artistic expression and social action as tools for learning.
www.djds.ca

JENNIFER HALE
"I believe the most important phrase in the English language is 'How can I help?' Volunteering has been part of my life since I was a teenager – it's simply a way of supporting and giving back to my community."

Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles

Encourages participation and fosters interest in the study and creation of textile art and needlework based on Jewish themes.
www.pomegranateguild.ca

"We would like to acknowledge all our volunteers for their special talent and thank them for their hard work and dedication."

Reena*

Enables people with developmental handicaps to realize their full potential by forming life-long partnerships with individuals and their families within a framework of Jewish culture and values.
www.reena.org

RHONDA GREENBERG
"Volunteering at Reena has enriched my life, giving me a chance to give back to the community. It has been my honour to work alongside people who make Reena the great organization that it is."

Schwartz/Reisman Centre*

Committed to developing a vibrant community in York Region, characterized by its diversity, unity, compassion, generosity and commitment to Israel and Jewish values. SRC enriches lives, provides opportunities for social, cultural, spiritual, educational and physical activities. Open to people of all ages and backgrounds, it is welcoming, accessible and inclusive.
www.srcentre.ca

DAVID ZALTZMAN
"I support the Schwartz/Reisman Centre's vision and this is exactly what our young developing community needs: Hebrew education, heritage protection and culture celebration for Canadian Israelis who want to have roots in the community and keep all their life-long symbols alive."

Shaar Shalom Synagogue

Provides for the spiritual, intellectual and social lives of the Conservative Jewish community through religious services and educational, cultural, social and recreational activities. www.shaarshalom.ca

ARNA CAPPE AND JANICE SHACHTER

"Our passion for knitting and care-giving led us to launch the Mitzvah Knitters. Together with 65+ women, we fulfill the mitzvah of tikun olam, *delivering handcrafted healing shawls, blankets and more to those in need."*

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation

A modern Orthodox Synagogue passionately committed to Torah, to Israel and to providing its members and the Jewish community-at-large with unique opportunities for spiritual development through learning and prayer. www.shomayim.org

JOYCE EKLOVE

"As Chair of Shaarei Shomayim's Adult Education Committee, Joyce has been instrumental in delivering a wide array of exceptional programs for our members and the community-at-large. Yasher Koach to an exceptional volunteer."

State of Israel Bonds

Provides a steady source of investment capital for the development and expansion of Israel's essential industry and infrastructure. www.israelbonds.ca

DODI WEILL

"Every time we loan Israel money through the purchase of Israel Bonds, it builds a personal connection and gives strength and prosperity to our future. I am proud to help sustain the infrastructure of Israel."

TanenbaumCHAT*

Striving for excellence in all aspects of education. TanenbaumCHAT provides each student with a Judaic and General Studies education in a co-educational pluralistic community setting. www.tanenbaumchat.org

NETTA GREENBLATT

"I have been volunteering at TanenbaumCHAT for nine years, working closely with the administration, parents and students. It has been my privilege to support the school in bringing the community together for events and providing assistance with school programs."

TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre

Produces Jewish-themed plays from Canada and the world's communities, unveiling the treasures of Jewish tradition, enriching and inspiring the Jewish experience of all theatregoers, leading to better understanding and harmony, while maintaining Jewish values. www.teatrontheatre.com

KIVI SHAPIRO

"I volunteer for TEATRON because it's a Shomer Shabbat theatre group with a community-wide focus. Everyone can participate, and we give our audiences great shows."

Temple Har Zion

Fosters commitment to Judaism through the mitzvoth of worship, study and good deeds, in a warm inclusive environment. www.templeharzion.com

STEVE AND MARIE BORLAK

"After volunteering for more than 30 years – from Big Brothers to Temple Har Zion, including our Temple's Out of the Cold program – we subscribe to the sentiments of Booker T. Washington: 'I think that I began learning long ago that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.'

Tiferes Bais Yaakov

Instills the joy and excitement of Yiddishkeit and a deep understanding of, and commitment to, Torah, *mitzvos, middos tovos,* and *ahavas yisroel* in all students so that they are fully equipped to function successfully in today's society and become contributing members of their community and Klal Yisroel. www.tiferesbaisyaakov.com

DEENA MARDER

"It gives me great satisfaction to have a small part in helping the wonderful people at Tiferes Bais Yaakov accomplish their goal of bringing out the very best in every student."

Toronto Heschel School*

Envisions an educational community in which students develop an appreciation for learning, mutual respect and cooperation, love of Judaism and an understanding of the role of Jews and Judaism in the broader community and in the world. www.torontoheschel.org

CARRIE ORFUS GELKOPF

"I volunteer at the Toronto Heschel School because I feel that a Jewish home and a Jewish education are integral to the building of a strong Jewish identity. Heschel is our partner in raising 'Mensches'."

Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa*

Provides interest-free loans to members of the Jewish community for personal, educational and economic opportunity Start-Up Business needs. www.tjflc.com

STEVEN FRIEDMAN

"My involvement with TJFLC has been enjoyable and rewarding. I am proud to be a member of a team of volunteers and staff who are committed to touch others from within our community with the essence of tikun olam."

United Synagogue Day School*

A nurturing and respectful community that strives to provide excellence in integrated Judaic and General Studies programming, focusing on the needs and growth of students in order to foster a lifelong love of learning. www.usds.ca

ELYSE BANKLER ARONOFF

"Volunteering at USDS, especially using my professional skills as an architect, has allowed me the opportunity to blend my professional experience with my family's legacy as educators and a personal commitment to give back to our community."

Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee

Raises the consciousness of all its members to the world's ills, and actively engages in efforts to repair the world's inequities and imperfections, as part of the Jewish value of *tikun olam* – "repairing the world." www.veahavta.org

CAROLYN TUCKER AND DANIELLE KAPLAN

"We volunteer because each visit leaves us with a feeling that our efforts are making a difference to the people on the streets, insuring that they will have the right clothes to wear to survive. In addition, we can see first hand what a huge difference our contribution makes to the internal operations at Ve'ahavta."

Weizmann Science Canada

Expresses commitment of the Canadian Jewish community to help the Weizmann Institute of Science maintain its standards of excellence and its significant scientific contributions to Israel and the world. www.weizmann.ca

DR. JAY ALAN SMITH

"It gives me great pride to serve as Chairman and President of Weizmann Science Canada. Visiting Weizmann each year, I am recharged by the research of the 2,500 scientists and staff working diligently for the benefit of humanity."

Zareinu Educational Centre of Metropolitan Toronto*

Believes that every child has potential and deserves united efforts in providing therapies and learning strategies that will improve the quality of life for both the child and their family; strives to battle prejudice and encourages inclusion through opportunities for supported integration whenever possible; and works towards increasing acceptance of children with special needs in the community. www.zareinu.org

ELLEN HOLTZMAN

"I have always had an interest in working with special needs children. Volunteering at Zareinu Educational Centre is a wonderful opportunity. I have learned a lot from the kind and wonderful staff and have been able to watch the children blossom beyond their developmental expectations.

"...the greatest reward for doing is the opportunity to do more."

- Dr. Jonas Salk

* Denotes 2008-2009 beneficiary agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Committed to preserving and strengthening the quality of Jewish life in Greater Toronto, Canada, Israel and around the world through philanthropic, volunteer and professional leadership.

www.jewishtoronto.com

United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto Annual Campaign

MITCHELL OELBAUM
"From an early age I was taught the importance of tzedekah, both in terms of financial and time commitment and so it was natural to get involved. It has proven very rewarding on so many levels."

UJA Women's Philanthropy

LORI ROSENTHAL
"I volunteer for UJA because I believe that it successfully addresses many serious and urgent needs both in Toronto and Israel. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to support UJA and the work they do."

Holocaust Centre of Toronto

Through education and remembrance, the Holocaust Centre of Toronto safeguards the lessons of the Holocaust in order to nurture an inclusive society. As custodians of memory, the Centre is dedicated to preserving the past, honouring the legacies of those who survived, and educating future generations.

ALAN WAINER
"I have been a volunteer on the Holocaust Education Week committee for over nine years and, as a result, I learned about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program. This special program has been my most fulfilling volunteer experience."

Israeli Forum

Established to represent and respond to the needs of the Israeli Canadian community, utilizing their strength and resources to create an umbrella network. Also serves to bridge the gap between Israeli Canadians and the established Jewish community and its organizations.

FRANCESCA (HASSIDA) DAVID
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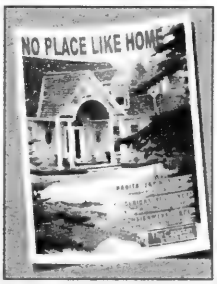
This Week

National

Toronto builder donates $4 million to USDS. *Page 3*

B'nai Brith wants play pulled. *Page 6*

No Place Like Home



Shopping through the recession. *Section B*

Arts & Travel

A self-portrait with many faces. *Page 38*

On cjnews.com

Philatelist collects famous Jews on stamps.

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Pope Benedict VI tours Israel

Pope Benedict VI arrived in Israel Monday from Jordan on the second leg of his Middle East "Pilgrimage of Peace." He was greeted at Ben-Gurion Airport by President Shimon Peres, centre left, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In Jerusalem, he was greeted by a group of schoolchildren in the company of Mayor Nir Barkat. *Please see related story on page 35.* **[Israel Sun photos]**

U.S. funds may be tied to Schalit's release

Noam Schalit

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

A new initiative launched last week by U.S. politicians and supporters of the father of Gilad Schalit is the latest attempt to gain the release of the captured Israeli soldier by asking western governments to link promised aid to Gaza with Schalit's freedom.

An emotional request by Gilad's father, Noam Schalit, posted recently on Aish.com's "Freedom for Gilad" website (dogood.aish.com/gilad), the elder Schalit asks viewers to do "something to help" bring Gilad home.

"Imagine he was your son or brother," Schalit beseeches. "You would do whatever you can."

The Aish website contains a petition calling on the American public to support the initiative. It reads: "We, the undersigned, call on the United States government to make its $300-million humanitarian aid pledge to the people of Gaza conditional upon the Hamas leadership releasing Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit, held in captivity for over 1,000 days."

Gilad Schalit has been in captivity for nearly three years, after being kidnapped on June 25, 2006, by Hamas operatives in a cross-border raid from the Gaza Strip.

Continued on page 37

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Canadian-born IDF soldier killed near Ramallah – see page 36

The News in Brief

Canada

Koffler Dumps Artist

TORONTO — Toronto's Koffler Centre of the Arts withdrew its support last week from an exhibit it was co-sponsoring because it said it learned the artist publicly backed Israel Apartheid Week. Audio artist Reena Katz was slated to open a "sound and social performance" about Kensington Market titled *each hand as they are called* in the market this week, curated by Kim Simon for the Koffler Centre. "As a Jewish cultural institution, an agency of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Koffler Centre… will not associate with an artist who publicly advocates the extinction of Israel as a Jewish state," federation said. It said the exhibit will go on as scheduled, but the Koffler Centre is "disassociating itself from the artist and will not promote the exhibition… from this point forward. Any promotional pieces for this exhibition carrying the Koffler… name or logo were produced before the Koffler came to this decision."

Extradition Accepted

CALGARY — Criminal charges against a notorious Israeli computer hacker arrested last summer in Calgary have been dropped in exchange for him agreeing to be extradited to New York to face charges of hacking into financial institutions worldwide. Ten charges against Ehud Tenenbaum, including making, having or dealing in instruments for forging credit cards, were dropped, Sun Media reported. The Canadian charges alleged Tenenbaum helped hack into a Calgary financial institution's database, leading to theft of $1.8 million. His lawyer said he agreed to the deal in order to face one set of charges and because it's hard to fight extradition. Known as "the Analyzer," Tenenbaum masterminded the hacking of Pentagon computers in the late 1990s.

Diamonds Shine

VANCOUVER — Gordon and Leslie Diamond received Simon Fraser University's 2009 President's Distinguished Community Leadership Award for their philanthropy at an April 29 gala in Vancouver. The Diamond Foundation, established in 1985, is one of Canada's largest family charitable organizations.

World

Appeal Rejected

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court rejected without comment a bid by John Demjanjuk to stop his deportation. The May 7 rejection seems to leave no avenue for appeal for the ex- Nazi death camp guard. Germany wants to try Demjanjuk, 89, a retired Cleveland-area auto worker, for his role in 29,000 murders in the Sobibor death camp. He had appealed the deportation, citing frailty. U.S. Justice Department officials, who stripped him of his citizenship because he lied about his Nazi past, released video recently showing him in good health. He was deported to Israel in 1986 and sentenced to death for being the notorious "Ivan the terrible" guard at Treblinka. Israeli prosecutors later cleared him of being "Ivan," but Israel's Supreme Court ruled he was a guard at Sobibor. He was released in 1993 and returned to America.

Branches Won't Close

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati and Los Angeles campuses of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC) will stay open. Discussions had been under way to close the two campuses of the Reform movement's four-branch seminary in order to save the financially strapped HUC millions of dollars. But the idea was scrapped at a May 4 board meeting.

President Stays Away

SAO PAULO — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad cancelled his visit to Latin America one day after Jewish-led protests in Brazil. No reason was given for the cancellation. Thousands of Jews and non-Jews protested in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro against his Brazil visit, slated for May 6, which was to be the first stop on his trip.

British Pop Singer Adele Apologizes

TORONTO — British pop singer Adele apologized last week for anti-Semitic remarks she made at her April 28 concert in Toronto.

Speaking about buying two guitars from a pawn shop owner on the day of her Massey Hall gig, Adele, 20, told the crowd he was the "rudest person ever." She later blamed an error she made in a song on being distracted by thoughts of the man, adding, "But don't worry, he wasn't Canadian, he was Jewish." The remark drew silence and some nervous laughter, Sun Media reported.

"I just meant he wasn't a rude Canadian," she added. At least one Jewish patron walked out.

"What I said on stage in Toronto… at Massey Hall was not meant how it came across. But I completely understand how it was offensive," she said in a statement issued by Columbia Records in New York. "I sincerely apologize for being so naive and disrespectful! It was not my intention to be hurtful, and I'm very sorry."

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Developer gives USDS $4 million

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

United Synagogue Day School (USDS) has received a $4-million donation – the largest in its history, and possibly the largest a Jewish elementary school in Toronto has ever received.

Larry Robbins, a USDS grandparent and Toronto builder and developer, is giving the school the gift to honour the memory of his wife Miriam. The gifting agreement was signed May 1, the one-year anniversary of her death.

The magnitude of the gift and the state of the economy make the donation "that much more meaningful for the school," said USDS' director of development Sheila Miller.

In a news release, Robbins said that his grandchildren "have benefited from the amazing education, warm community and strong sense of tradition that is taught at USDS." He added that Jewish education was very important to his wife, who was the daughter of a rabbi.

The gift will be divided among several initiatives, including an endowment fund, key capital projects and the expansion of the school's presence on the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.

In recognition of the gift, USDS will rename the school in honour of Miriam and Larry Robbins. The new name will be announced at a later date.

USDS donor Larry Robbins, left, shakes hands with school president Leonard Abramsky.

The donation will "put us on a path that allows us to use tuition dollars for education, and it prepares the way for the future," head of school Claire Sumerlus told The CJN.

Interest from the endowment fund will be used to meet the greatest needs of the school, Sumerlus said. Enriching the use of technology – the school already has SMART Boards in all its classrooms – and providing professional development for teachers are areas she offered as examples.

USDS, which began as part of Beth Tzedec Congregation in 1957 and became an independent school in 1961, serves more than 700 students from junior kindergarten to Grade 8. There are currently two campuses, one at Beth Tzedec and another at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. A Richmond Hill branch closed in 2006.

The school will open a full-day JK class in Vaughan this September, to be housed in the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre on the Lebovic campus.

A building called the Centre for Conservative Jewish Life, which will house USDS and Beit Rayim Synagogue, is being planned for the campus.

School president Leonard Abramsky told The CJN that the Robbins gift will "allow the school to move properly into the 21st century and to plan on a long-term basis for the future of many generations."

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Widely acclaimed appointment

From the editor's desk...

Relations between sovereign states are always based upon mutual interest. States can be friendly with one another, but not friends in the conventional understanding and meaning of the term.

To be sure, there are examples of especially warm bilateral friendships. The current relationship between Canada and Israel likely falls into that category. Indeed, we are grateful for the principled, often courageous policy positions the Canadian government has advanced in recent times in furtherance of those special bilateral relations.

It is no slight to Canada, however, to acknowledge that the most important bilateral relationship for the government of Israel is that with the United States, the most powerful democracy on earth and home to the largest Jewish community outside of Israel.

The most important diplomatic posting for the government of Israel, therefore, is its envoy in Washington. The requirements of the job are more rigorous than the norm for all the other key diplomatic appointments since so much is at stake for Israel in maintaining the deeply allied nature of the relationship.

Israel's ambassador in Washington must be a master of the many-layered substantive aspects of the diplomat's responsibilities. But since a great deal of the envoy's work unfolds behind the scenes in private meetings and contacts with myriad high- and low-profile individuals of power and authority, it is vital that the ambassador be someone of impeccable character, dignified bearing and easy, genuine inter-personal skills, too.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu named the renowned author, academic and scholar Michael Oren as the new ambassador to Washington. The appointment has been universally acclaimed.

That Oren is not a career diplomat is not a matter of concern. Traditionally, the Washington posting has been the personal call of the prime minister. And his qualifications fill the basket of the job description.

The 54-year-old Oren was born in New York. English is his first language.

His colleague at the Shalem Center, a Jerusalem-based think-tank, Yossi Klein Halevi, told Ha'aretz last week that "Michael understands Jewish vulnerability on a personal level, and he understands that Zionism is a gift of empowerment."

Oren's experiences growing up in the United States and especially his reverence for the bravery and sense of duty of his father and the generation that fought in World War II led Halevi to add that "Michael early appreciated the nobility of fighting for a just cause."

Michael Oren

Oren is a historian. He has written two widely acclaimed history books on the Middle East: Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East (Presidio Press) and Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present (W. W. Norton & Company).

He is also a novelist. The Sand Devil (The Toby Press) is a collection of three novellas that tell stories of the Negev Desert.

He is an elegant writer, commentator and clear thinker. He appears uniquely to fit the bill as Israel's ambassador in Washington. And thankfully so, for the times are momentous and historic.

The domestic situation in the Untied States itself is unprecedented. The international situation, too, especially but not exclusively the concern over Iran, is unprecedented.

Once he presents his credentials to the administration, Oren will immediately pull up a chair to a desk covered with dossiers of the highest priority classification. The pressure will be unremitting. We wish him the wisdom, strength and abiding focus of purpose that the job will demand.

For a sense of Oren's thinking about Israel's current situation, readers can turn to the latest issue of Commentary (May). Oren was one of five writers invited by the magazine to contribute to a special report titled Israel at Risk.

In his essay, Oren points to seven existential threats facing the Jewish state.

- The Loss of Jerusalem;
- The Arab Demographic Threat;
- Delegitimization;
- Terrorism;
- A Nuclear-Armed Iran;
- The Hemorrhaging of Sovereignty;
- Corruption.

His essay is a concisely written primer. It is important reading for anyone interested in the survival of the Jewish state.

I reproduce part of its conclusion: "Though remedies exist for all of the monumental threats facing Israel, contemplating them can nevertheless prove dispiriting. A historical context can, however, be helpful. Israel has always grappled with mortal dangers, many more daunting than those of today, and yet managed to prevail.

"Though the severity of the threats jeopardizing Israel's existence must never be underestimated, neither should Israel's resilience and national will. That persistence reflects, at least in part, the success of the Jewish people to surmount similar dangers for well over 3,000 years. Together with Diaspora Jewry and millions of Israel supporters abroad, Israel cannot not only survive these perils but, as in the past, it can thrive."

– MBD

REENA GROUNDBREAKING

About 160 people, including Reena families, supporters, MPs, MPPs, local mayors, and representatives of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto attended the April 30 groundbreaking ceremony for Reena's new community residence, to be built at the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan. The residence, geared for people with disabilities, will also serve UJA Federation agencies such as Chai Tikva, Jewish Family & Child, Kehilla Residential Program and Circle of Care. Pictured, from left, are Vaughan regional councillor Joyce Frustaglio, Reena Foundation chair Frank Wilson, Vaughan city councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, Community and Social Services Minister Madeleine Meilleur; Richmond MP Reza Moridi, York Region Chair Bill Fisch, Vaughan Mayor Linda Jackson and developer Joseph Lebovic.

Greater Toronto Area

Jewish groups help guide new Ontario poverty bill

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Jewish groups and other social advocacy organizations are taking credit for helping to make the Ontario government's Bill 152 – the Poverty Reduction Act – more responsive to community concerns.

Specifically, they say that for the first time, Bill 152 enshrines into law the province's responsibility to set poverty-reduction targets and action plans every five years based partly on consultations with affected groups, individuals and communities most at risk.

The legislation received royal assent May 6, but last month, representatives from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Canadian Jewish Congress were given 10 minutes to give their input on the bill to the province's standing committee on social policy.

In preparation, the two organizations convened a Social Policy Table to bring together "Jewish leaders from the social service sector to make recommendations to government" and discuss their thoughts on how to reduce poverty in the community and the province in general, federation said.

At the policy table were representatives from organizations such as Jewish Family & Child, Jewish Vocational Services, JIAS, March of Dimes, Kehilla and Chai Tikvah, among others.

The current estimate of Jews living below the poverty line in Ontario is 25,000 people – or 11.2 per cent of the community – according to both Congress and the federation. Of those, nearly 3,800 are children under 14.

Frank Bialystok, CJC's Ontario region chair and one of the presenters at Queen's Park, told The CJN that Congress was "pleased with the united front we presented to the government."

"The key recommendation accepted was that there will now be consultations with the [voluntary] sector," he said.

David Spiro, the federation's public affairs committee chair, called the bill "important" and said he was "proud of our involvement in this first step on the road to reducing poverty for all Ontarians.

"The fact that we were asked to present a Jewish community voice to the standing committee… sends a clear message to our community and in particular, to our social policy table, that we have a critical role to play."

Though he was disappointed that a recommendation to specify the goal of a "poverty-free Ontario" was rejected, Bialystok said the fact that Liberal MPP Deb Matthews – who introduced the act – turned up to personally listen to the Jewish community's deputation "bodes well for the government's potential to consult with the Jewish community directly in the future to reduce poverty."

The jointly run federation-Congress Social Policy Table will continue meeting to continue this work on behalf of the Jewish community's needs, a federation spokesperson confirmed.

Security funding renewed

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Public Safety Minister Kevin Van Loan said a federal government program that provides funds for security enhancements to communities at risk of being victims of hate crimes will be extended for a third year.

Van Loan made the announcement at a press conference on Sunday at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre. Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber and Thornhill Tory MP Peter Kent were also in attendance.

Van Loan said the Security Infrastructure Program (SIP) is intended to provide support for all communities in need of assistance against threats and acts of violence and terrorism, not just the Jewish community.

The $3-million, three-year pilot project was announced by former public safety minister Stockwell Day in 2007. Sunday's announcement confirmed that up to $1 million will be made available for the final year.

Van Loan said that any communities that had not yet applied for funds could do so by the June 17 deadline.

The minister, who visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., recently, said that "fairly innocuous hate-motivated crimes, small acts of vandalism, small acts that made a community feel insecure" allow for "greater, more heinous acts to take place."

Farber said that "the very fact that our government understands the need for [security programs] and comes to the fore in such a strong way, brings, I think, a lot of confidence to the community. It speaks volumes to a government that understands the need to endure, that there's a level of comfort, there's an ease, that communities feel protected."

Farber recalled an attack on a Jewish day school in Montreal two years ago. The perpetrators were captured on camera and eventually prosecuted. The increased use of security cameras on public grounds of Jewish institutions is an example of ways the SIP program can improve safety measures for Toronto's citizens, he said.

CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka said in a statement that "we know from experience, underneath the violence and physical damage of hate crimes, there is a deeper psychological damage to the victimized community who feel isolated, vulnerable and unwelcome."

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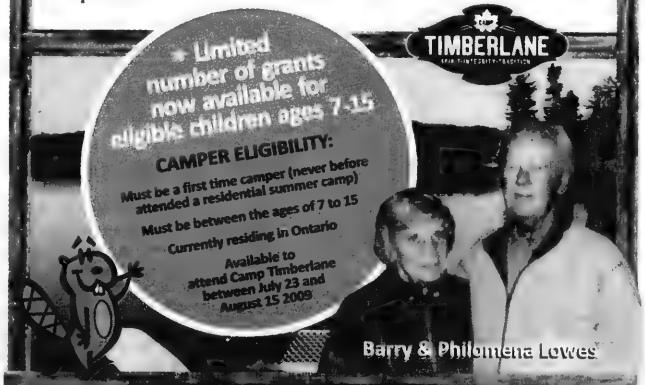
After 52 years, Barry and Phil are committed more than ever to their life pursuit of making camping available to the new generations of children. To make this possible, they have created *"Share the Magic"*; an endowment with the sole objective of introducing new campers to the Timberlane experience.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Mayor asked to cancel play at city-owned theatre

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

B'nai Brith Canada has called on Toronto Mayor David Miller to stop the production of a short play that the Jewish organization calls anti-Semitic from running at the city-owned Theatre Passe Muraille.

"We call on Mayor Miller to ensure that our tax dollars are not inadvertently being used for the promotion of a play whose thrust is anti-Semitic," Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president, said in a statement last week.

Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza, written by British playwright Caryl Churchill after Israel's recent war in the Palestinian territory, will be presented for free at the Directors' Showcase and Exchange from May 15 to 17.

The event, co-sponsored by Crow's Theatre and the National Theatre School of Canada, will also feature the works of graduates of the National Theatre School's director program.

The controversial 10-minute play made its Canadian debut earlier this month in Montreal, when Quebec Jewish Congress' incoming president, Adam Atlas, told The CJN that it's "anti-Semitic and full of hatred... It culminates with a depiction of Jews as ghoulish, bloodthirsty and heartless killers."

The 1,300-word play, whose text is readily available on the Internet, depicts Jews as being self-righteous, uncaring and condescending about the plight of the Palestinian people.

The play unfolds as if a Jewish parent is equivocating between what to tell a girl about the Jewish presence in Israel and relations with Arabs in order not to frighten her.

"Tell her they want their children killed to make people sorry for them... Tell her we're the iron fist now, tell her it's the fog of war, tell her we won't stop killing them till we're safe... Tell her they're animals living in rubble now, tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out," reads one excerpt near the end.

B'nai Brith Canada calls the show anti-Semitic

"Tell her we're the chosen people, tell her I look at one of their children covered in blood and what do I feel? Tell her all I feel is happy it's not her."

Miller's spokesperson Stuart Green said the mayor's office received a letter from B'nai Brith, but as of last week, his office had not had a chance to prepare a response.

"We don't want to respond to the letter through the media. We want to respond to their letter to them," Green said.

The Toronto Star, however, quoted Miller as saying, "We own the building, but we don't determine what theatre groups in this city play, nor should we."

Dimant said the play doesn't criticize Israel exclusively.

"It is clearly aimed at maligning Jews, depicting them as oppressors of Palestinians, blood-thirsty aggressors and child killers. It disturbingly inverts history, using Holocaust imagery to allege that the Jews, once the victims, are actively teaching their own children callous disregard for the suffering of others."

Chris Abraham, Crow's Theatre's artistic director, said that he hasn't received letters or phone calls of complaint from Torontonians, but instead has received "encouragement from members of the Jewish community."

He said he's heard from members of Independent Jewish Voices – an organization that says it's "opposed to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories" and sponsored the play's production in Montreal – as well as individual members of the Jewish community.

"They've been in touch with me to sort of indicate their support," Abraham said.

"I do recognize that the play is a provocative piece, and I hope that all diversity of perspectives are able to come and check out the piece and make their own opinions... The work should be seen and assessed on its own merits."

The play had its premiere in February at London's Royal Court Theatre amid controversy. The Board of Deputies of British Jews accused its author of being "anti-Israel," while the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland called it "a modern blood libel." Sixty well-known British Jews also published a letter in the Daily Telegraph saying the play reinforces "false stereotypes."

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Heart of Darkness

Gilad Schalit has spent more than 1,000 days as a captive of Hamas. Kidnapped 1,054 days ago, he remains the ill-treated, abused, tormented human pawn of an inhuman, cynical regime of genocidal terrorists and haters of Jews.

"The kidnapping of Israeli soldiers has become a strategic vision for Hamas," said Abdel Latif Qanou, a Hamas spokesperson in northern Gaza last month. Without the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, Qanou said, "Schalit would never see daylight."

And thus, in the succinct prose of the devil's advocate, Qanou explained both the means and the ends of the "democratically elected" leaders of the people of Gaza whose public policy, we are sad to note, evokes no opprobrium from those who so vocally, indignantly and some so self-righteously feel the pain of the world's oppressed.

It is difficult to understand how and why individuals who are moved by the plight of the people of Gaza, for example, are so little-moved by the plight of young Gilad Schalit. It is also difficult to understand how and why those same individuals who inveigh in the highest pitch of vehemence and umbrage against the Jewish state will not find a single word of criticism for the Hamas rulers who have kept Schalit beyond the reach even of the Red Cross.

Unfortunately, the efforts of the Israeli government to date have not succeeded in securing Schalit's release, nor has Israel been alone in trying to win their soldier's freedom. Canadian Jewish communities – and indeed communities throughout the Diaspora – have rallied and continue to rally for the young man's freedom. The European Union, most notably France, has spoken out on behalf of Schalit. Last October, Ingrid Betancourt, a former Colombian presidential candidate who had been held captive by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia for six years, urged the European Parliament to work for Schalit's release.

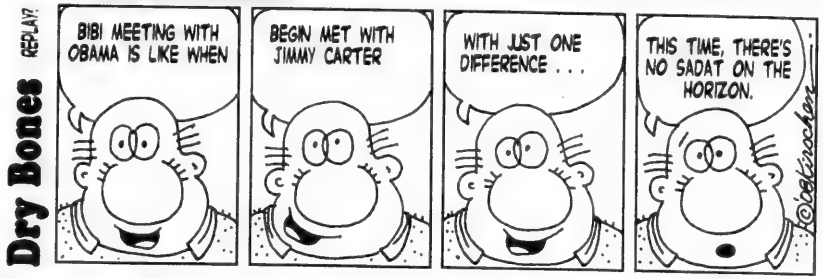
Some members of the U.S. Congress have recently launched an initiative that would tie the $900-million Gaza reconstruction aid, promised earlier in the year by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to Schalit's release. It is now hoped that Pope Benedict XVI will also join in the cause. At the invitation of Israeli President Shimon Peres, Gilad's father, Noam, met with the spiritual leader of the Catholic church on Monday. The Pope agreed to meet with Schalit's father. The press also reported that the pontiff promised to take part in the effort to bring Gilad home.

Not surprisingly, as Gilad's father told The CJN last week, the uncertainty regarding his son's condition is a hard burden of trauma and anguish.

Gaza is a place of darkness. Ordinary Gazans are exploited even as their pressing needs are neglected by their rulers, who, in the words of the writer Joseph Conrad, are the heart of that darkness. Only a concerted effort by fair-minded people, governments and NGOs can penetrate that darkness and bring Gilad Schalit home to his family.

25 years ago in The CJN

Rabbi Adolph Syayavich, spiritual leader of Moscow's main synagogue, denied that the Soviet government was persecuting Jews or preventing them from emigrating. Speaking in New York, he claimed that most Soviet Jews had little interest in attending services, and ritual needs were being met.


Dry Bones
REPLAY?
BIBI MEETING WITH OBAMA IS LIKE WHEN
BEGIN MET WITH JIMMY CARTER
WITH JUST ONE DIFFERENCE . . .
THIS TIME, THERE'S NO SADAT ON THE HORIZON.
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CJC Quebec region name change (1)

I just finished reading Victor Goldbloom's guest voice "Background to a name change," as well as the letters to the editor on the subject of the Canadian Jewish Congress' Quebec region name change (CJN, April 30). I totally agree with the letter writers David Birnbaum and Manuel Shacter, who oppose the name change. Goldbloom seems to be pandering to the extreme Québecois nationalists. Changing the name to Congrès Juif Québecois will make as much difference as Mr. Victor Goldbloom changing his name to M. Pierre Goldbloom. There has to be a better way of proudly acknowledging our deep attachment to Quebec than crassly hiding our deep attachment to Canada.

Penny Hassan
Montreal

* * *

CJC Quebec region name change (2)

I agree that the new name Congrès juif québecois will give us a new impetus to participate more effectively in Quebec society. There is nothing to be afraid of. The word "québecois" does not belong to one party nor to only one political direction – it covers all Quebeckers who live in this province.

I do not agree with the comment made by the people letter writer Stanley Baker discussed the name change with, that they "are Canadian Jews who happen to live in the Province of Quebec" (CJN, April 23). Jews are an integral part of Quebec and contributed to its evolution and progress long before there was a Canada. We can be very proud of this history. My family arrived as displaced persons in 1948 and chose to stay in Montreal, rather than go to Toronto, as the authorities wanted. We then chose to remain here, despite difficult political times.

Baker also states that "there is a hint of separatism" in the name change – an innuendo not proven and too easily uttered, especially considering the many proud Canadians involved in this decision. An innuendo that feels like it appeals to people's fears rather than to their reason.

Rivka Augenfeld
Outremont, Que.

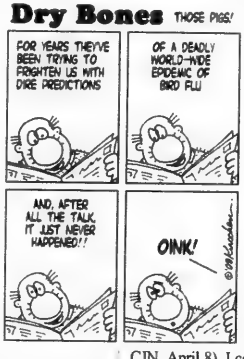
* * *

Conference to promote one-state solution

I share Avrum Rosensweig's apprehension about the deafening silence emanating from our community ("Please call the meeting," CJN, March 26; and "Fighting anti-Semitism is pursuing freedom," CJN April 8). I am deeply concerned about the prevailing apathy of our brethren to a profound and imminent danger that threatens to engulf not only world Jewry, but the entire western civilization. Western nations are facing the threat of global invasion and conquest by radical Islam. So soon after the Holocaust, are we again paralyzed by disbelief or apathy while the enemy declares his intentions and mobilizes against us in broad daylight? Our strength lies in our unity. Too often in our past, our downfall has been preceded by internal disharmony, indifference and inaction. At such a time of peril for our people, we cannot afford to be either neutral or uncaring.

York University is co-sponsoring a June 22-24 international conference called Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace, which will promote a one-state solution (which means no Jewish state). The Jewish Defence League is sponsoring a counter-rally. We should all attend. We must also use and withdraw our financial influence to publicly condemn York for co-sponsoring such an ignominious event.

Goldi Steiner
Toronto


Dry Bones
THOSE PIGS!
FOR YEARS THEY'VE BEEN TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US WITH DIRE PREDICTIONS
OF A DEADLY WORLD-WIDE EPIDEMIC OF BIRD FLU
AND, AFTER ALL THE TALK, IT JUST NEVER HAPPENED!!
OINK!
©yaakovkatz

* * *

Durban II

"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore." This quote from the movie Network was used in a column by Mordechai Ben-Dat in reference to the idea that everywhere in the world, as anti-Semitism grows, the Jewish voice must be loud and clear ("Not taking it anymore," CJN, April 8). I concur with him and believe that if the Jewish people speak out, those who are our friends will do the same. During Durban II, it was paramount that our feelings were heard so that the disaster we saw at Durban I would not repeat itself. It is equally important now that this United Nations "human rights conference" is over that we continue to speak loudly against anti-Semitism wherever it appears. My father used to say, "If it will be good for Jews, it will be good for the entire world." I believe that to be so.

Gitel Rosensweig
Toronto

* * *

Ellerslie Girls High School reunion

This is an open invitation to all past pupils of Ellerslie Girls High School in Sea Point, South Africa, to attend a reunion in July 2010, which ties in with World Cup Soccer at Green Point, South Africa. Simultaneous overseas reunions in major cities will be arranged for those unable to attend the Cape Town-area function.

Tara Wells-Stoddard (formerly Kroukamp)
Cape Town, South Africa
e-mail: taratjie@gmail.com

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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info@cjnews.com

Holy See has expressed political hostility toward Israel

By SERGIO L. MINERBI
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Despite strong opposition in the Vatican to his visit to Israel, Pope Benedict XVI was scheduled to arrive here on Monday. According to press reports, even prior to his arrival, President Shimon Peres was pressing Interior Minister Eli Yishai to waive Israeli sovereignty over six sites: the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth; the Church of Gethsemane, on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives; the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, at Tabgha on Lake Kinneret; the Mount of Beatitudes; the Basilica of Mount Tabor; and the Coenaculum on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The first five sites already are the property of the Catholic Church, while the Coenaculum, the traditional site of the Last Supper, has not been in the Church's hands for the past 400 years.

The status of the Coenaculum, which today also houses a mosque, is very different than the others. Legally, it belongs to the local Waqf (Muslim religious trust), and during the British Mandate, requests by the Church to have it restored to Catholic ownership went unanswered. Israel is a custodian of the site only, and a decision to hand it over to the Church would create a new conflict with the Muslim world and would gravely threaten the status quo arrangement of 1852. Only preservation of the status quo can assure a minimum quiet in those sanctuaries, like the Holy Sepulchre, that belong to various churches. Moreover, both Israel and the Church are committed to respecting the status quo, according to the Fundamental Agreement of 1993.

There is no commanding reason to impair the status quo. Giving up Israeli sovereignty would mean that whenever a road would need to be paved, water or sewage pipes laid or electrical infrastructure renovated at any of these sites, permission would have to be granted by the Vatican. Interior Minister Yishai has objected to the move, claiming that such a concession would limit "the Israeli government's ability to function as a sovereign government in those areas." Israel could expect to be asked for similar concessions by the Greek Orthodox Church, from which it leases the land on which the Knesset and other buildings are located in Jerusalem. What makes the possibility of renouncing sovereignty especially absurd is that even in Italy, a tribunal refused to hear an appeal made on the basis of canon law (on another matter entirely), stating that it could pass judgment only on matters of Italian law. Should Israel be more Catholic than Italy? Definitely not.

Rather than considering phantasmagorical requests on the part of the Vatican, Israel could agree to the Holy See's legitimate request to obtain exemption from taxation for its institutions in Israel – a request granted under the terms of the Fundamental Agreement, but not acted on since 1993 because of the Finance Ministry's opposition and the Foreign Ministry's relative weakness.

The Vatican is so desperate for tax relief that the issue was raised by the Pope himself last year, but to no avail, when the new Israeli ambassador to the Holy See, Mordechay Lewy, presented his letter of accreditation. Maybe such a move would make it easier to take the issue of the six holy sites off the table.

I am not sure that Israelis are aware of the measure of political hostility expressed by the Holy See toward Israel. Vatican authorities did not object explicitly to the bombing of civilian targets within Israel by Hamas over eight long years, but were quick and vehement in protesting the army's campaign in the Gaza Strip this past winter. At the beginning of this year, the Pope himself protested five times in eight days.

Cardinal Renato Martino said at the time that Israel had transformed Gaza into a concentration camp. And just last Sunday, the Pope expressed his sympathy for the Palestinians, saying: "In a special way, I ask that you remember the Palestinian people, who have endured great hardship and suffering." Yet, I am not aware of any diplomatic measure by Israel conveying to the Holy See its regret and disappointment over the unbalanced and steady condemnation of Israel, at the same time that the pontiff expresses solidarity with the Palestinians, who, he said, live in a region "plagued by violence and injustice, mistrust, uncertainty and fear."

Pope Benedict and his flock. *[RNS/Reuters file photo]*

Unfortunately, the itinerary of the Pope's visit will not allow him to receive a detailed description of the complex political situation in the region. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the only political personality scheduled to meet the Pope – apart from a ceremonial encounter with President Shimon Peres – will apparently go to Nazareth, to the Basilica of the Annunciation, to meet him. Very strange indeed, since diplomatic protocol would generally demand that the Pope pay a visit to the prime minister's residence, in Jerusalem.

Israel badly needs a complete reshuffling of its policy toward the Vatican. We should be much more flexible and forthcoming on fiscal issues, while alerting Jewish communities in the United States, which take pride in their good relations with the Pope, to the Holy See's very hostile posture on the political plane. After all, the Vatican still generally refuses to refer to Israel by its name, calling it instead the "Holy Land."

Sergio I. Minerbi is a former Israeli ambassador.

The potential minefields in the papal visit

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

The official Israeli government website for Pope Benedict XVI's upcoming trip to Israel and the West Bank promoted the May 11 to 15 visit as a "bridge for peace."

Others, however, described it as a potential minefield where various factions may try to exploit the Pope's presence for political gain.

"Both Jewish and Muslim ideologues are determined to stop the Pope crossing that bridge," wrote Catholic religion journalist Damian Thompson in his blog for the U.K. Telegraph, "either by smearing him as an anti-Semite or by making his visit to a Palestinian refugee camp look like a politically motivated reproach to Israel."

The German-born pontiff left for the Middle East on May 8 and spent three days in Jordan before flying to Israel.

The trip is the first by a Pope to Israel since the 2000 pilgrimage by Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II. John Paul was a historic trailblazer who made promoting Vatican-Jewish relations a central policy goal.

Inevitably, Benedict's words and actions are sure to be compared – and contrasted – with John Paul's.

"It's unfair, but John Paul's warmth will be compared to the theological coldness of Benedict," Israeli political scientist Shlomo Avineri said. "The fact that he was in the Hitler Youth, though involuntarily, will make everyone look at every move and turn of phrase."

Several issues have strained Vatican-Jewish ties in recent months. There is ongoing controversy over wartime Pope Pius XII's role in the Holocaust, and Jewish groups erupted in January when Benedict lifted a 20-year-old excommunication order against a traditional bishop who turned out to be a Holocaust denier.

In Rome, Lisa Palmieri-Billig, the American Jewish Committee's liaison with the Vatican, told JTA that both sides were striving to minimize lingering problems ahead of the papal trip.

"All the problems that might have loomed on the horizon before the pontiff announced his trip are being muted within the perspective of the importance of the visit for bilateral relations," she said. "Both the Israelis and world Jewry are aware of this and want to nourish good relations."

On April 12, Benedict, 82, said he would "emphatically" bring a message of "justice and truth, mercy, forgiveness and love" on his trip.

"Reconciliation – difficult but indispensable – is a precondition for a future of overall security and peaceful coexistence, and it can only be achieved through renewed, persevering and sincere efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," he said.

The Pope's itinerary includes prayer, politics and pastoral teaching to local Christians in an attempt to improve interfaith relations with both Muslims and Jews.

He stopped in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, where there were open-air masses and meetings with Muslim and Jewish religious leaders.

The Pope visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and the al-Aida Palestinian refugee camp near Bethlehem. He met with Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Official Vatican policy is to maintain an equilibrium of sorts in its relations with Israel and the Arab world.

"Its diplomacy is different from that of other states because it is always aware of the Christian populations," Palmieri-Billig said.

In Jerusalem, Oded Ben-Hur, a former Israeli ambassador to the Vatican, said the Pope's visit is proof that "relations between Israel and the Holy See are strong and solid." Ben-Hur said Benedict "has never missed an opportunity to reiterate his commitment to dialogue and to relations with Israel."

The two states formalized full diplomatic relations in 1994. But years of fitful negotiations have failed to resolve several lingering issues, including fiscal status and tax issues regarding Church property in Israel and visa restrictions on Arab Christian priests.

Meanwhile, Arab and Muslim sentiment ahead of the visit appeared to be mixed. One possible problem could be the Pope's last day in the region, May 15, which coincides with the day Palestinians commemorate as the Nakba – the "catastrophe" of Israel's birth in May 1948.

"The Pope's Palestinian hosts will certainly 'instrumentalize' this," Avineri said.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, said Benedict's visit to the al-Aida refugee camp on that day is a symbol of the Palestinians' "right of return" to the Holy Land, according to a report on Israel's Ynet news.

Pamphlets in some Arab towns called for protests against the Pope because of remarks he made in 2006 that were construed as insulting Islam. At the time, the remarks sparked protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as elsewhere in the Arab world.

In Nazareth, near the Church of the Annunciation, which the Pope is to visit, radical Muslims have hung a banner apparently aimed at Benedict that quotes a passage from the Qur'an: "Those who harm God and His Messenger – God has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment."

"Everyone is crossing their fingers" that things go well, Avineri said.

Opinions

Leave Israeli politics to Israelis

Suggestions have again been heard in Israel that, to become true partners, Jews in the Diaspora should seek Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return and thus involve themselves in Israeli politics. Citizens of many democracies vote in elections in their countries, whether they live there or not, the argument goes, so the same should apply in Israel, the state of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

The new government of Israel could legislate that all Jews, whether Israelis or not, vote abroad in the hope that the Diaspora will continue to support right-wing politics in Israel. Likud and parties to the right of it tend to have a strong following in Jewish communities around the world.

To include Jewish votes from abroad may, therefore, assure the continuity of the present government. Although some Jews have become obnoxious attackers of Israel, mercifully, many more are its uncritical and passionate defenders. They would now get a say as to who will govern there.

An even stronger right-wing government in Israel would further compromise the situation of over 20 per cent of its resident citizens, namely the Arabs. As it now stands, the new strongman of Israel, Avigdor Lieberman, wants to test the loyalty of Arabs in ways calculated to further restrict and intimidate them.

Understandably, Jews want to make sure that they remain the majority in Israel. The best way hitherto has been to immigrate there. One of the main reasons for the Israelis' interest – some say, preoccupation – with anti-Semitism in the Diaspora is that it may persuade more Jews to make aliyah. By allowing those living abroad to vote in elections, they could immigrate to Israel, as it were, without leaving their countries of residence.

Advocates of the scheme might even be prepared to ignore the anomaly of having people vote that neither pay taxes in Israel nor serve in its military.

The proposal, if implemented, would have a profound impact on the nature of Jewish communities around the world. It would prompt a shift from philanthropy, which has always been the main Diaspora identification with Eretz Yisrael, to party politics. This in turn would give our enemies further cause to describe Jews as a fifth column in the countries where they live, which, of course, would breed more anti-Semitism.

What on the face of it seems like a creative idea intended to bind all Jews to Israel may turn out to have very negative consequences.

On balance, a better idea would be to continue to collect money and promote tourism while leaving the running of the country to Israelis who actually live there.

God: for or against?

I wish to dedicate this column to the team of competent and dedicated educators and support staff I worked with at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education over the past 10 years.

I'm impressed by all the attention given lately to God. There are those who are so convinced of God's non-existence that they're advertising the fact on subway cars, while others are so faithful of God's existence that they, too, advertise it. As overjoyed as the ad companies must be, I'm taken by the fact that this is still an engaging issue in the 21st century. It brings me back to the Middle Ages!

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

In his latest book, Breaking the Tablets: Jewish Theology After the Shoah, David Weiss Halivni argues that at Auschwitz, God was absent from history, in contradistinction to His presence in history at Sinai. Absent, but not non-existent. And, of course, this is the approach to God in Jewish religion. God's existence is a given in our faith, but His presence has always been a concern, from the earliest biblical texts to our own days.

Indeed, one only has to look to Pascal's wager to see the foolishness of searching for some proof of existence. Pascal's "bet" on God is based purely on the idea that since neither side can be proven, it makes sense to opt for God's existence. It's the only side that can claim "nothing to lose, everything to gain."

I was once on a March of the Living bus in Poland when a survivor was telling some of her stories to a group of Orthodox high school students from England. It became obvious that she was a secular Israeli who had lost her faith during the war years. Not wanting to offend the students and being sensitive to their faith, she ended by saying they shouldn't assume that it was easier to be a non-believer. She told them how lonely she was without a God to console her.

My reading of that moving moment was that this woman believed in the existence of God, but couldn't feel His presence at all, and sometimes even yearned for that feeling. Could God not be the force that made her so sensitive to the needs of those British kids? Taken as I was by Weiss Halivni's book, I kept thinking of that Tel Aviv survivor throughout the entire read. Having a God and worrying about His presence or absence in history is a much greater existential problem than not having a belief at all.

I think the current debate between the Creationists and the Evolutionists is just as foolish as the subway signs for and against God. Our tradition holds that Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world as we know it – specifically, it's the anniversary of the sixth day of creation, when we humans were brought into the order of the cosmos. It is, of course, significant that we don't see ourselves at the very beginning of creation, something we have in common with Darwin's theories. But even more telling is that on Rosh Hashanah, we don't read the Creation story, but rather of the birth and near-sacrifice of Isaac, a story about our specific faith group, not a cosmic history.

There's no doubt that over the ages, we saw in the Creation story the "science" of creation, and there still are fundamentalist believers who read the text with that in mind. But it's just as true that from the very beginnings of biblical interpretation, we also saw the very true moral lessons and ethical teachings in every word of the first chapters of Genesis. Those of us who see contemporary science as an ongoing quest for truth by God's creatures – using God-given powers of intelligence, memory, insight and articulation – see Darwin as a wondrous complement to the biblical account, not a threat.

Those who believe in a God who welcomes faith-struggle by calling us Yisrael (the one who strives with God) know that God's presence or absence is the real issue, not His existence. As I heard my sister say years ago: "The God you don't believe in is not the one I do believe in."

Imagine: a return to religion

In his 1971 song Imagine, former Beatle John Lennon sang: "Imagine there's no countries \ It isn't hard to do \ Nothing to kill or die for \ And no religion too \ Imagine all the people \ Living life in peace…"

The song was taken up by youth culture, captivated by the singer's soulful desire to "give peace a chance," as an earlier song put it. Over time, Imagine was embraced as something of an anthem by idealistic utopians caught by Lennon's idea of a world living "as one," where people"shar[e] all the world" in "a brotherhood of man."

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

Lennon's song captured a particular cultural moment. At the same time, it gave popular expression to a set of ideals and criticisms that have proved enduring. Imagine was intended not as a simple paean to peace – a secularized, rock version of Oseh Shalom – but rather as an anti-capitalist manifesto of sorts. "Imagine no possessions… No need for greed… Sharing all the world."

While those lines resonate with the visions of Isaiah, arguing for a just world, the song articulated a romanticized Marxist vision that involved the dissolution of such things as religious and national identity in favour of a universalist ideal.

You could say that Imagine encapsulates a messianic vision, but one displaced from the religious to the secular political context. Religion was lumped together with other things that caused people to fight and die, rather than being seen as a source of spirituality and ethics.

This view of religion as, at best, irrelevant and, at worst, destructive, has long characterized both academic analyses and radical political stances. But two articles that I came upon recently by staunch cultural critics place religion back into the arena as a source of sustaining values. The angle that the articles took, and the turnabout that they represented for their authors, caught my attention. Each of the authors argued that western culture – North America, Europe – would be the better for coming under the influence of Islamic fundamentalism.

In a recent essay in Commonweal, the illustrious Terry Eagleton, a British Marxist literary theorist, described western liberal democracies as populated by consumerist automatons with no compelling beliefs. He contrasted their inner emptiness with the "critique of materialism, hedonism, and individualism made by many devout Muslims," arguing that western countries would "be altered for the good" if they were to be influenced by Islam.

American feminist Naomi Wolf, in the pages of the Globe and Mail, argued that rather than viewing the veiling of women under Islam as the oppression of women and repression of their sexuality, we should understand it as a practice that supports the values of marriage and family. Best known for her book The Beauty Myth, which sees the idea of beauty as an instrument to control and limit women, Wolf views female modesty as a potential source of sensuality and liberation. Elsewhere, she extends this idea to Orthodox Judaism, as well. She contrasts Christian anti-sensuality with Islam and Judaism, where, she argues, "sexuality channelled into marriage and family life is seen as a source of great blessing, sanctioned by God."

One could argue that both of these authors romanticize religious devotion, and neither of them possess a deep knowledge of the religious phenomenon they describe glowingly. For them, religious commitment is a peg on which they hang their ongoing criticisms of western civilization.

Still, these two articles are a sign of the changing cultural winds. Religion, once pushed to the periphery of civic discourse, is regaining the centre. What will that mean for the way we live our lives as Canadian Jews? I, for one, will welcome a more complex, less trivial public understanding about the place of religious values and ethics.

John Lennon saw only religion's power to divide and destroy. As a professor of Jewish studies at a secular university, I am often struck by its potential to bring people together – not only co-religionists, in a feeling of solidarity and belonging, but people of different faith groups who respect religious commitment. Imagine.

The Kirshner File

Working for Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel

To Faisal Azaiza, the Israeli port city of Haifa, with its mixed Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Druze inhabitants, is a model of multiculturalism and coexistence in Israel. "In Haifa, Arabic is not the language of the enemy," he said. "People mix easily in Haifa, as they have for a long time."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Azaiza, an Israeli Arab Muslim, has more than a passing interest in ethnic and cultural diversity. He is director of the Jewish Arab Center at Haifa University, which has the highest proportion of Arab students of any Israeli university. By his estimate, 20 per cent of its student body is composed of Arabs, a figure that matches the percentage of Arabs living in Israel. Furthermore, Haifa University has more Arab professors than any other Israeli university – 25 at last count.

Nonetheless, Arab-Jewish tensions have flared on campus. Azaiza, who also directs the MA program at the university's School of Social Work, is hardly surprised by the occasional eruptions of acrimony. "We have successes and failures," he said in an interview during a recent visit to Toronto. "Students bring to the campus the problems of Israeli society. We try to open doors and windows so that we can work together in harmony."

At the Jewish Arab Center, a unique Israeli interdisciplinary institution founded in 1972 to foster mutual co-operation on an equitable basis, dialogue is the name of the game. The centre, which Azaiza has headed for the past seven years, encourages research on Middle Eastern affairs and provides a venue for conferences and seminars.

In his own research, Azaiza, a PhD from the Hebrew University, promotes the values of coexistence. He has written papers on Arab-Jewish relations, bilingual education in Israel and friendship between Jewish and Arab university students.

A resident and former mayor of Daburiya, an all-Muslim village of 9,000 in the Galilee about 70 kilometres north of Haifa, he was an adviser of the Abraham Fund, which fosters Arab-Jewish co-operation in Israel, and a director of the Association for the Advancement of Equal Opportunity Between Arabs and Jews in Israel, known as Sikkuy.

As well, he founded and administered the first Arab geriatric nursing home in Israel, which happens to be in Daburiya. "The idea behind this project was to close the gap between Jews and Arabs in Israel," he explained.

To his regret, the gap remains wide open, tolerated by Israeli governments that have largely neglected the problem and have only begun to recognize it of late. "It's very serious, a case of discrimination," he said, echoing an appraisal issued by Israel's former prime minister, Ehud Olmert. Last November, Olmert said, "For 60 years, there has been discrimination against Arabs in Israel. It is deep-seated and intolerable."

According to Azaiza, 52, the unfair distribution of government funds to Arab municipalities is the most flagrant example of the none too subtle discrimination that the Israeli Arab minority faces today.

He cited a case close to home. While Jews in neighbouring Kfar Tabor receive ample infusions of infrastructure funds, Daburiya is left gasping for equitable funding. The end result is painfully obvious. Daburiya looks like a Third World village, while Kfar Tabor is modern in all respects.

There are also gaps in employment and education, he observed.

Schools in the Arab sector, particularly older ones, do not have sufficient computers and labs. "We need to change this."

The Jewish Arab Center, as written in Hebrew and Arabic

Confronting the grim prospect of unemployment, many Arab university graduates lower their expectations, taking jobs in Arab municipalities and schools.

And in the Israeli civil service, less than five per cent of senior managers are Arabs.

Shortly before he was interviewed, the Israeli press reported that 40 Arab Israel Railways workers had been laid off and replaced by army veterans.

In his view, Israeli Arabs are better integrated than 20 years ago and are much better off than in the pre-Six Day War era, when they were subjected to military rule and their movements were circumscribed.

However, Azaiza is clearly concerned by the suggestion, made by Avigdor Lieberman before his appointment as foreign minister and seconded by Benjamin Netanyahu before his accession as prime minister, that the citizenship of Israeli Arabs should hinge on a "loyalty" test.

[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Faisal Azaiza

"It's a joke," said Azaiza, who, as a university student, met Lieberman, who was born in the former Soviet Union and immigrated to Israel as a young man. "I'm not sure Lieberman is more loyal to Israel than Faisal Azaiza. This is racism. It's more important to talk about integration than loyalty. Lieberman wants to take us back to the period of military rule."

Despite a succession of Arab-Israeli wars since 1948, the vast majority of Israeli Arabs have remained loyal to Israel, he said, referring to a Shin Bet report stating that 95 percent of Arab citizens are loyal to the state.

"Too many Jews in Israel regard Arabs as enemies rather than as fellow citizens," he noted, saying that this attitude induces Israeli Arabs to accentuate their Palestinian origins.

Asked how he identifies himself, Azaiza said, "I'm a Muslim, Arab, Palestinian citizen of Israel."

He added, "The Arab-Israeli conflict affects us all personally. I want to see it coming to an end with a two-state solution. We were close to achieving one under Olmert. I'm still optimistic, because this is the policy of the United States and the European Union."

When asked whether Israel should be replaced by a secular "state of its citizens," an idea that Israeli Arab parliamentarians generally support, Azaiza replied, "I want a Jewish state with humanistic values. I'm not bothered that Israel is a Jewish state."

He does not identify with Zionism, saying that only Jews can embrace it. "But I'm sensitive to what happened to the Jewish people during the Holocaust." In addition, he respects the major symbols of Israel's statehood – the Magen David flag and the Hatikvah national anthem. "I can't change the symbols of the Jewish people, but they should be sensitive to our symbols and our pain."

In this connection, he believes that Israeli Jews and Arabs should be more attuned to their respective historical narratives.

Israeli Arabs are pained by the knowledge that more than 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed during and after the 1948 war, that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were thrown out of the country, and that parcels of their lands were seized and never returned. To this day, a number of his relatives still live in Jordan and Syria, having fled Palestine as war raged. In his estimate, Israel expropriated more than 300 dunams from his family and about 2,000 dunams from Daburiya.

He recognizes that, for Jews, the narrative is radically different. The War of Independence was a war of sheer survival as Arab armies sought to wipe out Israel.

Azaiza regrets that Netanyahu, who presides over a bloated cabinet of 30 ministers, saw no need to appoint a single Arab minister. "It's a mistake. It tells me that this government is not sufficiently interested in integrating the Arab community."

On a related matter, he said that Israeli Arabs should decide whether military service should be compulsory for their community.

In closing, he took heart from reports that Jews in the Diaspora have begun to focus on the problems faced by Israeli Arabs.

But in a warning, he said, "If Jewish donors give only to Jewish causes in Israel, the gap between Jews and Arabs is likely to grow."

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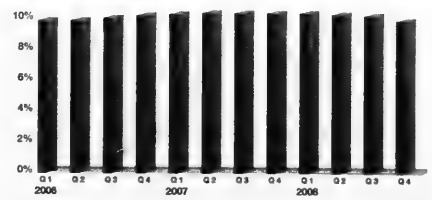

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Masorti seeks 'mainstream' acceptance in Israel

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

For most of his life, Yizhar Hess, the 42-year-old executive director and CEO of the Masorti movement in Israel for the past two years, considered himself a secular Israeli.

That began to change almost a decade ago, when he attended a Conservative bat mitzvah in Tucson, Ariz., where he was serving as a shaliach for the Jewish Agency.

Hess – recalling his own bar mitzvah at a Jerusalem synagogue, where his grandmother could barely see him from the women's balcony – was astounded to see that the celebrant's grandmother not only held hands with her on the bimah, but was honoured with an aliyah.

Speaking at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue on a Shabbat morning during a recent visit to Toronto, Hess said (according to a copy of his speech provided to The CJN), "It was in North America, thousands of miles from Jerusalem, that I experienced my first significant Shabbat. How absurd."

As executive director of the Masorti movement, as Conservative Judaism is known in Israel, Hess says one of his main goals is to steer Masorti, which has grown to 53 congregations in Israel, toward becoming "a mainstream player in the arena of Jewish identity in Israel."

Citing the dichotomy in Israel between the religious and secular segments of society, Hess – a 10th-generation Jerusalemite on his mother's side – noted in an interview the day after he spoke at Beth David that secular Jews are not necessarily atheists.

"The majority are quite open to religion," he said.

Hess, a lawyer by training who also studied political science and Hebrew literature, would like to see Masorti recognized by the State of Israel, so that, among other things, its rabbis would have the authority to officiate at weddings in Israel and to oversee conversions that would be accepted as legitimate by the state.

Currently, if Israelis want to get married in a non-Orthodox Jewish ceremony or a civil ceremony, they must do so outside the country.

Hess said that many Israelis are "disgusted" with the status quo, but he added that, in the long run, he is optimistic about the future.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that 20 per cent [of couples who are marrying] decide not to go along with the system. It means we are not that far from the point where Israelis will say, 'Enough already. There's more than one way to be Jewish.'"

Yizhar Hess
[Frances Kraft photo]

However, he noted that the haredi Shas party has grown in power, indicating challenges for Masorti, at least in the near future.

Masorti, which was established in Israel 31 years ago, receives virtually no funding from the Israeli government, aside from "a token" that is earmarked for education only, not for religious services such as mikvahs that are funded if they are under Orthodox auspices, Hess said.

He noted that Conservative rabbis are not allowed to use Orthodox mikvahs for conversions.

Hess added that the Masorti movement has had to cut about 30 per cent of its budget in Israel because of the economic situation in the United States.

Among the programs affected by the cuts is a bar/bat mitzvah program for special needs children, which Hess said is the only one of its kind in Israel. Although it has not been eliminated, cutbacks mean that between 70 and 100 youngsters will not be able to participate in it, he said.

In addition to seeking financial support here, Hess is asking North American Jews for political support. He suggests that when they have the opportunity to meet an Israeli politician, they should "express their frustration in a very severe way over the treatment of the [non-Orthodox] streams [of Judaism] in Israel.

"[Politicians] need to understand that the majority of North American Jews think that the fact we are not treated equally in Israel is a big challenge for the future of the State of Israel.

"If the differences in how to celebrate your Judaism continue to grow, we will have problems connecting the young generations here and there. Israel cannot be a fundamentalist country."

But according to Hess, more and more Israelis are identifying as Masorti Jews.

He said that a survey last year indicated that 22 per cent of Israelis – more than half a million people – who planned to go to synagogue for the High Holidays said they would go to Reform or Masorti congregations.

Although such a large number did not show up for services – the total at Masorti congregations was tens of thousands, mainly sabras, Hess said – "the fact that so many Israelis said the shul they don't go to is Masorti represents a big change in Israel."

For many Israelis, he said, "if Orthodoxy is the only option, then there is no option. This is not where they want to be."

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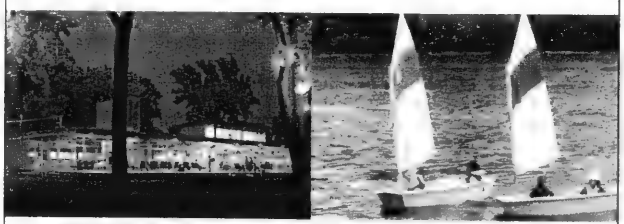

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Doctors group fights anti-Jewish bias

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It was a question physician-activist Michael Bloom had clearly anticipated: does the world really need yet another organization dedicated to protecting Jews from the scourge of anti-Semitism?

Bloom, along with his colleague and friend Rob Zadik, had only a month or two ago created DARA, Doctors Against Racism & Anti-Semitism, a largely Jewish group that seemed to duplicate the efforts of long-established Jewish organizations in the field of community protection.

"Anti-Semitism is such a big problem," explained Bloom, "you need a multipronged approach." The work of existing organizations is "necessary, but not sufficient."

Where DARA steps in is in asking its members – doctors, dentists, medical students, academics – to use their skills, their contacts and their relationships to try to put out the fire of anti-Semitism in their own backyard.

Bloom and Zadik believe that in recent years, there has been a frightening upsurge in overt anti-Semitism worldwide, including in Canada, "where anti-Semitism is becoming fashionable in the form of anti-Zionism."

What's more, they believe that it is beginning to make inroads within their profession – at least if measured by instances in medical literature.

The Lancet and the British Medical Journal have been politicized against Israel for some time and both have carried anti-Israel articles, Bloom said.

And a couple of months ago, the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) ran two pieces "on the effects of Israeli aggression on the health of Palestinians in Gaza," he added.

Bloom and Zadik see those articles as providing the impetus that led to the formation of DARA. Co-operating with Honest Reporting Canada, a media watchdog group, they distributed a talking-points memo to friends in the medical profession which addressed the allegations in the CMAJ articles.

"We sent it to doctors we knew," Bloom said.

In the end, more than 200 people wrote letters of complaint to the magazine. Among them was one missive jointly signed by 50 doctors. That prompted the journal editor to contact a representative of the 50 and they spent an hour on the phone discussing concerns about the articles.

Bloom and Zadik believe the CMAJ is now more sensitive to the issues raised by the articles.

Rob Zadik, left and Michael Bloom

"We don't want the CMAJ to go the way of the British journals, which are virulent in tone," Zadik said.

Impressed with the grassroots response to the CMAJ articles, Bloom and Zadik sent out another letter to hundreds of doctors, inviting them to an information session to discuss possible future activities. More than 50 showed up, and another 50 would have also come, but for scheduling conflicts. In the past few months, DARA's membership has grown to 238 members who work in a variety of medical disciplines and span a wide range of ages, including retired physicians.

The group's first organized activity took place April 6 when about 30 people braved "a hostile" environment at the University of Toronto to attend a lecture by Jewish and Arab doctors on health issues in Gaza. "It was an anti-Israel propaganda fest under the guise of medicine," Zadik said.

"During the question period, we challenged the propaganda and showed they were not able to talk with impunity, they'd be challenged," said Bloom.

Questioners brought up the use by Hamas of human shields, that ambulances were used to shuttle weapons, that Hamas attacked Israel from the vicinity of hospitals and that Hamas operatives hid from Israeli forces in hospitals.

Bloom believes the lecture played to DARA's strength – organizing on a grassroots basis to confront anti-Israel attacks.

DARA serves as "a wake up call to doctors" about the re-emergence of anti-Semitism as "a huge problem." It also is meant to "galvanize doctors to stop being apathetic and to use our skills, connections and credibility to help combat this problem," said Bloom.

With its monthly meetings, it "provides an organized forum to help doctors mount a co-ordinated response," he added.

Bloom and Zadik both have a background that included political advocacy. A native of Toronto, Bloom attended Associated Hebrew Schools and the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. As an undergraduate at the University of Western Ontario, he became politically active in the Jewish Students Union at a time when anti-Israel agitation was beginning to develop momentum.

His time for political activism shrank considerably when he entered medical school. He now works as as an anesthesiologist at William Osler Health Center.

Zadik attended Jewish school in his native Calgary. He served as president of Hillel at the University of Calgary before moving to London to study medicine at Western. He works as an anesthesiologist at Humber River Regional Hospital.

They admit they'd rather be focusing on their careers and families, but they believe doctors on an individual basis can make a difference. "We're not looking for recognition or self-promotion," Bloom said. "All I'm trying to do is help the communal response to anti-Semitism run more smoothly and effectively."

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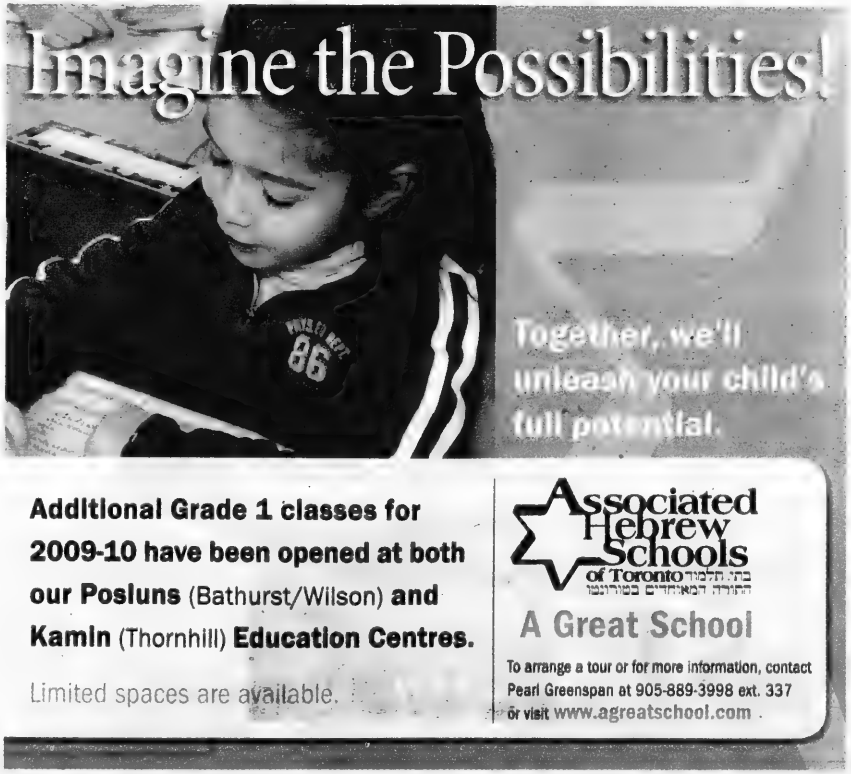
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Gov't sued over disability funding at faith-based schools

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Dayna Blustein, a 14-year-old Grade 8 student, became deaf at age four after contracting meningitis.

When she attended United Synagogue Day School from Grade 1 to Grade 5, her parents had to pay for services such as an itinerant teacher to help her, and for amenities such as carpeting in classrooms to absorb extraneous sounds like footsteps. Blustein, who has a cochlear implant, now attends a public school, where those costs are taken care of by the provincial government.

Max Greenberg, 13, has a learning disability. The Associated Hebrew Schools Grade 7 student said he needs more time than his peers to write and to process information that he reads.

"I really don't think it's fair that in the province of Ontario, they don't pay for my disability," Blustein said at a press conference last week at Queen's Park.

The teenagers' families are among a group of eight families – seven Jewish and one Muslim – who are suing the Ontario government for not funding services for children who are blind, deaf or learning disabled and who attend non-Catholic faith-based schools. The lawsuit asserts that the government is violating the children's rights under Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The same services are funded for students in Ontario's public and Catholic schools.

From left, Max Greenberg, Ira Walfish, Dayna Blustein and Allan Kaufman, seen at a press conference last week at Queen's Park, defend the rights of parochial school students with disabilities to receive government-funded services. [Frances Kraft photo]

The lawsuit was filed in 2007, and the case will be heard in Ontario Divisional Court in Toronto on May 27 and 28.

Ira Walfish, chair of the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith-Based Schools, said it's up to faith-based schools to provide all the resources for students who are deaf, blind or have a learning disability.

He said the government's policy of providing those resources to students in public schools is arbitrary and discriminatory. "This court action is a last resort," he added.

Allan Kaufman, a lawyer for the eight families, said that children with certain types of disabilities – even those who attend faith-based, non-Catholic schools – qualify for government funding for seven types of services.

The funded services – speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nursing services, dietetic services, training of school personnel to provide the services, and the provision of medical supplies for therapy – are considered health matters by the government and have been funded by the Ministry of Health since 2000.

However, resources for students who are blind, deaf or have learning disabilities are funded by the Ministry of Education.

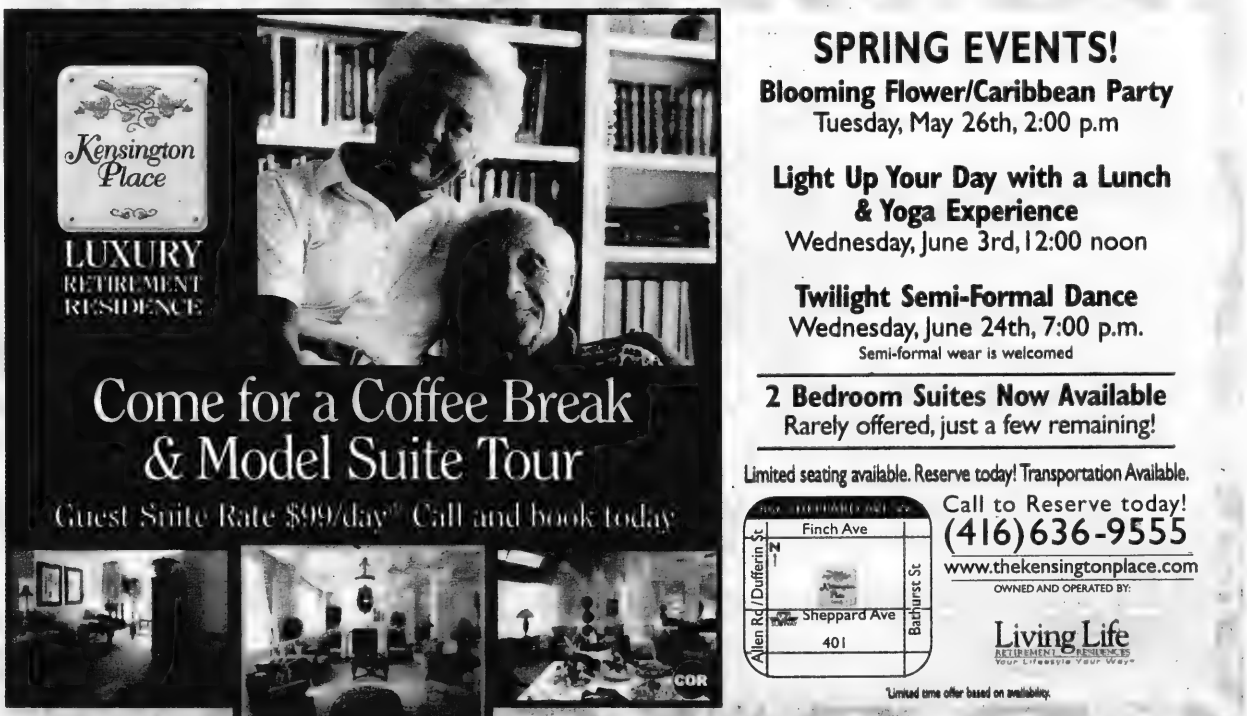
Kaufman said the Health Ministry sets aside $14.4 million annually to be shared among all students in faith-based schools for health-related disabilities, but it only spends about $4.5 million of that amount.

He believes the remaining $10 million would cover the cost of resources for students in faith-based schools who are affected by deafness, blindness and learning disabilities and can't access funding for necessary services from the Education Ministry.

Kaufman blames David Caplan, Ontario's health minister, for the situation. "His ministry of health controls the $14.4 million, which could be easily spread among the disabled children."

Walfish noted that children don't choose to be disabled, nor do they choose to grow up in a particular religion. "There is an element of responsibility on the government's part when it provides a program and does so in a discriminatory way. Government programs, like everything else, are subject to discrimination laws."

According to Kaufman, this case differs from one launched by parents of children with autism because, in this case, "the money is already there" and the therapies in question "are well-known, not experimental, and scientifically proven to be effective."



School project develops future philanthropists

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Project Give Back, a unique program for students in grades 4 and 5, has left an indelible mark on the students who participated in it, their teachers say.

Ellen Schwartz, a Grade 4 teacher at Eitz Chaim Day School, developed the project in her general studies class four years ago. The goal was to teach children empathy, compassion, philanthropy and communal responsibility, all of which require the efforts of both the home and the school. It has received rave reports from educators and charitable organizations.

The students participating in Project Give Back choose a charity and then learn to research information about their chosen charity, its mission and its activities. They then put the information into their own words.

Each student creates a visual presentation and a speech on the chosen charity and speaks about why that charity inspired him or her to try to help raise funds for the charity

"The children raise awareness for their chosen charity," Schwartz says.

The project, which closely follows the Ministry of Education's guidelines to enhance the grade 4/5 language arts program, has helped more than 160 different organizations, and many students have exceeded their teachers' expectations.

"The children have risen to the challenge," says Schwartz, who has experience and a passion for establishing charitable activities. She co-founded Jacob's Ladder in 1998, a charity named for her son, Jacob, who was born with Canavan disease, a severe neurodegenerative disorder.

The escalating success of the project is reflected in the expanding number of Hebrew and public schools that participate and the increasing number of teachers being trained for the next school year.

Schwartz told The CJN that more than 500 students in classes in Hebrew and public schools are now participating in Project Give Back, including Crestwood School, Eitz Chaim's Spring Farm and Viewmount branches, Netivot HaTorah Day School, United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tzedec campus, Leo Baeck Day School's south campus, and the Allenby and John Ross Roberston public schools.

"We hope to double the program in both public and Hebrew schools next year," Schwartz says. "I believe that the project develops character, builds confidence and life skills.

"We all know that if we give our children the proper tools, positive guidance and a belief in their accomplishments, the sky is the limit."

Schwartz's son Jacob visits the classes so that the students can see the source of her desire to help other children with special needs.

"The students ask well-thought-out questions about Jacob to learn how his day to day life differs from theirs, and they learn that even though he can't walk, talk, see, eat or even breathe easily, he can easily smile," Schwartz says.

"They learn the power of a smile, and actually see the contagious nature and impact a smile can have on others. Over the course of that one class, their attitudes are quickly transformed from fear to acceptance."

Project Give Back was launched with the help of several corporate sponsors, including Starbucks. It's operating in partnership with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, where individual donors can receive charitable tax receipts for directed gifts supporting Hebrew day schools.

For information and the complete list of charities chosen by the children, go to www.projectgiveback.com.

HAIRY DONORS: Students and a teacher at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus donated their hair to Locks of Love, a charity that provides hairpieces to disadvantaged children suffering from long-term medical hair loss, after growing their hair for many months in preparation for the mitzvah. They were joined by the daughter of one of the stylists. Pictured, from left, are Joelle Newman, Miranda Wiseman, Isabel Stern, Chloe Debow-Krawitz, Jordana Dipietro and teacher Sarah Lubelsky.

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4. To elect 10 Members to the Board of Directors.
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6. To transact such further and other business as may properly come before the meeting, or any adjournments thereof.

DATED AT TORONTO, THIS 13th DAY OF MAY, 2009
Sally Zigler, Secretary

Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation
La Fondation Culturelle Canada-Israel

Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation is thrilled to present Israel Makes Music on Tuesday, May 19th at 8 pm at the Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. West.

This quartet of highly talented young Israeli musicians are all America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarship winners and have been named Distinguished Musicians during their IDF service. There is little doubt that the young people you will hear at Israel Makes Music will be the superstars of tomorrow.

The chamber music concert programme will be in the format of a "guided concert", where the performers will provide an historical context for each composition, as well as an introduction to some of the musical themes.

This promises to be a wonderful evening of music, followed by a dessert reception, with an opportunity to meet these remarkable young musicians.

Tickets are $20, and are available for ordering through Ticketweb www.ticketweb.ca or 1.888.222.6608 or through the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation office at 416.932.2260.

On May 19, 2009 (8pm), The Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation Presents

Tickets $20, available at www.ticketweb.ca or 1-888-222-6608 or from CICF at 416-932-2260

Mayor thanks Jews for contributions to city

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Speaking in front of a group of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto staff and volunteers, Toronto Mayor David Miller shared his thoughts and strategies last week on ways to "ensure the city succeeds, and most of all how we ensure that nobody gets left behind."

About 100 people gathered May 4 for an intimate lecture in a Forest Hill home for Part 2 of the federation's annual speaker series called the Invitation of Invitations.

Before Miller spoke, Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, the UJA Federation Campaign 2010 co-chairs, briefly discussed the campaign and boasted that it managed to raise about $65 million this year. (Last year's drive raised $66 million.)

Miller made sure to acknowledge the efforts of UJA Federation and the Jewish community for their commitment to community-building in Toronto.

"I've always admired the federation, because it helps build community and it helps build a city where everybody is valued," Miller said.

"I want to say, 'Thank you.' In a city like Toronto… we don't succeed unless everyone has a real chance, and that is what the projects of the federation do, to work so everyone has a real chance."

Miller spoke about Toronto's economic development strategy, called the Agenda for Prosperity.

"It passed council unanimously a couple of years ago, and I'm pleased that it did, because in these extremely uncertain times, you need a clear strategy," he said.

"Quite famously, earlier in this term of council, we couldn't get agreement on when to break for dinner. So to pass a document like the strategy for Toronto's future success unanimously, I think, spoke to the real depth of the strategy."

David Miller stands between UJA Federation Campaign 2010 co-chairs Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum. [Ruxandra Petolescu photo]

He said that the strategy, which was developed by business, labour, academics and members of the non-profit sector, has four principles.

The first, Pro-active Toronto, says that the city government should be an activist one. Global Toronto, the second principle, acknowledges Toronto's multicultural population.

"We have to view ourselves as part of the broader world," Miller said.

Third, Creative Toronto addresses the the idea that future jobs in the city should come from the "creative application of knowledge," such as manufacturing and research jobs.

The fourth principle, One Toronto, speaks to the value of social justice.

"We don't want to grow the economy just to benefit a few. We want to grow the economy so that every Torontonian benefits," Miller said.

He said that in an effort to help both the city and the business sector, a new tax incentive – an idea adopted from American cities – was introduced.

"The basic idea is that if… you are prepared to build on [polluted industrial land] in a way that will support certain kinds of jobs – biotechnology and other modern kinds of jobs – you will get a significant tax break on that site."

When it comes to helping people, Miller said that improving the city's employment rate has become part of the focus of the city's social services department.

"The first idea is helping people get employment and get a chance to live a dignified life," he said.

He added that the development of environmental industries can help spur growth in the city.

"When you do the right thing for the environment, you are also doing the right thing for business, because what is bad for business is waste, what is bad for government is waste as well, and what is bad for the environment is waste."

Miller added that as the chair of C40, a group of cities fighting climate change, he is encouraged not only by projects in Toronto, but around the world.

The mayor said that there is a rapidly growing city in Texas that paid to insulate every home in its new housing developments in order to save on energy expenditures.

"This initiative saved them $300 million. While the population doubled in this city, the energy consumption stayed the same," he said.

"It created hundreds of jobs, creating all the insulation, and it had a very significant positive impact."

He said that although this is not an initiative Toronto would adopt, he is trying to think along those lines.

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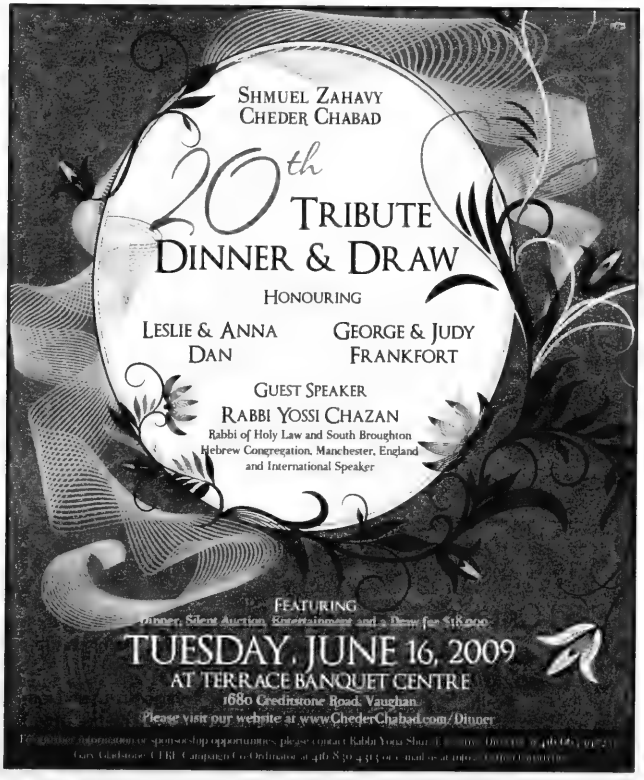

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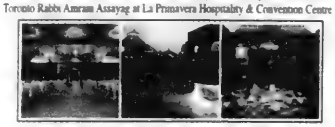

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A Sephardi heritage treasure in Alberta

By RABBI YEHIEL BENAYON

Permanently housed in the University of Alberta's library is a treasure trove of Jewish North African heritage, known as the Bension Collection of Sephardic Manuscripts and Texts.

In it one finds all sorts of correspondence between North African rabbis regarding matters of community, of ritual, of legal, personal and financial status. There are entire biblical texts, yet-to-be-printed religious and mystical works in manuscript, liturgical texts, as well as piyutim – poetic songs of praise.

Among these, are 100-year-old documents written (or at least signed) by the greatest rabbinic names, names remembered and venerated today by North African Jewry. In them, one can also readily find, brilliantly illustrated, the lives and times, the tensions, the joys, and the humanity of the period. This extensive collection represents the 400 years after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

How such a collection came to be and how it came to the University of Alberta provide a classic case of fact being stranger than fiction.

Dr. Ariel Bension (1880-1932) was a Jerusalemite whose family had originated in the ancient city of Fez, Morocco. His early education came from his father Rav Yehoshua, a member of the mystical Jerusalem group (still in existence today) known as the Holy Community of Beth El.

Through A Sephardi Window

Bension's later education took him to western Europe, to the universities of Germany and Switzerland, where he earned a doctorate in philosophy and Semitic languages. He subsequently served as a community rabbi in Serbia, then for the World Zionist Organization and on behalf of Keren Hayesod as liaison to the Sephardi communities of India, Iraq, Indochina, North Africa, Egypt, Spain, Portugal and even South America.

He was a communal worker, Zionist, scholar, author and a lifelong collector of rare books, letters and manuscripts.

When his first wife passed away, he married Ida Siegler of Montreal, and that's how the Canadian connection began.

Bension himself died at the early age of 52, and Ida Siegler came into possession of her husband's large collection. In time, she sold parts of his collection to other collectors of and dealers in antique books. The segment described here finally came to rest in the library at the University of Alberta.

Some 20 years ago, when I first became aware of the Bension collection's existence, I – being of similar descent – recall being simply overwhelmed. Not only was I dazzled at the contents and importance of this collection, but here, I believed, was something else, something immense in terms of its spiritual and magical fortitude.

In the early '50s, in order to make aliyah or settle somewhere perceived as safer, North African Jews began to leave their host country of Morocco. At that time, I can assure the reader that in the minds of the Moroccans, Canada was a virtual nonentity. Certainly, even as a cold and remote destination, Canada was not one of the countries in consideration.

But meanwhile, there already existed in this country of ours – for at least a decade – the sole literary depository of our culture, of our sanctity and of our heritage and history, the holy words of faith of our fathers. Fascinating!

Could they not have been the invisible beacon that beckoned to their children: "Yes, go forth out of your land, the one that has hosted you and come hither. For in this long and wearisome journey of Galut [Diaspora], your next and final stop must still be Canada. And we, your ancestors, are here already, in order to greet you and to ease your journey."

Points of Suspension makes us remember

By JUSTIN DAHAN

Every year, the University of Ottawa holds an exhibition for students graduating with a bachelor of fine arts. One of the students participating in this year's exhibit was Toba Cooper.

On Campus

Cooper decided, like many artists do, to let her art speak passionately about something that's important to her. She settled on a piece that would remind the world of the horrors of the Holocaust. The result was a compilation of interviews that were shown on four different screens. The project combined audio and still pictures of survivors with video clips of them talking about their personal experiences.

Toba had four child survivors – Fanya Fauner, George Berman, Magda Hilf and Judy Cohen – talk about the cattle cars and how they arrived at Auschwitz. She also had them speak about a moment of humanity they shared in the camps.

The final result was a work that lasted 14 minutes and 25 seconds. Cooper had patrons moving from screen to screen to watch the different stories. She dubbed this fine piece of art Points of Suspension.

Cooper spent a whole year travelling to Montreal and Toronto, as well as around Ottawa, to interview survivors for her piece, all this on top of a heavy course load. She ended up interviewing a total of nine survivors, but she could only include four in her piece.

She spoke about the difficulty of having to select which interviews to include in Points of Suspension. "It was difficult for me to have to choose what material to use from my nine incredible interviews, but I had to base my decisions on my time constraints," she said.

The exhibit was seen by more than 200 people on opening day, with up to 30 people seeing it at a time – very impressive, considering the size of the smallish room in which it was located.

The exhibit also included a sign-in sheet. One of the notes left was by Andrea Fitzpatrick, an assistant professor in U of O's department of visual arts, who wrote, "Congratulations on this amazing, serious, moving, amazing, important work of such humanity and respect."

On a campus where Jewish events have occasionally been met with unwelcome protests, Cooper's piece conveyed an important message without meeting the same reaction. The ability she had to effectively get her message out is an indication of a great artist with a message that cannot be ignored.

Cooper's art not only educated its mostly non-Jewish audience about the Holocaust, it also served as a reminder to Jewish students. One Jewish student wrote in the sign-in book, "I'm Jewish. My great-aunt died in Auschwitz. Her name was Clara and she was 23 years old. Your piece touched my heart. I'm reminded of just how lucky I am."

Points of Suspension had an important impact on everyone who went to see it, both those who have ties to the Holocaust and those who don't. It's a great example of how art can educate and how it's possible to make a difference while doing something you love.

Jewish Life

Avoiding Shabbats of destruction

Class Act
By Daniel Held

Our seders are filled with questions and commentary, insights and discussion. Weeks before Passover, my family begins preparing by reading and studying. Despite our hours of preparation, it was well into our first seder and well past bedtime for my little four-year-old cousin when he made one of the most insightful comments of the night.

Knowing that we don't turn lights on and off during Shabbat or Yom Tov, he said, "If these lights stay on all night, you'll waste a lot of energy."

Al Gore could not have said it better.

In six days, God created the world, and on the seventh, God rested. Our Shabbat is meant to follow God's example by refraining from creative work and retreating into a simpler time of family, community and relaxation. While stepping back from creation, however, our Shabbat practices sometimes fall into the trap of destruction.

In our zeal to observe Shabbat, we sometimes neglect to consider the environmental impact of our actions. Because we can't turn them on and off, we often leave lights and air-conditioning units on throughout Shabbat. Because we don't use the dishwasher, many use disposable dishes.

Shabbat observance and environmental considerations need not be mutually exclusive. By thinking creatively, we can reunite our Shabbat practices with the primal Shabbat of creation (and likely save some money along the way).

I'd like to offer some practical suggestions to help make our Shabbat observance more environmentally conscious.

Use timers. The dining room light doesn't need to be on at 3 a.m., and living room lights may not be needed on a sunny Shabbat afternoon. Installing timers and anticipating when lights need to be on and off can drastically reduce energy consumption. The same can be said for a crock pot and *plata* (hot plate). Do they need to be on all of Shabbat afternoon, or can a timer turn them off after lunch?

Replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents can save a significant amount of energy – especially on lights that stay on throughout Shabbat, such as bathroom lights.

I've been to far too many Shabbat meals that use disposable dishes. While many families don't run their dishwasher on Shabbat, washing dishes by hand or loading the dishwasher and waiting to turn it on after Shabbat offer good alternatives to throwing away plastic plates, cutlery and cups. Similarly, try using cloth napkins that can be laundered rather than paper napkins that need to be thrown away. (My mother tells me they also look much nicer.)

Before Shabbat, make sure that computers are turned off. Similarly, there's no need for a cellphone or laptop to charge throughout Shabbat. Before lighting Shabbat candles, a simple sweep of the house to unplug electronics can have an impact on energy consumption.

Store leftovers in reusable containers. A few plastic containers can save space in the fridge, be heated up in the microwave and washed up quickly to be ready for next week's leftovers.

My four-year-old cousin has grown up with an enviable environmental consciousness. His education has endowed him with an ability to think about the broader impact of his actions – a skill that is still missing in much of our community. At a Yom Ha'atzamut celebration last week, I cringed when soft drinks were served in Styrofoam cups, and when I drive by our communal institutions late at night and see the internal lights left on, I realize how much work needs to be done.

It's time for our community – both in our homes and our institutions – to rethink our environmental policies and find the meeting point between our tradition and the sustainability of our practices.

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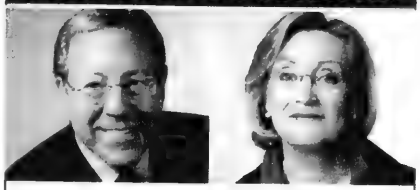

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By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Rumours and hoaxes, Part 1

Did you just get that e-mail about the company that's decided to boycott Israel? Or did someone message you about what that anti-Semitic actor said? Or did you hear about that politician who trivialized the Holocaust? Actually, those events may never have happened. You may be on the receiving end of an Internet hoax.

I regularly get e-mails warning me not to patronize a certain multinational corporation because it has just adopted some odious policy toward Israel. After a bit of investigating, the rumour often turns out to be just that. Israel and world Jewry have enough real enemies without anyone maligning innocent organizations or individuals. And when you forward something that's not true, you upset friends for nothing and provoke them to fight injustices that simply aren't there. So this week and next, I'll tell you how to check out whether that accusation really is true.

You can spot a hoax in your e-mail in-box even before you read what it has to say. Here are a few tips from the Urban Legends section of About.com.

• Look for the telltale phrase, "Forward this to everyone you know!" The more urgent the plea, the more suspect the message.

• Look for statements such as "this is not a hoax." They typically mean the opposite of what they say.

• Watch for overly emphatic language, as well as frequent use of UPPERCASE LETTERS and multiple exclamation points!!!!!!! **[tinyurl.com/hoax01]**

OK, once you've discarded those e-mails, you are left with some that seem plausible but you're just not sure. Following are some examples.

• U.S. President Barack Obama authorized funds for the immigration of Hamas refugees to the United States. *False*. As TruthOrFiction.com clarified, in January 2009, Obama approved an emergency contribution of $20.3 million solely for "urgent relief efforts in the Gaza Strip." **[tinyurl.com/hoax03]**

• Nike shoes ran an ad showing an apparent suicide bombing in Israel. The text of the ad next to Nike's trademarked Swoosh reads, "You may not survive the blast. But your shoes will." *False*. The Anti-Defamation League has an entire section on its website geared to debunking rumours and calls the e-mail a forgery. That so-called ad "was not authorized by Nike and has no affiliation with the company." **[tinyurl.com/hoax02]**

• Actor Angelina Jolie hates the State of Israel and wants its destruction together "with those people." *False*. I turned to boycottwatch.org to set the record straight on this baseless one. **[tinyurl.com/hoax04]**

• Iran has passed a law requiring Jews and Christians to wear badges identifying them as religious minorities. *False*. For this one, I consulted snopes.com, which reprints the original accusation, and explains how it is untrue. **[tinyurl.com/hoax05]** Snopes has the most comprehensive rumour investigations.

I should point out that snopes.com, truthorfiction.com and boycottwatch.org deal with all types of rumours, such as the one about a Wendy's fast-food outlet patron who found a human finger in her chili. *False*: the woman pleaded guilty to placing the finger in her food in hopes of a huge settlement. **[tinyurl.com/hoax06]** However, there seems to be inordinate number of rumours about Israel and Jews out there. You can find them by doing a simple search at those sites.

One more site worth mentioning is Hoaxbusters, which was created by the U.S. government's Department of Energy. This site is no longer being updated, but you can still consult an archived version with sections on the history of hoaxes, the risk and cost of hoaxes and what to do if you receive a hoax letter. **[tinyurl.com/hoax07]**

Sometimes mistakes occur and the party involved takes responsibility, apologizes and corrects the wrong. Unfortunately, the story often doesn't end there. Angry e-mails fail to take note of the apology. A few years ago, an Israeli-based travel agency received a letter from the Marriott hotel chain designating Jerusalem as an "occupied Palestinian area." E-mails went out calling for a boycott. Mariott corrected the error and acknowledged that it was remiss in not sending a timely letter of apology to the offended Israeli travel agent. But who knows how many accusatory e-mails are still travelling through cyberspace? **[tinyurl.com/hoax08]**

Keep that in mind before you forward that piece of e-mail!!!!!!

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Teen volunteers recognized for helping others

Compiled by CJN Staff

Volunteers aren't paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless, 16-year-old Jonah Babins said at Chabad Youth Network's recent first evening of recognition for the volunteers of Teens For the Community (TFC).

TFC is a group of teenagers whose primary goal is to assist the underprivileged in their local community. They meet weekly throughout the school year to plan and co-ordinate events for the Jewish community and other organizations in the GTA, with special emphasis on children and the elderly.

Their activities have included visits to retirement homes, basketball tournaments to raise money for a widowed mom in the neighbourhood, bowl-a-thons to benefit underprivileged children and a game of laser tag for younger kids.

To help others, TFC volunteers commit to consistency in attendance and participation, regardless of school schedules or extracurricular activities.

The volunteers found that the program gave them self-satisfaction, boosted their self-esteem, developed their leadership skills and fine-tuned their creativity in a practical way, while having simple fun and socializing in a healthy and productive environment.

"Although TFC has given us the opportunity to build necessary skills and learn about the world around us, it has also given members... a chance to make new friends. TFC has a welcoming environment," said recognition evening MC Erica Melamed, a Grade 9 sudent.

At the event, the volunteers were acknowledged by rabbis, parents and friends and member of Parliament Peter Kent presented them with certificates for their volunteerism.

"The volunteers and staff from the TFC program display an unbridled dedication to consistency and commitment. It is truly remarkable that these teens would meet regularly on a weekly basis throughout... the school year, all for the betterment of the greater community," Kent said.

Referring to the future of the group, TFC president Josh Freedman said, "The vision down the road for TFC is to establish different branches all over the community, and to spread our influence to help an ever wider range of people."

From left are Teens For the Community volunteers Jonah Babins, Ben Babins, Lidor Cohen, Adam Fishman.

TFC operates under the guidance of its founder, Rabbi Shmuli Nachlas of Chabad Youth Network. Rabbi Shmuli, as he is known, also established the Torah for Teens Jewish high school program, offers counseling and guidance to teens on many issues and, along with his wife, Chani, runs CYN Hebrew School for elementary age children.

For more information about TFC, please call Chabad Youth network at 905-889-7582 or visit www.JewishYouth.ca

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UJA Federation
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Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Michael Chan, left, recently presented the June Callwood Awards for Outstanding Achievement for Voluntarism in Ontario as part of the province's celebration of National Volunteer Week, April 19 to 25. Among the 20 groups and individuals who received honours was Reuben Cipin of Toronto, right, who successfully lobbied for government issued photo identification for people who don't drive.

Activist gets volunteer award for ID card drive

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Local activist Reuben Cipin was one of 20 individuals and groups to receive Ontario's 2009 June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism at a ceremony held April 24 at St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto.

Cipin, 81, is visually impaired and volunteers with the Toronto advocacy committee of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

The June Callwood Award – named for the late journalist, author and social activist – recognizes exceptional leadership, innovation, creativity among volunteers, and Cipin won the award for his efforts to ensure that individuals who don't drive are able to obtain a government-issued photo identification card.

At the award ceremony, which took place during National Volunteer Week, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Michael Chan reflected on the "wonderful commitment of our volunteers – and how much we all benefit from them.

"The Government of Ontario believes that volunteerism is a very valuable part of life in Ontario."

In presenting the award, Chan said that the award is for "people who have demonstrated their care and bonding with the tribe of humanity. Ontario is a better place because of all that you have done.".

Cipin was born in Glace Bay, N.S. He attended Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., and graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1956. He then practised law in Edmonton, but left his firm in 1970, at age 42, after suffering a heart attack.

He worked for the Alberta Justice Department for 22 years. He served as president of Beth Shalom Synagogue and was active with the Edmonton Talmud Torah.

He moved to Toronto in 1997 to follow his five children. He resides at 2 Neptune Drive, which in 2004 was renamed the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community.

Since 2002, he has served as elected president of the council of the building, which is a Baycrest Property Project Residence.

Monty Mazin, chair of public relations and the program committee at the building, said that "Reuben's perseverance, commitment and dedication to all those who do not drive paid off with the passage of the Ontario Photo Card Act in 2008.

"Reuben is a cherished friend and I can speak on behalf of the entire mishpachah at 2 Neptune when I say that we have one of the most knowledgeable volunteer advocates that any senior residence could wish to have."

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy 95th birthday Harry Katz, husband of the late Sarah (photo on left side), Holocaust survivors. Lots of love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Happy 70th birthday Arnold Bobkin! Love, Dina, Jamie and Lauren.

Sheila (Bick) & Sidney Coplevitch, congratulations on your 60th wedding anniversary. We are honoured to celebrate this milestone occasion with you. Love Robin, Cheryl and Mark.

Mazel tov Talia Skapinker & David Jube, who will be married on Aug. 2. With love Joel & Mindy Skapinker, Arlene & Patrick Jube.

Mazel tov to Jacob Petroff on your bar mitzvah. With all our love from Sara, Steven, Avi & Nate.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** banner!

JNF
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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
• Features • Heebonics
• Breaking News • Contests
• Past Issues and much more!

What's New Deadlines. NOTE HOLIDAY DEADLINES. Monday, May 11, is the deadline for the May 21 issue and Wednesday, May 13, is the deadline for the May 28 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

Sunday, May 17

FENG SHUI JEWISH WAY

Architect **Richie Idels** speaks about the Chinese art of placement. Can it work in a Jewish home? 7:30 p.m., The House, 469 Eglinton W. Suggested donation $10.

Monday, May 18

WESTMOUNT SHUL

Westmount Shul and Learning Centre dedicates a new sefer Torah at 1:30, to be used by the Westmount Youth Minyan. Funds raised during the campaign will support the Westmount Youth Program. The event coincides with the opening of the Learning Centre at 10 Disera Dr., Unit 250. Shabbat morning services continue to be held at Westmount Collegiate on New Westminster.

Tuesday, May 19

PRIDE OF ISRAEL CONCERT

Celebrating Israel concert features the Renanim Youth Singers. Special guest appearance by Nirkoda Israeli Dancers. Silent auction at 6:15, concert following. Refreshments. Advance tickets only, 416-226-0111, ext. 10. Members, seniors and children, $10, non-members 18-64, $15.

ISRAEL MAKES MUSIC

Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, Toronto chapter, special concert by award-winning Israeli performers – pianist **Gili Loftus**, violinist **Hagar Maoz**, oboist **Natti Amrany** and cellist **Bernice Keshet**. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W., 8 p.m. Tickets $20, www.ticketweb.ca, or phone 1-888-222-6608 or 416-932-2260.

SMART INVESTING

Smart investing: safeguard your financial future. Beth Tzedec Sisterhood program. Panel discussion with **Martine Celej**, **Sue Eagleson**, **Shelley Levine**, **Victoria Winter**. Refreshments. 7:30 p.m., Nathan & Roey Hurwich boardroom. $5 donation to Beth Tzedec Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum. 416-781-3511.

EXERCISE AT BAYCREST

Move Your Body, Stretch Your Mind. Join **Janet Murchison**, occupational therapist of Baycrest's Brain Health Centre-Mood Clinic, and **Judy Knight**, yoga instructor. Free. Dress comfortably. 1:30-3 p.m., Baycrest Hospital. Register at 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

MAKING MARRIAGE GREAT

Jewish Family Institute presents **Rabbi Aryeh Pamensky** on "How to Make Your Good Marriage Great." First of five Tuesday evening sessions. Village Shul, 1072 Eglinton Ave. W. 416-785-1107, ext. 204.

Wednesday, May 20

YOM YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbi Yoel Glick speaks on "Uniting the Higher and the Lower (the heavenly and the earthly) Jerusalem." Holy Blossom, 7:30. Call **Deborah Spiegel**, 416-789-3291, ext. 239.

COUNCIL HOUSE PARTY

A card party is being held at Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. Thornhill Study Group of NCJWC, Toronto section, invites card groups or single players to games of bridge, mah jong, kaluki or other board/card games. Refreshments and prizes. 1-5 p.m. Tickets $18. 416-633-5100.

Continued on page 23

Baycrest
Aging, Innovation & the Mind THE SPEAKER SERIES
Nutrition and Brain Function:
The relationship between your diet and your mind
Are you really what you eat? Find out about the different ways food can affect your brain and the impact your food choices may have on the way your brain ages. This talk could change the way you shop for groceries!
>>> HOST
Charmaine Gooden
Contributing Editor
Zoomer Magazine
>>> FEATURED SCIENTIST
Dr. Carol Greenwood
Senior Scientist,
Kunin-Lunenfeld Applied Research Unit (KLARU)
Tuesday, May 26th, 2009 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Winter Garden ~ Baycrest ~ 3560 Bathurst Street, Toronto
Free admission and parking
Limited seating. RSVP by Tuesday, May 19th
416.785.2500 ext 6218 or
e-mail: speakerseries@baycrest.org
www.baycrest.org

An Evening for Mothers and Daughters
Featuring World Renowned Author Naomi Ragen
Keynote Address followed by Dessert Reception and Book Signing. Book Signing sponsored by: Chapters Indigo
May 25th, 2009
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Sephardic Kehila Centre
7026 Bathurst St.
Ticket Prices:
• $36/Student • $75/Ticket • $140/Pair
Tax receipts will be issued for the maximum amount allowable

Naomi Ragen
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The Marcos Sobrenno Society for Jewish Education and Camping

What's New

Continued from page 22

PENCER BRAIN TRUST

"Simply Chic" raises funds for Pencer Brain Trust to provide multidisciplinary care, treatment and support for brain tumour patients and their families. 7:30 p.m. Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex. Call 416-923-2999, e-mail info@pencerbraintrust.com.

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Award-winning fibre artist, beader and quilter **Anne Marie Desaulniers** talks about how the Internet influences her art in "Tales of a Technique Junkie." Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 8 p.m. $5. Guests welcome.

Other News

HOMOSEXUALITY

Rabbi Cory Weiss leads a discussion of traditional sources and modern ideas on Judaism, homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Temple Har Zion, May 14 and 21, 7:30. Non-temple members $5.

DIABETES

Endocrinologist **Dr. Rob Silver** answers questions on diabetes. Door prize. Thursday, May 21, 8 pm. Wheelchair accessible. Admission $1. Information 416-363-0177, ext. 7403.

'WHY CHOOSE YOU'

Ken Abeer and **Ian Chamandy**, of Blueprint Business Architecture, speak on "Why Choose You? In seven words or less." A UJA Israeli Forum Business Cabinet event. Dessert reception. Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m., Lipa Green Building. $10 in advance, $20 at the door. RSVP ggomperts@ujafed.org; www.ujaevents.con/registration/whychoose; or call 416-631-5707.

THE HOUSE PRESENTS

First annual TGIS (Thank Goodness Its Shabbat) interactive Kabalat Shabbat and dinner experience, May 22, 6:30 p.m. Join The House for good food, wine, song and friends. Shaarei Tefillah. Before May 14, $18; after, $25. 416-482-9025; shabbat@thehousetoronto.co; www.thehousetoronto.com.

SHUL ARCHITECTURE

Corey Keeble, curator at the ROM department of world cultures speaks on "The History of Synagogue Architecture from Medieval to Renaissance to Modern." Shaarei Shomayim Brotherhood and entertainment and cultural committee, May 21, 8 pm. Sisterhood Hall. Coffee and cake. Members free, guests $2.

FOLK DANCING

Kehillat Shaarei Torah Sisterhood presents an evening of women's international folk dancing, with **Sandy Starkman**. All proceeds to Or Shalom V'Chesed Jerusalem Open Kitchen Food Distribution Widows and Orphans Fund. Women only. Thursday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. $10. 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

SEEDS OF SUN

Mattan Klein and Seeds of Sun, a leading Israeli jazz ensemble, marks the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem. Holy Blossom, May 21, 8 p.m. Tickets $25. Call **Mari Lynn Rusak**, 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

PLAY BALL!

B'nai Brith Modified D Division baseball team needs players. About 18 games for the season, half on Wednesday evenings. Players 20-50 years old. E-mail lippyzippy9@hotmail.com.

SCHOLAR WEEKEND

May 22-24, Beth Tzedec. **Stephen Berk**, Shabbat dinner and lecture, "Russia Resurgent, Shabbat: Jews in Peril?" Luncheon lecture, "The Summer of '49: Israel's first year." May 24, breakfast lecture, 10 a.m., "The New American Government and the State of Israel." Prepaid reservations 416-781-3511.

WEIZMANN SCIENCE

Weizmann scientist **Brian Berkowitz** discusses water, energy and the environment. May 21, 7:30 p.m., Park Hyatt Hotel, Queen's Park Ballroom. Dessert reception, dietary laws observed. $36. Reserve 416-733-9220.

CONCERT IN HAMILTON

Beth Jacob Synagogue presents Cantors Do Broadway, featuring cantors **Eric Moses** of Beth Sholom in Toronto, **Ben Silverberg** of Shaar Shalom in Thornhill, **Marshall Loomer** of Beth David Synagogue in Toronto, **Laura Wolfson** of Hamilton's Temple Anshe Sholom and host **Ben Sharpe**. Silent auction of Jewish art. May 21, doors open 6:30 p.m.. Tickets: adults $25, seniors and students $18. Call 905-522-1351, or office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca.

HOLOCAUST MEMOIR

Ten Green Bottles is a play based on an award-winning family memoir by **Vivian Kaplan**. Staged by Te-Amim Music Theatre. For schoolchildren Grade 8 and up. May 14-24, Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC. Tickets, $20. Call 416-924-6211, visit www.milesnadaljcc.ca. Information at website: Te-Amim.com. School bookings, call 416-642-0430. Rush seats at door.

BOOK OF SAMUEL

Shaarei Shomayim **Rabbi Chaim Strauchler** speaks about the Book of Samuel, from Chapter 16. Monday mornings, 9:30 a.m., May 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22, Tuesday evenings May 19, June 2, 9, 16, 28.

JIS OF GREATER TORONTO

Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto, 416-635-5600, www.jewishtoronto.com, or jinfo@ujafed.org.

New to Toronto? Know someone who is? Shalom Toronto welcomes new residents with a warm greeting and a gift basket.

Moving? JIS can help find a basement apartment, room or shared space.

One-stop Jewish shopping. Info on community events, holidays, shuls, camps, kosher restaurants and more.

Having a baby? Know someone who is? JIS-UJA Federation welcomes your baby with a package, including a personalized certificate, picture frame and more.

FOR SENIORS

Association of Jewish Seniors presents representatives from Community Care Access Centre discussing "Home care and Independent Living." May 21, 9:30 a.m. Shaarei Shomayim Brotherhood Hall. Light breakfast. RSVP **Tammy** 416-635-2860.

Bernard Betel Centre needs friendly visitors. You don't have to be a superhero – just be yourself. 1-2 hours a week – choose the day. Call **Naomi**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group Tuesdays, 10 a.m. Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell. Information 416-630-9444.

BAYCREST

Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library needs volunteers for circulation, assisting special projects and helping online searches. Good English and computer skills necessary. Training provided. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Wagman Centre outing: The Sound of Music at Princess of Wales Theatre. May 20. $30 members, $40 guests. Includes transportation, admission. Bring lunch or lunch money. Leaves Wagman Centre 12:30 p.m. Register at service desk at Wagman Centre.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Fridays 11:30 a.m. Shabbat in the Atrium. Songs, stories, challah – 15-minute Shabbat celebration for all ages. Free.

Jewish Discovery Museum, Hebrew Picnic. Music, puppets, games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m., Newborn-4 years old, with adult.

Shabbat Club. Children 3-5 years old. Prepare for Shabbat with songs, stories, games and crafts. Fridays 9:45-11:15 a.m..

Conversation Café, offers newcomers a chance to practise English in a social environment. Joint program with JIAS. Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 pm. Call 416-636-1880.

JVIA network connects active vision-impaired adults. New group hopes to establish a recreational and physical education program, outings and activities. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Film talks Sundays with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. May 17 topic "Israeli Views." $9 includes film clips, coffee, bagel breakfast. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org.

Foreign and Familiar, photography exhibit by **Mircea Popescu**. Until June 15, Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. 924-6211, ext. 133. visualarts@mnjcc.org.

Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards. 21st annual celebration of excellence in contemporary Canadian writing. Book signing follows awards ceremony. May 25, 8 p.m. Al Green Theatre. 416-636-1880, ext. 352, or ababins@kofflerarts.org.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Robert Kushner	Apr 25/09	170 Red Maple Road
Judith Gluck	Apr 26/09	30 Greenfield Avenue
Harry Kaplan	Apr 26/09	23 Krieger Crescent
Peter Draimin	Apr 25/09	400 Walmer Road
Felice Gropper	Apr 28/09	11 Ridelle Avenue
Max Wolnerman	Apr 26/09	115 Antibes Drive
Arnold Sprince	Apr 24/09	3003 La Mirage Drive
Aurelia(Aranka) Friedlic	Apr 26/09	3560 Bathurs Street
Louis Brockman	Apr 28/09	4001 Walmer Road
Judy Burstein	Apr 29/09	3900 Yonge Street
Leslie Feldman	Apr 29/09	234 Strathallan Wood
Pearl Batcher	Apr 30/09	18 Cedarcroft Blvd.
Harry Kronis	May 1/09	18 Cedarcroft Blvd.
Norma Lepofsky	May 1/09	182 Old Forest Hill Rd.
Ida Gold	May 2/09	2121 Bathurst Street
Shirley Wolfson	May 2/09	78 Waterloo Avenue

HEDREW BASIC FUNERAL

Ben Epstein	Apr 28/09	306 Finch Avenue, East
Jerry Bijmolt	May 2/09	20 Alcaine Court

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Gertner, Regina	April 23/09	8 Hearthstone Cres
Babb, Florence Tilly	April 23/09	10 Torresdale Ave
Kalnitsky, Rachel	April 24/09	3560 Bathurst St
Stern, Miriam	April 24/09	7440 Bathurst St
Cohen, Sadie	April 24/09	
Schwartz, Murray	April 24/09	2 Covington Court
Vadas, Jeno	April 26/09	205 Cummer Ave
Gould, Hilda	April 25/09	1121 Steeles Ave. W.
Abramovich, Michel	April 24/09	63 Springhead Gardens
Wander, Rose	April 26/09	17 Sandale Gardens
Sendrovich, Isaac	April 27/09	Private
Grossman, Jack	April 27/09	18 Alexandra Wood
Rumack, Lewis	April 28/09	60 Baycrest Ave
Zetser, Slava	April 28/09	Private
Melul, Alegria	April 29/09	155 Marlee Ave
Fried, Rose	April 29/09	151 York Downs Dr
Zion, Irene Naomi Eleonora	April 30/09	14 Rothsay Rd
Alexander, Adrienne	April 28/09	Private
Mogyoros, Alejandro Sandor	April 25/09	8 Christine Crt

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
STANLEY SMITHER ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17, at 11:00 a.m.
Dawes Road Cemetery
Beth David Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ZEV KNIZNIK ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17th, at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Labour Zionist Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend
Luncheon following.

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
BERTHA LAPIDUS ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17TH
2:00 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Dufferin St. N. of Major Mackenzie
Temple Sinai Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
J. HAROLD MOSOFF ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17
1:30 p.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
T.I.B.A. Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SYLVIA TEITELBAUM ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 17th
11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Beth Emeth Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ALEC ROSSMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 24, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.
The B'nai Israel Cemetery
120 Bunting Rd., St. Catharines
Relatives and friends are invited to attend
Luncheon following.

JACK GROSSMAN ז"ל

On *April 27, 2009* passed away in Toronto with family by his side. Jack was the beloved husband of Hilda for 58 years, a loving father to Sharon & Meir Lazar, Leonard & Sally, Ralph & Risa and Eli & Barbara Grossman. He was a dear brother of Ben Grossman, Martha Sud and Lillian Rose. He will also be deeply missed by his 16 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

As a young man Jack served in the Royal Canadian Airforce as an Aerial Photographer in World War II. Upon returning to Canada he founded what would later become Billy Bee Honey, *"Canada's Favourite Honey"*. As President of Billy Bee his commitment to his job led him through his entire life.

A special thank you to all the nursing staff and doctors at Sunnybrook Hospital for their support and care, and to Oscar David his caregiver, who took special care of Jack during the past 3 years. Memorial donations may be made to *Hatzalah*, 416-398-2300.

"He will be forever in our hearts"

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What's On at the koffler

kofflerkultura

EXHIBITION

Russia: Beyond Utopia

On view through June 30
Loggia Gallery, Koffler Centre of the Arts
4588 Bathurst Street

The Canadian debut of vibrant images of post-Communist Russia by acclaimed New York-based photographer **Andrew Moore**.

Presented as part of the CONTACT Toronto Photography Festival

CONTACT

Andrew Moore, *Red Piano, Camp Artek, Russia, 2003*

KOFFLER 20s&30s

Arts Salon - Russified!

Thursday, May 14, 8 PM
The Rivoli | 334 Queen Street West | $12

Live art, music, literature, and film with author and filmmaker **David Bezmozgis**, singer-songwriter **Alla Kadysh** and award-winning poet **Rafi Aaron**.

Presented together with Zeek: A Journal of Jewish Thought and Culture

SCREENING

A Touch Away

Israeli mini-series screenings over 4 nights

Tuesdays, 7 PM | May 19 & 26, June 2 & 9
Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue (at St. George St)
$10 each screening | $35 Series Pass

A Romeo and Juliet story set amidst a culture clash with the arrival of secular family from Russia to an Orthodox neighbourhood of Tel Aviv.

Made possible in part with the support of The Mifgash program and the Israeli Forum together with Kolel and Hillel of Greater Toronto

KOFFLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA 2008-09 SEASON

From Russia with Love

Sunday, May 31, 7 PM
Toronto Centre for the Arts | 5040 Yonge Street | Tickets: $20 ($10 students)

An evening of string orchestra gems from some of Russia's greatest composers: **Arensky**, **Shostakovich**, **Tchaikovsky**, and more, under the direction of **Jacques Israelievitch**.

Support for Koffler Chamber Orchestra is generously provided by Leslie Dan & Family

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21ST ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WRITING

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT, **HOWARD ENGEL**, PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR OF BEST-SELLING MYSTERY NOVELS.

BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR
The Canadian Jewish News Award
Peter C. Newman, *Izzy: The Passionate Life and Turbulent Times of Izzy Asper, Canada's Media Mogul* (Harper Collins Canada)

FICTION
The Beatrice and Martin Fischer Award
Ami Sands Brodoff, *The White Space Between* (Second Story Press)

HISTORY
The Joseph and Faye Tanenbaum Award
Barrie Wilson, *How Jesus Became Christian* (Random House Canada)

HOLOCAUST LITERATURE
The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem Award
Joseph Kertes, *Gratitude* (Penguin Canada)

POETRY
The Samuel and Rose Cohen Award
Isa Milman, *Prairie Kaddish* (Coteau Books)

SCHOLARSHIP ON A JEWISH SUBJECT
The Abe and Fay Bergel Award
Reinhold Kramer, *Mordecai Richler: Leaving St. Urbain* (McGill-Queen's University Press)

YIDDISH LITERATURE
The Abraham and Eve Trapunski Award
David G. Roskies, *Yiddishlands: A Memoir* (Wayne State University Press)

YOUTH LITERATURE
The Louis L. Lockshin and Brenda Freedman Award
Kathy Kacer, *The Diary of Laura's Twin* (Second Story Press)

THE AWARDS CEREMONY WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY, MAY 25 | 8 PM | FREE ADMISSION
AL GREEN THEATRE, MILES NADAL JCC
750 SPADINA AVENUE (AT BLOOR)

Al Green Theatre Venue Partner
Miles Nadal JCC
JEWISH FOUNDATION OF GREATER TORONTO
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KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Discourse on Israel and Jews sinks to new low

Criticism of Israel is reaching a state of hysterical overreaction, devoid of rational analysis of events on the ground. Even decent, well-meaning people have been swept up in this frenzy to such a degree that they're now willing to entertain, as legitimate discussion, the most vile caricatures of Israelis and Jews.

That's what happened on May 3, when CBC Radio Sunday Edition devoted its first hour to airing English playwright Caryl Churchill's play Seven Jewish Children.

A 10-minute drama, ostensibly criticizing Israel's military conduct during the recent conflict in Gaza, Seven Jewish Children ends up caricaturing Israelis and demonizing Jews as bloodthirsty murderers of Palestinian children.

Sunday Edition host Michael Enright said it was important to broadcast the play – a series of monologues spoken by Jewish parents about what to tell their children concerning difficult episodes in their history – in order to appreciate the controversy surrounding it. So the CBC Radio audience was treated to lines such as the following, about Israel's military operations in Gaza, which conclude the performance: "Tell her [a Jewish child] we killed the [Palestinian] babies by mistake… Tell her I laughed when I saw the dead [Palestinian] policemen. Tell her they're animals living in rubble now. Tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out… Tell her we're better haters. Tell her we're chosen people."

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Immediately following the reading of the play, Enright interviewed British novelist Howard Jacobson, who has written scathing critiques of Churchill's work.

Jacobson made several key points:

- Churchill's production is political propaganda masquerading as art;
- It's based on a lie about Israel's actions in Gaza and the way Israelis feel about innocent Palestinian civilians killed or injured in the recent conflict. Churchill eliminated any context about the conflict, making Israelis look wantonly brutal and wholly callous;
- It's also a lie to imply, as Churchill does, that Jews who suffered under the Nazi Holocaust are acting in a similar way toward the Palestinians;
- Churchill promotes an anti-Semitic "blood libel" against Jews, whom she refers to as "chosen people."

Enright next interviewed McGill University professor Abby Lippman, a member of Independent Jewish Voices, a group that's promoting the play's performance in Canada. (It debuted in Montreal this month and will be staged in Toronto May 15 to 17.)

Enright asked Lippman whether she thought the play is anti-Semitic. "No, I do not. I reject that label," she said, without substantial elaboration.

With respect to Jacobson's charge that Churchill promoted a "blood libel," Enright referred to a line that he admitted he found "curiously disturbing": "Tell her we killed the babies by mistake."

Enright asked: "Isn't the inference in that line that Israelis were killing babies on purpose?" Lippman said that she didn't read it that way, but is aware that some have, adding, "It may be that I'm just not sophisticated enough or religious enough" to see any blood libel. Instead, she said, all she saw in that line was anger about Israel's conduct in Gaza.

Referring to another point that Jacobson made, namely, that not all criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic, Enright pressed on with Lippman, asking, "But isn't it also the case that sometimes anti-Semitism is hiding in the cloak of criticism of Israel?" Lippman replied that she won't be silenced by that charge.

While Enright was very conscious of the criticism that Churchill's play is anti-Semitic, even acknowledging that the play is "radioactive," he apparently sided with Lippman against Jacobson on this crucial point. For otherwise he would not have aired something he knew or believed to contain noxious anti-Semitic tropes. And this is something this columnist, who knows and respects Enright, accepts that he would not knowingly do.

Yet it's also indisputable that Jacobson has the correct reading of the Churchill text, even if certain individuals, including some Jews themselves, fail or refuse, for whatever reason, to recognize this.

The result is that the CBC broadcast something, however unwittingly, that promotes some of the most historically vile stereotypes about Jews. Sunday Edition must deal with the consequences of its failure to acknowledge what is really at issue here.

This also stands as a frightening indication of how previously unacceptable discourse is becoming mainstream in the media.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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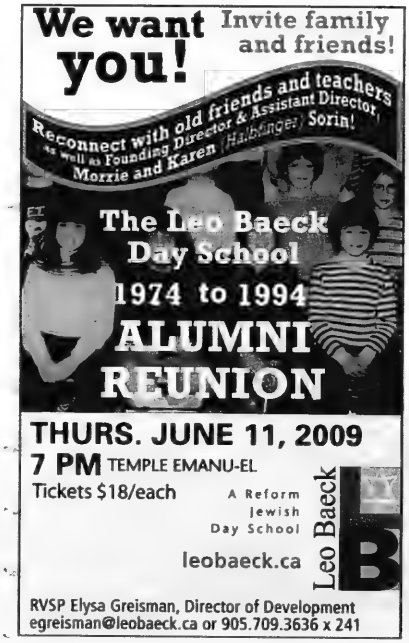
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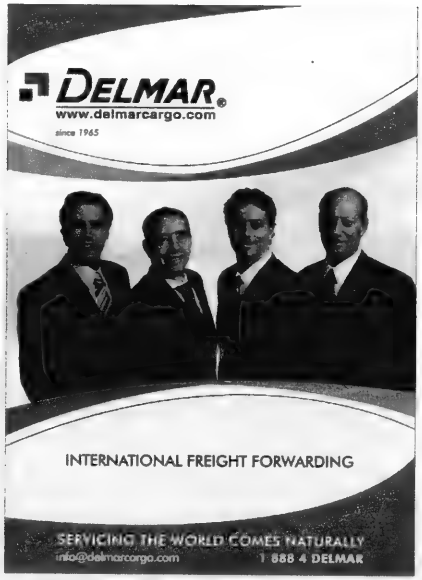

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St. Louis passenger recalls ill-fated voyage

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Eighty-three-year-old survivor Herbert Karliner was one of 936 German Jews who tried to flee Hilter's persecution by boarding the ill-fated St. Louis ship that sailed away out of Germany toward freedom in America.

Herbert Karliner

Karliner and the other passengers had paid their passage and had their quota numbers for entry into the United States. They were to arrive first in Cuba, and stay there while waiting for their numbers to come up for entry into America. The tragic story of the passengers of this ship was one Hollywood retold in 1976 in the movie Voyage of the Damned.

"We were in the Cuban harbour for one week. The Cuban police stopped us from disembarking. The first Spanish word I learned was *manyana* [tomorrow], but *manyana* never came. We were turned away by the Cubans and cruised around to Miami. We sent telegrams to [then U.S. president Franklin D.] Roosevelt to let us in, and then we sent a telegram to Eleanor Roosevelt asking her to let in even just the children. But we didn't get an answer. We sent telegrams to South America and Canada [which went unanswered]. Nobody wanted us," Karliner said in an interview with The CJN.

He was in Winnipeg as part of a Canada-Israel Friendship Tour sponsored by Watchmen for the Nations and other Christian groups last month.

"I was 12-1/2 years old and I could see Miami from the ship, and I was so impressed with it I knew I wanted to live there," Karliner recalled.

The Jews on the ship were finally granted entry into various countries, including France, Holland, Belgium and England, but as the Nazis overtook Europe, more than a third of them were killed.

"I came to France, and one year later we were occupied by Germans. On Aug. 26, 1942, I was arrested and taken by the Germans to a camp. All of the boys over 16 were taken to Auschwitz. I was very lucky. It was one week before my 16th birthday and they let me go," Karliner said.

His sisters and parents "were arrested and taken to Auschwitz and never came back."

A French Jewish humanitarian organization, the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), offered Karliner "false papers," and he boarded a ship "to go to Spain and then to Palestine." But he never got to Palestine.

"After arriving in Spain, I was caught and sent back to France. Then the OSE gave me money to go to Switzerland, but when I got there I was arrested and sent back to France… and finally the organization [OSE] placed me in a village in France, where they [the villagers] didn't know I was Jewish or German. My papers showed I was born in Alsace-Lorraine. The farmer [I lived with] didn't know I was Jewish. I went to church and worked like a slave, but at least I had a roof over my head and something to eat," Karliner recalled.

After being liberated by the U.S. Army in 1944, he reconnected with OSE, and through it he was sent to a displaced persons' camp in France, along with 450 Jewish boys who had survived Buchenwald.

"Elie Wiesel was one of those boys. [Israeli] Chief Rabbi [Yisrael Meir] Lau was one of those boys," Karliner said.

He finally made his way to the United States in 1946 and headed straight for Miami Beach.

"In 1950, I got a letter from Uncle Sam saying, 'I want you.' In 1939, Uncle Sam didn't want me, but in 1950 I was drafted into the American army and sent out East [serving as a translator in the Pacific]," Karliner said.

A retired baker, he is married to a woman he met in a children's home in France. They have two daughters and three grandchildren.

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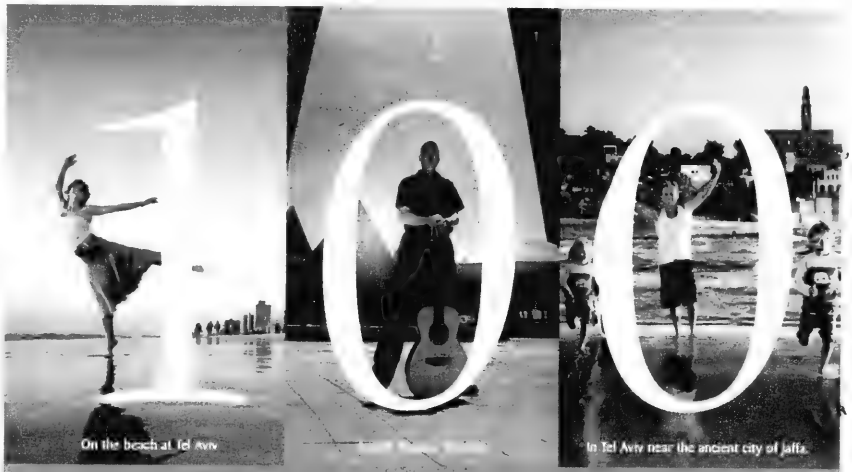

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Young leaders gather in Toronto

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

About 160 young Jewish leaders from across Canada gathered at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto last weekend for the Flick the Switch conference to develop Jewish leadership skills and to "shrink the country."

Steven Farber, 34, chair of UIA Federations Canada National Young Leadership Executive, which hosted the conference with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said working with Jewish leaders from all over the country will strengthen the Jewish community as a whole.

"What we're trying to do is not only shrink the country, but to a certain extent we're trying to shrink the world and ensure that the dialogue is working to strengthen the communities around the world," said Farber, who works for National Bank Financial Inc., and has been volunteering with Jewish organizations for eight years.

Steven Farber

"Let us each benefit from each others' good ideas. Let us each benefit from each others' challenges. Where there are opportunities to do things together as communities… let's do it."

The keynote speaker for the event, Marc Kielburger, CEO of Free the Children, delivered an address titled "Me to We: Achieving True Well-Being through Social Involvement."

Farber, who spoke to The CJN just days before the conference kicked off on May 8, said an event such as Flick the Switch allows people to learn from each other and to discover how much they have in common.

"We're very proud that it is a very inclusive conference of all communities from coast to coast, and I think they're coming together to make new friendships, to rekindle old friendships, to learn about different ideas that are working in other parts of the country that can be applied, or modified and subsequently applied," said the Ottawa native.

He said one of the challenges that Jewish communities in all parts of the world face, is engaging the next generation to become involved.

"Everybody realizes the importance, but the tough part is how you do it," Farber said.

"The only way you can do things is to constantly have dialogue and you get feedback and you try different things and you keep speaking about what is working and what's not and try very hard to strengthen the various communities."

But, he added, the conference isn't all serious business.

"It's a young leadership conference, which means there are a lot of laughs, there's a lot of learning and there is always a high level of energy."

Farber, a UJA Federation board member who has held leadership roles with a number of other Jewish organizations, including Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, said he grew up in a family who was always involved in the community.

"I find myself in a weird position now because… at the same time that I've taken over as chair of the National Young Leadership… my mother is actually the president of UIA, Barbara Farber," he said.

Farber added that being active in the Jewish community has afforded him many opportunities to travel, make meaningful friendships with peopleall over the world, and he encourages Jewish youth to get involved in whatever way they can.

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ש'שאר י'נ'ט

גידי קורן וחברים

סרטים שחובה

עבר זמן מאז שהמלצתי לכם לאחרונה על סרטים, ומאחר ואנחנו רואים שלושה סרטים בשבוע-זוהי התנהגות בלתי חברתית, אז הינה מקבץ חובה:

סוף סוף הגיע לטורונטו עץ הלימון הנפלא, הוא זוכה לתשבוחות רבות של הביקורת הקנדית. זהו סיפורה של אשה פלשתינאית שמגדלת על גבול גדר ההפרדה את פרדס הלימונים המשפחתי, שמועבר מדור לדור שנים רבות. בניה מזבו זה מכבר את הארץ והיא בעקשנות אינה מוכנה לוותר. ואז יום אחד מחליט שר הבטחון הישראלי לעבור לגור בישוב ששכן לגדר ההפרדה, והשב"כ מחליט שהפרדס מסכן את חיי שר הבטחון ומשפחתו. ואז מתפתח סיפור מרתק ונוגע ללב, שמציג גם את הצד הישראלי וגם את הפלשתינאי באור מגוחך. מעבר לעלילה המרתקת ולבצוע המושלם-היו לי דמעות גאווה על שארצי, ארץ דמוקרטית, מאפשרת לסרט כזה להיעשות ואף לקבל תמיכה ממשלתית. לי זה היה חשוב אפילו יותר מהסרט עצמו, כי זה היה מבחן של חוסן ביטוי ודמוקרטיה במדינה שנלחמת על קיומה נגד הטרור הכי מתועב שיש. עשר בסולם קורן.

Three Monkeys הוא סרט טורקי שעוסק בפוליטיקאי מצליח שהיה מעורב בתאונה קטלנית, הוא מבקש מנהגו הצייות ן (שלא היה איתו בליל התאונה) שירדה באשמה. הנהג יושב בכלא תשעה חדשים, שבהם תומך הפוליטיקאי במשפחתו, אבל גם מפתח יחסים אינטימיים עם אשת האסיר. לא אגלה לכם יותר מן העלילה, רק אומר שזה סרט מדהים גם בעלילתו וגם בדיאלוגים ובחשיבה העמוקה שבו. עוד עשר בסולם קורן.

Hunger הוא סיפור אמיתי של אסיר מהמחתרת האירית שמחליט לשבות רעב בכלא הבריטי. זהו סרט עז ונוקב על אירגלד של שנות מלחמת האזרחים. זהו סרט בכורה מדהים של במאי בריטי צעיר סטיב מקווין (לא קשור לשחקן המנוח). צריך לסרט הזה קיבה חזקה, אבל מעבר לזה-הסרט הוא חווית בידרה. עשר שלישי בסולם קורן. אני לא חושב שאי פעם נתתי שלוש עשיריות בטור אחד, אבל מה לעשות-כל אחד מהם שווה את זמנכם ואת תשומת לבכם. אבל שישאר בינינו.

אופטימיות בת ששים ואחת

עקבתי בעניין רב אחרי הכתבות של עיתוני יום העצמאות ואחרי השידורים השונים, ומעבר לתגיגות הטבעית של יום העצמאות-בלטה מאוד אופטימיות גדולה על מצב האומה מצד כותבים רבים, בניהם כאלה שלא חוסכים שבטם לאורך השנה.

הנעתי למסקנות הבאות:

העם בישראל מרגיש חזק, ומאמין שיהיה טוב, לא משנה מי ינהיג אותו: נתניהו, לבני, ברק-כולם נסף קטן, כולם יעשו מחות או יותר את אותו דבר-בהגנה, בכלכלה, בחינוך, אבל מי שבאמת מזיז את הסוס קדימה זה הסוס עצמו- שבעה מליון אזרחים דינאמיים, שאפתנים, סקרנים, ציניים אבל אכפתיים, והם יודעים שיהיה בסדר. הם אומרים, כל אחד בדרכו שלו: תראו לנו עוד מדינה שהשיגה כל כך הרבה בזמן כל כך קצר בנסיבות כל כך עוינות.

מה להגיד לכם-הרגשתי גאווה עמוקה בעם שלי. כמו שאמר אמיר גלבוע, בשיר שהלחנתי עם שלמה ארצי:

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Winnipeg camp waives fees for new immigrant kids

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Camp Massad has done something that appears to be unprecedented in the history of Winnipeg's Jewish community: the Hebrew immersion overnight camp is offering 17 immigrant children a free two weeks of camp in its first session this July.

"The only criteria is that all of the children must have settled in Winnipeg within the last five years and must be attending Massad for the first time," said Leslie Jacobs, administrative director of Camp Massad, located in Winnipeg Beach on Lake Winnipeg.

"We've been able to do this as a result of receiving a $20,000 grant from the Dorothea Gould Foundation, a Swiss-based foundation. We were made aware of this foundation and encouraged to apply by Faye Rosenberg-Cohen [the planning director] of the Jewish Federation [of Winnipeg]," Jacobs said.

Rosenberg-Cohen said the vast majority of Jewish immigrants to Winnipeg in the last couple of years have been Russian Israelis.

"All of these new immigrant children speak fluent Hebrew, since they've lived in Israel. They are a really good fit for our camp. They are easily able to participate in our drama productions that are put on in Hebrew. They are natural stars… And they are real assets to the camp, because they help raise the level of Hebrew," Jacobs said.

A request for proposals written by the Dorothea Gould Foundation says the foundation is aware of research "that confirms that an intensive summer… overnight Jewish oriented camp experience has positive long-term impact on youth," and keeps them connected to Jewish life.

Jacobs said Camp Massad decided to offer the spots free of charge, since even if there are subsidies available to go to camp, "there are always some people who are reluctant to apply for subsidies, which requires having to show financial need… We wanted new immigrant children to have the opportunity of experiencing Jewish camping without having to worry about having to go through the process of qualifying for subsidies."

Some immigrant families to Winnipeg have had more trouble than they originally anticipated re-settling in the city.

"A lot of them have to re-educate, and the economy is in a downturn, so the resettlement process can take time," Jacobs said.

Camp Massad advertised its 17 positions via e-mail with the assistance of the federation and Winnipeg's Jewish Child & Family Service.

"Within a week and a half, all of the spots were filled," Jacobs said.

The immigrant children will all be attending the camp's first session, because that's when Massad had room to accommodate them.

"We only have 60 children registered for first session, including the 17 spots that the grant covers. Second session usually fills up, and we have close to 120 campers," she said.

Camp Massad is one of only two Jewish camps in Canada that are Hebrew-speaking, Jacobs said.

Last year, Massad received a grant of $5,000 from the Dorothea Gould Foundation, which went toward subsidies for children in need.

"So far, we haven't had other families of immigrant children, in addition to the 17 families, apply to get a spot free of charge. But if someone expresses an interest in our a camp, they'll still be able to apply for a subsidy from us, or they also can apply to the province-wide Sun-Shine fund, which assists kids who want to go to camp," Jacobs said.

Garment mogul to be feted at JNF gala

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG —This is turning out to be a banner year for Winnipeg business leader Bob Silver.

On July 1, Silver will become the seventh chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, and about a month earlier – on June 8 – he'll be front and centre as the 2009 Jewish National Fund Negev Gala honoree.

Bob Silver

"I am humbled to be included in the company of a long list of previous worthy recipients of this honour, including a couple of Manitoba premiers," Silver said.

"We are delighted that Bob agreed to be our honoree this year," says Mel Lazareck, himself a former JNF Negev Gala honoree (along with his wife, Karen). "He has done so much over the years for both the Jewish and general community. Everyone is excited about having Bob as our honoree."

It has been quite an interesting journey for Silver from a communal farm in British Columbia to the top echelon of Winnipeg business and community leadership.

Born and raised in Winnipeg, the young Silver, like many of his contemporaries in the late 1960s and early '70s, left home after university to join the counterculture.

He was lured back to Winnipeg in 1973 by his uncle, S.J. Nitikman, who needed help in managing the family business. Western Glove Works was a longstanding Winnipeg-based garment manufacturer specializing in jeans. (The company originally made gloves.)

Silver expected to be working with his uncle for just a few months before returning to the farm. Thirty-six years later, he's still here. And as president of Western Glove Works, he has helped make the company one of the top jean manufacturers in the world and take denim into the realm of high fashion.

Silver and his longtime business partner, Ron Stern, also own Warehouse One, a chain of denim wear retail outlets, as well as the Winnipeg Free Press and Brandon Sun daily newspapers.

Over the years, Silver has played a leading role in the garment industry here and across Canada. In more recent years, he has become involved with a number of volunteer organizations. He chaired last year's local United Way campaign, for example, and he's also co-chaired the Premier's Economic Advisory Council and the Winnipeg Library Foundation.

In the Jewish community, he was the founding chair of Grow Winnipeg, the community's five-year-old campaign to increase the Jewish population here through a combination of retention programs aimed at younger people and recruitment efforts directed to former Winnipeggers and potential newcomers.

Lazareck said Stern and Hartley Richardson, a scion of Winnipeg's long-established business family of the same name, have agreed to co-chair the gala evening this year.

"We are hoping to sell out the Centennial Concert Hall [which seats about 1,800]," Lazareck says.

Funds raised from every Negev Gala help support a project in Israel. This year's project is the establishment of an ecologically friendly wastewater treatment facility on Kibbutz Ne'ot Semadar in southern Israel.

"We expect that this first-of-its-kind wastewater treatment facility will be a model for others around the world," said Jacqueline Freedman, JNF's development co-ordinator for Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The project fits in with ongoing joint water research being concluded between Manitoba and Israeli water experts, thanks to an agreement forged between the JNF and the government of Manitoba two years ago.

Entertainment at this year's gala will be Tararam, an Israeli stomp group.

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Montreal Jewish leader retires from Senate

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Yoine Goldstein spent his last day in the Senate May 7, having reached the mandatory retirement age of 75.

Goldstein, a Montreal lawyer and longtime Jewish community leader, was appointed to the upper chamber in August 2005 by former prime minister Paul Martin.

Goldstein was the latest in a long line of Jewish senators from Quebec, all Liberals, going back to the appointment of the late Lazarus Phillips in 1968 and, in more recent decades, including Sheila Finestone and Leo Kolber.

As Goldstein said himself, he was not simply a senator who happened to be Jewish, but considered himself a representative of the Jewish community's interests, whether it was commemorating events like Yom Hashoah or Yom Hazikaron or speaking out against anti-Semitism or unfair criticism of Israel. Goldstein said he would like to see another Jewish senator continue in that role.

Unlike when Kolber's seat was about to become vacant in January 2004 after 20 years, few names have been touted as possible successors to Goldstein. Among those that have been proposed, however, are lawyers and brothers Robert and Michael Vineberg, sons of the late Philip Vineberg, Lazarus Phillips' law partner. Goldstein believes they would be splendid choices.

There are now three Jews in the Senate: Conservatives Hugh Segal and Irving Gerstein of Ontario, and Liberal Jerry Grafstein of Toronto, who must retire by the beginning of next year.

During his term, Goldstein clashed a few times with Senator Marcel Prud'homme, a former longtime Liberal MP and an outspoken supporter of the Palestinian cause and an opponent of Zionism.

The most recent confrontation was in March, when Prud'homme accused Israel of leaving behind more than a million cluster bombs during its war with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006, which he claimed are killing and injuring innocent Lebanese civilians on an almost daily basis, as well as other anti-personnel bombs from its earlier incursions into Lebanon.

He further maintained that Israel is refusing to provide Lebanon with maps indicating the bombs' locations.

Goldstein shot back that Prud'homme was engaging in "misinformation" that is "a figment of someone's over-active imagination…

"In fact… UN commissioner Jan Egeland has long since identified and sequestered 359 sites where the disarming of cluster bombs continues to take place."

No Lebanese are being harmed by the bombs, Goldstein continued, "since all the sites have been identified, and these bombs are being disarmed and secured in sequestered areas."

Goldstein questioned Prud'homme's claim that most of the cluster bombs were dropped during the last two days of the 2006 conflict. "There is no way to verify that assertion," he said.

Goldstein also noted that Prud'homme expressed no sympathy for Israeli victims of that war. Hezbollah, he said, fired dozens of rockets in the direction of Israeli civilians.

He asserted that such "selective sympathy… declares that some people's lives are less important and less significant than other people's lives."

"I let him have it," Goldstein said in an interview last week.

Goldstein leaves the Senate convinced of the continuing value of its traditional role as the chamber of "sober second thought" on legislation passed in the House of Commons and as a check on any abuse of power.

There has been plenty of that under Stephen Harper, Goldstein said.

"He runs the government like a dictatorship, on fear; he's the king and only what he says is OK," Goldstein said.

He was prepared to defend the honour of the institution and the people who serve in it. In another testy exchange last year, not related to the Middle East, Goldstein took to task fellow Quebec Senator Michael Fortier – a Conservative – for belittling the Senate on the popular Radio-Canada television show Tout le Monde en Parle.

Fortier, who also sat in the Harper cabinet, alleged that the senators, including himself, got appointed not for what they know, but for who they know, and are getting well paid for not putting much time or contributing much in the way of wisdom or independent thinking.

Yoine Goldstein

Goldstein described the comments as "insulting and offensive.

"The outstanding Canadians serving here are not serving because they are party hacks. They are serving because they want to serve the country… Many of us work one hell of a lot and we are not paid what we were paid in the private sector. We are here because we want to do something for our country."

The priorities Goldstein set for his time in office were to amend the bankruptcy act to better protect workers and students; to secure more support for financial literacy programs; to enact a law to control spam e-mail; and to urge greater Canadian action to stop the conflict in Darfur.

He was vice-chair of the banking committee and co-founded the all-party parliamentary group against genocide. Goldstein also supported the release of Canadian citizen Omar Khadr from Guantanamo Bay.

Goldstein left reluctantly. "I was delighted to be there and feel very privileged to have been part of the government."

Goldstein was a high-powered bankruptcy lawyer in Goldstein, Flanz & Fishman when he ascended to the Senate almost four years ago. He is returning to the practice of law with the firm McMillan.

He will receive an honorary doctorate from Yeshiva University on June 15 at a convocation and dinner at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, along with Supreme Court Justice Morris Fish and Rabbi Howard Joseph of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

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Coast to Coast

Joseph Zatzman, left, and Ralph Medjuck

Medjuck, Zatzman get N.S. business award

By JOEL JACOBSON
Atlantic Correspondent

HALIFAX — Two men responsible for changing the faces of their respective Nova Scotia communities are to be inducted into the Junior Achievement Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame June 16.

Developer Ralph Medjuck, 75, of Halifax altered the city's skyline in the 1960s and continues to revamp its face today with new downtown development. He built many city office and apartment buildings, hotels and senior citizens residences.

The late Joseph Zatzman, former mayor of Halifax's sister city, Dartmouth, led the drive for the first major industrial park in the region, spearheaded a second bridge crossing between the two major cities and built new schools, a police station and City Hall. He also operated one of the largest property management companies in the province.

Medjuck, a graduate of Dalhousie University Law School, was honoured by the university with a doctor of law in 2006 for his work and contributions to the community and development professions. Outside Nova Scotia, he did construction and development in the Atlantic region, as well as in Edmonton and downtown Toronto, where he completed the Yonge Richmond Centre and the Cambridge Suites Hotel.

Medjuck, a member of Beth Israel Synagogue, has served as director of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, as well as chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress' Atlantic region, United Jewish Appeal, Camp Kadimah and State of Israel Bonds in Halifax.

In the wider community, Medjuck has served as chairman of the Neptune Theatre Foundation, as director of the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Foundation, and as a council member of the Halifax Board of Trade. He received the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia's Tourism Vision Award.

"My personal effort hasn't so much been to build better buildings as it has been to build better people as well. I want to see everyone develop to their full potential. That's what made our company successful and this region a great place to work in," he says

As mayor of Dartmouth in the late 1960s, Zatzman's leadership and "get-things-done" attitude created an image of a man of integrity and strength whose vision led to a prosperous community and province.

Beginning in 1934 with a small Dartmouth grocery shop, Zatzman eventually entered property development and management. His Maplehurst Properties company became one of the largest property management companies in Nova Scotia.

After his two terms as mayor in the late 1960s, he became chairman of the Nova Scotia Resources Development Board, where he was instrumental in rescuing Nova Scotia's fishing industry from financial ruin.

In the 1980s, Zatzman headed the Business Development Corporation. He was given an honorary doctorate of law from Saint Mary's University in 1979, was awarded the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada medal and was named to the Order of Canada in 1997.

Additionally, he served as chairman of the United Jewish Appeal and the local Israel Bonds committee, was a governor of Saint Mary's University, vice-president of the Nova Scotia Liberal Association, and a director of the Victorian Order of Nurses and Kiwanis Club.

His son, Michael, says his father, who died in 2006 at age 95, was concerned with "improving local business, making a fair living and putting food on the table. He had no interest in being a huge success. He just wanted to serve the public, work for the underdog and even the playing field for everyone. He was always extremely fair in all his dealings. What I learned from him was to give back. You owe a debt to the community in which you are successful."

Since 1993, 56 people have been inducted into the Junior Achievement Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame.

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On Campus

UWO houses survivor testimonies

By NICOLE LAIDLER
Special to The CJN

Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel might be surprised to learn that his 1988 criminal trial for spreading false news was the catalyst for what is now one of the world's largest collections of survivor testimonials.

As a member of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, University of Western Ontario French professor Dr. Alain Goldschläger was brought in to help the prosecution research team.

"I quickly realized how important testimonials were, because historians couldn't be part of the court proceedings. History is hearsay," he explained. "It was the survivors who were the substance of the prosecution."

But when Goldschläger wanted to look at a bibliography of Holocaust testimonials, he discovered there weren't any. And so he began his quest to systematically collect and catalogue survivors' stories.

Dr. Alain Goldschläger

Today, Goldschläger's Holocaust Literature Research Institute is the second-largest collection of testimonials outside of Israel. More than 4,000 books written in 29 languages take up most of his UWO office, and Goldschläger has done his best to read them all.

There are wartime journals published by clandestine presses, books written in Yiddish in postwar Buenos Aires and even an account of the Shanghai ghetto told in Chinese.

"Right from the beginning, Jews had the consciousness that this was something of a new magnitude, and they had to record it," Goldschläger said.

Wartime documents provide a detailed record of day-to-day life in Nazi Europe, but offer no larger perspective or explanation.

As time passed, the nature of the testimonials began to change. In fact, Goldschläger has defined five distinct periods of writing.

The majority of Holocaust memoirs come from the second period (1945 to 1951).

"These stories are an outburst – a *crie de coeur*," Goldschläger said. "It's a disorganized narrative, with little outside perspective."

Production dropped dramatically between 1952 and 1979, although this period saw the mass publication of famous memoirs such as Elie Wiesel's Night and Primo Levi's If This is a Man.

After 1980, survivors realized that their stories might be lost if they were not recorded.

"This fourth period is a reaction to the negation of the revisionists. Suddenly a lot of survivors said, 'It cannot be denied, I have to give my testimony,'" Goldschläger explained.

These memoirs often take a somewhat pedagogical approach as survivors write for children and grandchildren who may have limited knowledge about the war.

"The perspective is also very different," Goldschläger observed. "It's about what a human being can survive and how they can rebuild their lives. They are very positive to a certain extent, because the outcome is positive."

Goldschläger believes the time of true testimonial ended in 2000. Since then, he said, most memoirs have been collaborative efforts or produced in special writing workshops.

"People think once they publish a book, their memories are safe. But if it's only 200 copies distributed to family and friends, it can be lost," he said.

That's what drives him to scour second-hand bookstores and online booksellers for new additions to his collection.

"You can study and learn a lot through historical textbooks, but there are things, small personal events, that can only be found in testimony," he said.

So would someone such as Zündel be swayed by the sheer number of survivors' stories on Goldschläger's shelves?

"No, you will never convince Zündel," Goldschläger said with a sad smile. "But what we can do is stop revisionism from spreading."

For more information on the Holocaust Literature Research Institute, visit www.hlri.ca.

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Goldwasser's widow tells her story at JUMP

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Most of us know the story quite well.

On July 12, 2006, Israeli Defence Force soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser were kidnapped by Hezbollah, triggering the Second Lebanon War.

The war lasted about a month, but Karnit Goldwasser spent two years fighting to bring her late husband, whom she affectionately called Udi, and his colleague, Regev, back home.

Karnit Goldwasser
[Shlomo Buzaglo photo]

Goldwasser, who was in Toronto last week to promote a film at the Hot Docs festival called Chronicle of a Kidnap – a documentary that follows Goldwasser on her media campaign to generate international pressure on the Israeli government to negotiate the release of her husband – spoke to an overflow crowd at the Jewish Urban Meeting Place in Thornhill on May 2 about her experience.

She recalled the day her husband and Regev were kidnapped – it was the last day of their month-long reserve duty and she was anticipating her husband's return.

But then news began to trickle in that there was an attack on the Lebanese-Israeli border, right where he was stationed.

"They said several soldiers were killed, others were injured and two were kidnapped, and they didn't know if my husband was among the two kidnapped soldiers or among the casualties," said Goldwasser, who also spoke at York University in the Hillel lounge the following day.

After hours of uncertainty, she, her friends and family heard on the news that Goldwasser was not among the casualties.

"Everyone started to hug and to kiss. We were the happiest family in Israel, I think. If you're thinking about the reason, it's because Udi was kidnapped and it's because the whole day we thought that Udi might be dead, and by the end of the day we got the information that he was not."

It was two years later – when the bodies of Goldwasser and Regev were brought back to be buried in Israel as a result of a prisoner swap with Hezbollah – that she learned with the rest of the world that the two men were most likely killed in the initial attack.

But in the days following the kidnapping, with a hope that her husband was alive and in captivity, she vowed she would do everything in her power to bring him home.

Goldwasser also promised the Regev family and the family of Gilad Schalit – the soldier who had been kidnapped two weeks earlier by Hamas and who is still in captivity – that she would campaign for the safe return of those soldiers as well.

She said that after the war, when the United Nations appointed a negotiator to have the soldiers released, Goldwasser decided to try to meet with as many leaders of the free world as she could in the hope they would work to bring the men home.

But more than anything, she longed for a simple answer to a difficult question.

"I wanted to know if my husband was alive or dead," she said.

"I met many people from the Red Cross, but no one had the ability to give me an answer… The information about whether Udi was alive or dead I received with you, when it was broadcast live on the television."

Goldwasser recalled asking the secretary general of the International Red Cross if she would send a representative to see the two men.

"She said she couldn't do it, because she could not risk [alienating] Hezbollah. This is the Red Cross that I know, and we [Israelis] pay for them."

With Schalit having been in captivity for nearly three years, Goldwasser reminded the gathering that it's important for the international community to work to keep the issue on the agenda.

"By signing petitions and speaking out, they can urge those in power to bring Schalit back home," she said. "When I met Ehud Olmert [Israel's former prime minister], I told him, 'This is not my private problem. It is a problem of Israel and it is a problem of the free world.' He said, 'I know, because I have petitions and I have letters from all over the world that remind me of this issue.'"

She said both Schalit and his family continue to suffer.

"As far as I know from people who have once been in captivity, you cannot see the [day]light and you can count your days by counting the meals, but they change the meals [to confuse you]… We don't know when Gilad had his last shower, or when he's going to have his next one," she said.

"Think about his parents, if someday, someone will come to them to tell them, 'I saw your son.' And think about Gilad Schalit, if someone one day will go to meet him and say, 'From here, I'm going to your parents, and I'm going to tell them that you're OK.'"

Goldwasser said that despite the tragic outcome of her husband's kidnapping, she is proud of her country.

"The bottom line is that after two years… Ehud Olmert decided to bring back Udi and Eldad, and because of this I'm proud of what he did," she said.

"I wasn't abandoned by my country. It wasn't easy… but in the end, Udi was brought back… This is why I'm proud of my country. Because they could have abandoned me."

Professor Stephen Berk

The Henry & Sally Schaffer Professor of Holocaust & Jewish Studies at Union College, Schenectady, NY; eminent author, spellbinding lecturer, radio comentator; popular tour leader in Jewish sites in Eastern Europe.

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Damage upon separation

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 28 years

Question. I have been married for seven years. My wife and I live in the home I own, bought five years before marriage.

However, the home is registered in my name only. My wife contributed nothing to the purchase or enhancement of the value of this home. I also own a large amount of RRSPs and have no debts. My wife has no assets or liabilities. Our marriage may end in separation, I am not certain. The mortgage payments are a bit high and I would prefer to move into a smaller home.

What is my current situation if we were to separate and if not, what should I do to plan for separation down the road to minimize the damage to my property holdings? Before marriage, my home was worth $350,000. Now it is worth more than $550,000.

Answer. Currently if you were to separate, your wife would be entitled to half of the entire value of your matrimonial home, including its pre-marital value. She would also be entitled to half of the increase in the value of your RRSPs (valued as of the date of separation) after tax, since they increased after the date of marriage.

There is nothing you can really do about your RRSPs, unless you foolishly and improperly attempt to transfer them into the names of a third party, like an old and trusted relative or friend.

However, the moment you do so the entire capital amount of the RRSPs becomes calculated as part of your taxable income for the year in which you cashed them.

Moreover, if you transferred them close to the date of separation, say within the year or so, you could be accused of deliberately and fraudulently depleting your assets in order to deprive your wife of her rights to an equalization split. She might then likely recover what you tried to hide from one of your other more exposed assets or from your income over a number of years, plus penalties and interest.

Your matrimonial home is another matter. The law gives her an unfair split of its pre-marital value in your situation. She might want to buy a new house, especially if you offer to do so in joint names.

Since you will not have owned that second home on the date of marriage, you can deduct the full value of the equity in the first home you owned on the date of marriage in the equalization calculation when you separate.

This effectively means that your wife would only benefit from her half-share in the post-marital value of the second or any subsequent matrimonial home. According to your valuations, this means a saving of about $100,000 if you were to separate in the near future.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Sports doctor helps pro hockey players function at a higher level

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

Officially reported injuries may have contributed to the Calgary Flames' early exit from the NHL playoffs when they were beaten by the Chicago Blackhawks in the Western Conference quarter-finals, but according to sports doctor Aubrey Green, there was more to the Flames' defeat than met the eye.

"I think those guys are going to stand up for themselves and they're not going to use injuries as an excuse, but I can tell you that there's a lot of players who are playing injured who aren't reporting it and are battling through," Green said.

A 34-year-old Toronto chiropractor and acupuncturist, Green has built a practice and a reputation over the past several years treating professional hockey and football players in the NHL and the CFL. His patients include the Flames' all-star captain Jarome Iginla, defenceman Dion Phaneuf and forward Todd Bertuzzi.

"Hockey players are strong, tough athletes, and they battle through a lot of adversity and injuries and do the best job they can. But there are guys who wouldn't be competing in the regular season with how banged up they might be," he said.

Green prefers a "drugless approach to health."

Born in Vancouver and raised in Toronto, Green didn't always plan on becoming a sports doctor.

When he was 16, he injured his back playing basketball and as a result got his first close-up look at chiropractic medicine.

"It showed me a hands-on, drugless approach to health. And not to say that I don't believe in the drug approach, too – it's got its place – but for me, I went to see someone to help me out and it opened my eyes up to that profession," Green said.

After attending high school at Forest Hill Collegiate, Green got his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Western Ontario before putting in a year at law school. But when he got accepted to Toronto's Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, he found what he really wanted to do.

Nashville Predators captain Jason Arnott, right, spread the word to his fellow NHLers that Dr. Aubrey Green's treatments worked.

"I just took a year-long leave of absence, but I never went back to law because I enjoyed chiropractic so much," he said.

After earning his chiropractic degree, he went on to take sports medicine and acupuncture courses at Hamilton's McMaster University.

Getting from the classroom to the locker room was no small feat, however.

"I think that it's a fair thing to say that it's everybody's goal and dream when they're sitting in class [to] want to work with world-class athletes, but whether that's realistic or not is the question," he said.

Green got his big break when he was referred to treat hockey player Jason Arnott, who is currently the captain of the Nashville Predators. After Green proved that his treatments worked, his reputation spread by word-of-mouth and he started getting calls from more pro athletes.

"Arnott referred guys to me and then over the years guys get traded, they go to different teams, and people hear about me. It's a relatively small world, the hockey world," Green said.

In addition to the training he got at school, Green has developed his own therapies and techniques that have earned him a reputation for effectiveness within the world of professional sports.

"You have to get into the room, but then the second thing is you have to show that what you're doing is result oriented. When [Arnott] was playing for Dallas, he had an injury and he was going to be out for three to four weeks, and through my treatment, he was back on the ice in two days," Green said.

It also doesn't hurt that Green has been able to hit it off on a personal level with the athletes that he treats. Having a closer relationship with a player even makes him a better doctor, he says.

"When you travel with the guys, you develop a relationship. You're spending time with them and there is definitely a rapport, and that increases your working relationship. Part of what you're doing is positive reinforcement to help them get in the right frame of mind with respect to their bodies. The more confidence they have in what they're doing, the more they'll succeed," he said.

While Green is often called upon to treat injuries, a large part of his practice is just helping athletes stay healthy and avoid getting injured in the first place.

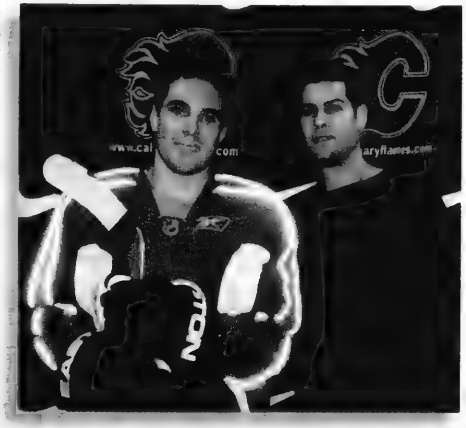
"In the perfect situation, I want the athletes I work with to be healthy and feeling good. And in that case it is performance based, where I'm doing treatment to get them functioning at 110 per cent of their capability, instead of dealing with an injury. So by working with the muscles, the nerves, the joints, you're making them function at a higher level – faster, stronger, more explosive on the ice or in the field," he said.

In addition to his celebrity clients, he works with what he calls "weekend warriors" at his Toronto office, and he's planning to launch a product line – "Dr. Greens" – which he hopes will alert people to sports-related injuries before they become major health concerns.

Ironically, Green's practice has made him give up his own sporting ambitions. Though he used to play basketball competitively, he found that his own injuries were interfering with the quality of care he was able to offer his patients.

Still, he works out and maintains a healthy lifestyle.

"I try to practise what I preach," he said.



The Calgary Flames' Mike Cammalleri has also benefited from Green's treatments.

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'We must fight anti-Semitism wherever it is found'

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Pope Benedict XVI arrived in Israel from Jordan on Monday morning, on the second leg of a pilgrimage to Middle East holy sites that takes him to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Pope, whose readmittance of Holocaust-denying Bishop Richard Williamson into the Catholic Church has badly damaged ties with the Jewish world, vowed in his first speech at Ben-Gurion International Airport to fight anti-Semitism, which he deemed "totally unacceptable."

"I take my place in a long line of Christian pilgrims to these shores, a line that stretches back to the earliest centuries of the Church's history and which, I am sure, will keep and continue long into the future," the Pope said during his address on the tarmac.

"I come, like so many others before me, to pray at the holy places, to pray especially for peace – peace in the Holy Land and peace throughout the world."

In his address, the Pope also denounced anti-Semitism and said that humanity must make every effort to avoid a crime on the scale of the one committed in the Holocaust.

"I will have the opportunity to honour the memory of the six million Jewish victims of the Shoah," said the German Pope, who faces criticism for policies toward Jews, including his recent reinstatement of Williamson, who denied the Nazis had killed six million people.

"Sadly, anti-Semitism continues to rear its ugly head in many parts of the world. This is totally unacceptable," the Pope said. "Every effort must be made to combat anti-Semitism wherever it is found, and to promote respect and esteem for the members of every people, tribe, language and nation across the globe."

The Pope receives a gift from the mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat. [Israel Sun photo]

Pope Benedict also urged the warring parties in the Middle East to strive for peaceful relations.

"I plead with all those responsible to explore every possible avenue in the search for a just resolution of the outstanding difficulties, so that both peoples may live in peace in a homeland of their own, within secure and internationally recognized borders," the Pope said.

Pope Benedict landed in Israel at approximately 11 a.m. on a special Royal Jordanian flight. He was met by Israeli dignitaries, including President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

An Israel Defence Forces honour guard greeted the Pope upon his descent onto the tarmac at Ben-Gurion Airport. The Pontiff stood between Netanyahu and Peres as the band played Israel's national anthem Hatikva, the Vatican's anthem and Jerusalem of Gold. After the welcoming ceremony, he was flown by helicopter to Jerusalem.

Pope Benedict was accompanied on his flight from Jordan by 40 members of the Vatican staff and 70 reporters.

Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, he was greeted by Mayor Nir Barkat and other dignitaries, at the Mount Scopus landing pad.

Barkat told the Pontiff he would feel at home in the Holy City. "In Jerusalem, the capital of Israel and the Jewish people, we promote pluralism, dialogue and freedom of religion," said Barkat.

In the afternoon, the Pontiff was to meet at the president's residence with Peres and the parents of the captive Israel Defence Forces soldier Gilad Schalit. A tree-planting ceremony was also scheduled there.

In the late afternoon the Pope was to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and make a statement after laying a wreath at the memorial for those who perished in the Shoah.

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Israel Institute of Technology

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Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of members of the Canadian Technion Society will be held in Ottawa on Sunday, June 14, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Sunday June 14, 2009

4:00 pm **Annual General Meeting,** Soloway Jewish Community Centre
6:00 pm **Dinner,** Soloway Jewish Community Centre
Guest Speaker: **Her Excellency Miriam Ziv,** Israel's Ambassador to Canada

Monday June 15, 2009

8:00 am **Breakfast,** Fairmount Chateau Laurier Hotel
Guest Speaker: **Dr. Henri Rothschild,** President CIIRDF
10:00 am **Tours** (optional - choose one of the following)
• Supreme Court
• Bank of Canada Currency Museum
• National Art Gallery
12:00 pm **Lunch,** Parliament Bldg, Commonwealth Room
Guest Speaker: **Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.,** Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Americas)
2:00 pm **Attend Question Period in the House of Commons**
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Israel Briefs

Police seize ancient scroll

Israeli police seized a 2,000-year-old Hebrew scroll from two Palestinians. The men were arrested for trying to illegally sell the valuable antiquity. The Hebrew document is written on papyrus and measures about 6 inches by 6 inches. The document is written in ancient Hebrew script, which is characteristic of the Second Temple period and shortly thereafter, and is primarily known from the Dead Sea Scrolls and inscriptions found on ossuaries and coffins. The document is dated with the sentence "Year 4 to the destruction of Israel." "What we have here is rare historic evidence about the Jewish people in their country from more than 2,000 years ago, during the days following the destruction which sent the people of Israel into exile for a very long time – until the creation of the State of Israel," said Amir Ganor, director of the unit for the prevention of antiquities robbery in the Israel Antiquities Authority. The scroll will undergo laboratory analyses to negate the possibility it's a forgery.

Arab peace plan amended

Arabs states are revising the Saudi peace initiative to make it more palatable to Israel, according to an Arabic-language newspaper. The London-based al-Quds al-Arabi reported that the moderate Arab nations are making the amendments at the request of U.S. President Barack Obama and that some of the changes involve the demand for the right of return for Palestinian refugees. The changes also will set a timetable for normalizing relations between Israel and the Arab countries in the region, if Israel withdraws to pre-1967 borders. The amended plan, being coordinated by Jordan's King Abdullah, will be presented to Obama when he meets Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Washington.

– JTA and Ha'aretz

Canadian-born soldier killed in West Bank clash

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A Canadian-born Israel Defence Forces soldier was killed last Thursday morning during an operation near Ramallah. The soldier, Sgt. Noam Adin Rechter-Levy, 20, was killed when his weapon discharged while he was scuffling with Palestinians in the town of Bir Zeit, a probe found.

Rechter-Levy was born in Montreal and immigrated to Israel with his family at the age of eight.

The incident began in the early hours of the morning when a clash broke out between a contingent of troops and people in the Palestinian town.

At one point, an officer and a soldier left the main force, apparently in a bid to flank the Palestinians. The pair subsequently encountered more Palestinians, with whom they began to scuffle.

Shortly afterward, a shot was heard and the soldier collapsed, critically wounded. He was later pronounced dead at the scene.

Troops apprehended three Palestinians whom they suspect of participating in the clash.

An investigation will determine whether the Palestinians with whom Rechter-Levy scuffled pointed the barrel at him while the rifle was strapped to his body as they were fighting.

Rechter-Levy was the first IDF casualty in the West Bank in 20 months.

"Noam was full of life and loved by everybody," his brother, Ma'ayan, said. "The smile never fell from his face. A wide heart as his is rarely found.

"Noam possessed a sense of justice that was unique. He was a dedicated and loyal friend who was willing to lend a supporting shoulder and an attentive ear. He always sought happiness and joy and made the most out of every moment he shared with family and friends."

Sgt. Noam Adin Rechter-Levy

Born in Montreal in 1988, Noam was the fourth of five children. He added the name Rechter to his surname to pay homage to his grandmother, whose family perished in the Holocaust.

His family came to Israel some 12 years ago and settled in the town of Mitzpeh Natufa in the Lower Galilee. He attended the elementary school in Kibbutz Lavi and completed his secondary school studies in the Yeshiva High School in Tiberias.

Ma'ayan said his brother was a very active child who was quick to adapt to his surroundings and was curious by nature.

"Even before he learned how to speak, he knew how to ride a bicycle without training wheels," he said. "Noam was an excellent athlete and an exceptional basketball player. He established a basketball club for the children in the town, and they loved him, admired him and saw him as a role model."

Noam underwent training as a medic. Last month, he was promoted to the position of battalion medic. "During an operation a few weeks ago he performed CPR on a terrorist who had been seriously injured."

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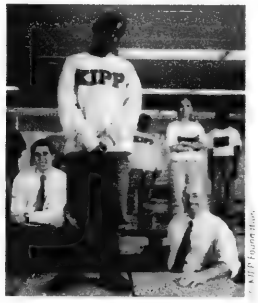

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Canada pledged nearly $4 million in aid to Gaza

Continued from page 1

Speaking to The CJN last Friday from his home in Israel, Noam indicated the ongoing fight to reclaim his son was exacting a toll.

"I'm not so well," he said, adding "It's hard."

He said while he appreciates the sentiment behind the new initiative, it was not his idea and said it may be a waste of energy by U.S. and western politicians.

The Schalit petition comes as an outgrowth of calls by two Democratic members of the U.S. Congress, who last week called for the conditions to be placed on the promised U.S. aid to Gaza.

In a letter to the chairman and ranking member of the House of Representatives appropriations committee, representatives Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) and Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) said that it's "essential that we not simply write a 'blank cheque' for the Gaza-based Palestinians to continue" their missile attacks on Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said that none of the $300 million in aid – part of an overall $900-million aid package for the Palestinians – will go to Hamas. The Gaza assistance is designated to meet humanitarian needs following the Israeli military operation in December and January.

Noam Schalit, who visited Washington two weeks ago and met with members of the U.S. Congress and other politicians, said he did so with the hope that the new Obama administration's policies and outlook on the Middle East may now provide a better "window of opportunity" to get his son back.

He said he asked U.S. officials to make his son's situation part of their policy in the Middle East. But the linkage of foreign monetary aid to his son's release was not part of his agenda.

"There are people who take [my cause] and use it to help. But it was not from me. In Washington, I tried to convey the message that U.S. money won't be any good, because Israel won't transfer construction [payments] to Gaza unless the swap deal for Gilad will be carried out," Noam said.

He added: "I tried to [explain] that the crisis of Gilad is a bottleneck [for negotiations with Gaza and the West], and if the bottleneck isn't opened, nothing can happen."

A woman ponders the fate of Gilad Schalit. [Israel Sun photo]

Earlier this year, Canada pledged nearly $4 million in aid to Gaza to be administered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which will split the funds between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

At the time, CIDA added that none of the funding would go to Hamas, which Ottawa considers a terrorist organization, but the agency said it was ready to inject more financial support, if necessary, as the humanitarian situation in Gaza develops.

Dimitri Soudas, press secretary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, told The CJN last Friday that Canada had, as yet, "not provided reconstruction aid to Gaza" citing concerns about the aid falling into Hamas' hands.

Soudas said the government "condemns" Hamas' kidnapping of Schalit and has "repeatedly called for [his] immediate release… so that he can return to loved ones."

He said he didn't know whether Harper had heard about or was considering the initiative to tie aid to Gaza to Schalit's release.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, said that while such an effort might seem useful, there is an "inherent flaw" in its logic and his organization won't ask Ottawa to adopt the idea.

"The Canadian government has withdrawn from funding projects that have any connection to Hamas. Therefore, there is no money to 'condition' to Schalit's release," Fogel told The CJN.

He added: "Even if one were to make such a demand of the [Palestinian Authority] – i.e., no funding unless they get Hamas to release Schalit – it would get no traction, since the PA itself has dysfunctional relations with Hamas. So, while at first blush it appears an attractive approach, in practice, at least as it relates to Canada, the suggestion is not viable."

Noam Schalit said he had not yet met with the new Israeli government headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but he said he was slated to meet with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak on May 13.

"I'm waiting for [Netanyahu] to learn all the details from the former administration… to consider his policy and attitude to this crisis. Now, I have hope. But I don't want to develop high expectations. But [with a] new administration, sure there may be new windows of opportunity," Noam said.

On Monday, Israeli President Shimon Peres invited the elder Schalit to meet with Pope Benedict XVI at Peres' residence as part of the pontiff's tour of the Holy Land.

"The office of the president attaches great importance to the meeting between the Pope and the Schalit family, as the Pope represents over one billion Catholic believers worldwide… and his assistance can be a great asset in the struggle to bring Gilad home," read a statement from Peres' office.

Asked what part Canada might play in helping return Gilad home, Noam Schalit said he was unaware of Canadian policy on the matter and that he was focusing all his efforts on speaking with only "the major players" in the Middle East.

He didn't rule out a potential visit to Canada.

"I was invited [to visit Canada] by the Jewish community in Toronto and Montreal but couldn't visit due to [a busy] schedule. But maybe if I see it's somewhere I can benefit, I'll consider [it]," he said, sounding weary.

With files from JTA

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Photo exhibit portrays a fictitious Jewish family

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

At first glance, the large black and white portraits hanging in the gallery appear to be a collection of vintage photographs of eastern European Jews from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

Among the photographs, you see a glowing bride and her tentative groom, a sextet of smiling klezmer musicians, and a man with a flowing beard who resembles Tevye from Fiddler on the Roof.

Upon closer examination, however, there is one striking element connecting these photographs. The subjects all have the same face. Indeed, this exhibit showcases self-portraits of Toronto- based photographer Rafael Goldchain.

Through the use of makeup, props and computer manipulation, Goldchain appears as various members of his real and fictional extended family. The show, I Am My Family, runs until May 30 at the O'Born Contemporary gallery, 710 Yonge St., as part of Contact, Toronto's annual photography festival.

These photographs are among a larger body of works from Goldchain's recently published book of self-portraiture, I Am My Family: Photographic Memories and Fictions (Princeton Architectural Press).

The portraits, which Goldchain, calls "post memory," reflect his attempt to insert himself into his own family history, which has many gaps. "I use self-portraiture to create visual representations of identity in relationship to history and culture"

Goldchain's family originated in Poland, but they're now scattered throughout many Latin American countries. He grew up in Chile. In 1975, he came to Canada to study photography at Ryerson University after completing a science degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In addition to his freelance work, Goldchain is program co-ordinator of applied photography at Sheridan College. His self-portraits are in the permanent collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, and they have been travelling across the country since 2007 in Persona, a show produced by the museum.

Goldchain notes that the dispersion of his family following World War I and their decimation in the Holocaust is a history typical of many Jewish families.

He laments that his effort to "create the allusion of wholeness highlights the losses and holes in remembered history."

Goldchain's solution was to fill in the holes with patently fictionalized characters. "In the absence of family material, they are created characters based on research of genealogy and published photographic collections," he says.

For example, the klezmer musicians in the wedding picture are a fictional band. They are given the names of people whom Goldchain traced through his genealogical history. On his father's side, he is related to a number of families with surnames that include Goldstein, Goldszayn, Goldszajn and Goldschain, while his mother's side encompasses the Rubinsteins and Krongolds.

Pictured above: Portrait as Janket Goldstein. Left: Portrait as Rachel Goldszajn.

Continued on page 39

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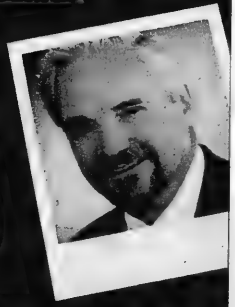

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Project brought him closer to family history

Continued from page 38

However, other portraits represent real relatives, whom Goldchain discovered through archival material – a scant collection of old photographs and family stories. A portrait of an elderly woman with an emaciated face is of Pesia Krongold, Goldchain's mother's great-grandmother. "I based the portrait on old photographs of period dress."

The portrait of Don Moises Rubinstein Krongold replicates a picture Goldchain took of his maternal grandfather in the late 1970s, he says. "I feel that I've gone full circle with this photograph," Goldchain says.

A 1999 self-portrait depicting this grandfather was the impetus for a thesis project of 13 self-portraits, for a master of fine arts degree, which Goldchain completed at York University in 2000.

After a show at York, Carolyn Bell- Farrell, then director of the Koffler Gallery, invited him to exhibit these works in 2001.

Some of the pictures were featured in the magazine Guilt and Pleasure in 2006 and were seen by Michael Murphy, an American book agent. He approached Goldchain about finding a publisher for a book of self-portraits.

In March of 2007, a publisher signed on with a request for 55 portraits, recalls Goldchain. "I only had 30 at the time."

He says he scrambled to meet a six-month deadline. "This was a team effort. Each picture takes five people. I needed two photography assistants and all types of makeup and hair artists."

He credits photographers Adrian Fish and Anthony Pileggi and makeup artist Kelly McCallum for the success of his self-portraits.

The self-portraits have already been shown in Paris, Berlin, Venice, Prague, Montreal, Fredericton, and Woodstock, N.Y.

Goldchain says the birth of his son – Michael is now 16 – was one of the catalysts for doing the familial self-portraits. "Becoming a father, I needed to feel like I was part of a long chain. I could not get the chain to come together, so I created the illusion of links.

"The project has brought me closer to a larger family history… I wanted to pass on to my son an awareness of a larger family."

Pictured: Portrait as Mojszes Precelman
[Rafael Goldchain photos]

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COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING

An interview with the author of Eva's Threepenny Theatre

By NANCY WIGSTON
Special to The CJN

Eva's Threepenny Theatre, Ottawa-based Andrew Steinmetz's "fiction about memoir," stars his great-aunt Eva, who acted in the 1928 debut of Bertolt Brecht's Threepenny Opera.

Both Eva's dynamic presence and her Brechtian training influenced her nephew's writing. "The overall structure of the book is Brechtian, with its multiple narrators and tones, but the content of each piece within the whole is emotionally driven," Steinmetz said.

Steinmetz reading [Ryan Hunt photo]

The following is excerpted from an e-mail interview with Steinmetz.

C.J.N.: Was the real Eva a wild character?

Steinmetz: She was no WASP, let's put it that way. Direct, irreverent, packed with real and put-on emotions, her humour came from the extravagant positions she would take. Her theatre training and love of exaggeration made sure she was the focus of attention. I got to know her first when I was 12 and she was in her 60s. She moved into our [Eastern Townships] summer house with at least five dogs. My Swedish grandparents were already living there. They had a whippet – we had two dogs and a cat. On weekends, it was mayhem. I loved that atmosphere.

Eva never stopped telling stories. I picked up on her European sensibility – apparent in her tastes and habits: goose fat, Russian rye, garlic, wine, cigarettes. I didn't grow up feeling very Canadian. Canadians ate hot dogs, we didn't. Whatever Eva was, wherever she came from, I liked that place. I felt comfortable dreaming about it.

C.J.N.: Your first chapter showcases Eva and her pet monkey. Did you deliberately set the tone with this story about a rebellious, caged creature?

Steinmetz: Yes, the story is like Genesis, the founding myth for how Eva will speak in the rest of the novel. It was her showpiece, the first story she told me when I asked her about Brecht. For years I could recite it forward or backwards. I was fluent. I repeat many sentences from this story in different contexts, to show how different voices mouthing the same words strike different chords in the reader. It's also important for its rebellious nature and for setting Eva up as an outsider who loves outsiders. At the end, there is the identification between Eva and her monkey, and Germany and the Jews. When she says, "Everybody knew, and everybody did nothing," she is not talking about Bimbo. She is talking about ordinary German citizens and concentration camps.

Eva and Monkey circa 1919, Breslau

C.J.N.: What about Eva and Brecht's Mother Courage?

Steinmetz: Initially, in the book, Eva makes the identification, ironically, to say she has no courage to be a mother to her own child. But Brecht's Mother Courage is complex, ravaged by war, yet also a parasite, fighting for survival by selling her wares to soldiers. She's in a desperate position. Eva told me about Berliners who in 1946-47 made makeshift wagons out of garbage, string, bits of wood and bicycles and used these to transport their "stuff" from place to place. Mother Courage is essentially homeless. So, too, was Eva, a refugee, displaced, restless. But they weren't without guile. Necessity is the mother of invention. Perhaps for Eva necessity was her true mother, the only one she ever had.

C.J.N.: At the opposite pole from Eva is her older brother, Hermann Hans [HH] and his fantastic escape story. "A total experience, like war," HH is the family dictator from Eva's childhood. What was it like, wrestling characters like these onto the page?

Steinmetz: In the end, they became abstractions to me and abstractions are easier to wrestle with than real people. In the book I say Eva was all verb, pure becoming, while HH was this solid noun of pure being. She could improvise, she was flexible – therefore she got through the difficult years. He was inflexible – therefore deformed by the oncoming storm. I had a loving relationship with HH. I have shaped him here and taken away his many good elements. I inherited some of his poems, in German, and translated them [using a dictionary]. He wrote like a good German, about nature and trees and flowers and the sunrise, but also about the pain and trauma of human relationships.

Every morning he went for a walk in the woods near his house outside Winston-Salem. He took his chickens with him. They would walk by his side through the forest. I have learned a lot, thinking about HH and Eva, their lives, the choices they made. After years reading about their times, staring at photographs, listening to them talk and to others talk about them, still, I am aware that I don't really know them.

C.J.N.: What about Rudolf, HH's friend who, as a Nazi, rescues the stranded Eva in return for favours?

Steinmetz: However extravagant, almost all her stories checked out, factually. Eva rarely used a euphemism. When she did, I knew she was hiding something painful. She was blackmailed in Vienna, sexually – she did not call it rape – and that's how she got to Switzerland. She would not give details. The Nazi in question was not this Rudolf. The reality is much worse.

C.J.N.: Why is this family so often described as being on stage? Were the Steinmetz clan –"our Jewish origins," as HH writes, the words crossed out – already playing roles, as assimilated Jews?

Steinmetz: Every family is its own distinct society, even happy families… My grandfather and Eva would probably never have said they were part Jewish, to them that was Nazi math. HH was punished for every identity – bourgeois, part-Jew, German – so he became a rabid atheist and recluse. He did not want to play a role, period. As a writer I can relate to that; I am fond of Keats' idea of negative capability; the writer erases himself to become the other. I have pushed that theory pretty far, personally and artistically… Writing the book, I did ask myself: Is this [struggle with identity] the consequence of having crossed out Jewish origins – of having relinquished my religious and cultural identity?

C.J.N.: How did writing the book affect you artistically?

Steinmetz: Artistically, the book pushed me to my limit. For me, every sentence is an experiment. I wrote sections in first person, third person, second person, using a different voice for sections of historical fiction and two others for oral storytelling. It took me over 14 years. For many of those years, I hung on to the manuscript like you might an overturned boat.

Eva's Threepenny Theatre is published by Gaspereau Press.

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Arts & Travel

Filmmaker Yoav Shamir

Israeli documentary filmmaker examines anti-Semitism

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Israeli documentary filmmaker Yoav Shamir was drawn to the oldest hatred, anti-Semitism, precisely because he had never personally experienced it.

"We live in a Jewish place, and anti-Semitism is not part of our lives," said Shamir, whose film, Defamation, was screened at the recent Hot Docs festival in Toronto. "Yet anti-Semitism makes headlines and we read about it constantly. So, yes, I was curious."

In an interview, Shamir, 38, said that since he knew little about anti-Semitism when he started his project, he approached Abe Foxman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League, which is headquartered in New York City.

"They're the biggest organization in the world fighting anti-Semitism. So they seemed like a logical choice."

According to Shamir, Foxman, a Holocaust survivor, liked the film. "He thought it was fair. They're OK with it."

Defamation, an anecdotal survey of anti-Semitism, starts with an unconventional scene of a Greek American taxi driver negotiating his vehicle through traffic in New York.

As he talks, he professes not to understand the meaning of the phrase anti-Semitism, scoffs at the thought that Jews are persecuted and claims that they control the world.

"He hadn't met too many Jews in his life," said Shamir by way of explaining the driver's ignorance and prejudice.

As Defamation picks up a head of steam, Shamir's cynical grandmother mischievously spouts anti-Semitic notions, Israeli students visiting Poland detect whiffs of anti-Semitism, an Israeli newspaper editor maintains that all European nations are anti-Semitic, and a young African-American man living in a chassidic enclave in New York City portrays The Protocols of the Elders of Zion as a blueprint of the truth.

Chugging along, Defamation makes a number of additional points through interviews with a wide variety of individuals.

A Russian Jew downplays the persistence of anti-Semitism. A rabbi in Kiev claims that only secular Jews are concerned by anti-Semitism. The controversial anti-Zionist American academic, Norman Finkelstein, observes that Jews in the United States need not worry about the "new anti-Semitism."

Further on, Uri Avneri, the left-wing Israeli magazine editor and a refugee from Nazi Germany, minimizes anti-Semitism, saying you'd need a magnifying glass to find anti-Semites.

As the film winds down, an American Jew on an Anti-Defamation League information trip in Europe says he regards Israel as an "insurance policy," while a Jewish academic says that Israel's policies toward the Palestinians should be a source of concern for Jews in Israel and everywhere else.

Shamir, whose 2003 film Checkpoint dealt critically with Israel's system of checkpoints in the West Bank, said he did not make Defamation with the intention of probing anti-Semitism's origins or explaining its appeal.

"That would be the subject of another film," noted Shamir, who lives in Tel Aviv.

He added, "Anti-Semitism concerns me as much as racism and homophobia."

What also worries him is the prevalence of racism in Israel. "It's a very serious problem. It's almost impossible for an Israeli Arab to rent an apartment in Tel Aviv."

Shamir believes that Israel has "a very complicated and tricky" relationship with Jews in the Diaspora. When Israel's policies are denounced, Jews living outside Israel may well be targeted, he suggested.

Although he finds Finkelstein interesting, he describes him as "a traumatized, wounded man who expresses his ideas in an extreme way."

In conclusion, Shamir thinks that Jews should live in the present, look to the future and shake off their preoccupation with the past.

The lesson of the Holocaust is that Israel needs to be strong. "But we have no right to abuse other people," he said in an oblique reference to Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians.

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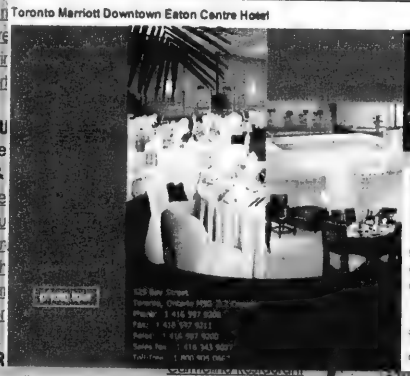

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

SHOLEM ASCH PLAY GOD OF VENGEANCE AT HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE

Holy Blossom Temple Stagecraft Company is preparing to stage an English version of Yiddish playwright **Sholem Asch**'s controversial God of Vengeance.

Controversial in its day, the 1907 play takes place in a Polish brothel run by Yankel Chapchovich. Attempting to gain respectability within the Jewish community, Yankel purchases a sefer Torah and offers it as a dowry for his daughter, Rivkele, hoping she will marry a young rabbinic scholar. Tragedy ensues when Rivkele undermines her father's dreams and hopes.

"The play ranges across many social issues that are still present within our own community, as well as mainstream society," said director **Eric Kirsh**.

The cast consists of **Esther Arbeid**, **Ron Boyd**, **Susanne Egier**, **Heather Finestone**, **David Fournier**, **Nora Freund**, **Anna Grosman**, **Harry Hochman**, **Ellen Karabanow**, **Judy Kent**, **Michael Ryval** and **Ivana Stojanovic**. $18, $12. Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St. Thursday, June 4 and Saturday, June 6 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, June 7, 2 p.m. 416-789-3291, ext. 511

* * *

Awake and Sing: Soulpepper Theatre Company is preparing a production of the **Clifford Odets** play Awake and Sing! a turbulent comedy-drama that offers a glimpse into three generations of a Jewish family struggling to survive in Depression-era New York. The director is **Miles Potter**, and the cast includes **Derek Boyes**, **Ari Cohen**, **Oliver Dennis**, **Matthew Edison**, **Jonathan Gould** and **Nancy Palk**.

Tickets $28 to $68. Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 55 Mill St., Distillery District. June 6 to July 31. 416-866-8666, www.soulpepper.ca. $20 tickets for 21- to 30-year-olds are available at www.stageplay.ca.

* * *

Jewish Book Awards: The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards. Free admission, everyone welcome to the 21st annual celebration of excellence in contemporary Canadian writing that reflects Jewish themes and subjects in history, fiction, Yiddish and more. The ceremony was always previously held in North York and moves downtown this year for the first time. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Monday, May 25, 8 p.m. 416-636-1880, ext. 352, www.kofflerarts.org

* * *

Portnyansky in Performance: Show One Productions and the Koffler Centre present international Russian-born singing sensation **Svetlana Portnyansky**. Trained as a cantor and described as "a Russian Streisand and a Jewish Piaf," Portnyansky is joined by violinist **Arkady Gips**, who has accompanied Madonna on her world tours, and pianist **Ernst Shteinberg**. $45, $55. Leah Posluns Theatre, 4588 Bathurst St. Wednesday, May 20, 8 p.m. 416-737-6785, www.ShowOneProductions.ca

* * *

Russian singing sensation Svetlana Portnyansky

At Miles Nadal JCC

• Te-Amim Music Theatre's première of Ten Green Bottles – From Vienna to Shanghai: A Journey of Fear and Hope, presents the true story of one family's strength in the face of persecution. Based on the book by **Vivian Jeanette Kaplan**, adapted and directed by **Mark Cassidy**. $25, $20. Al Green Theatre, May 16 to 24. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org. Limited rush seats available at the door.

• **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses Israeli Views in the next Film Talk Sundays on the International Jewish Cinema. $9 includes film clips, coffee and bagel breakfast. Sunday, May 17, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606. E-mail film@mnjcc.org.

•Foreign & Familiar, an exhibition of photographs by **Mircea Popescu**, is on view in the Jacobs Lounge as part of the Contact Festival of Photography. Until June 15.

Arts in Brief

• United Jewish Appeal's Business Cabinet presents Funny Business: A Night of Jewish Comedy. Absolute Comedy Club, 2335 Yonge St. Tuesday, May 19 (note new date), 8 p.m. (doors open at 7). $20 includes kosher desserts; cash bar. RSVP online at www.ujaevents.com/registration/funnybusiness or phone Brenda, 416-635-2883, ext. 5135.

• The Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation presents Israel Makes Music, a concert with award-winning Israeli pianist **Gili Loftus**, violinist **Hagar Maoz**, oboist **Natti Amrany** and cellist **Bernice Keshet**. $20, includes post-concert reception. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Tuesday, May 19, 8 p.m. www.ticketweb.ca, 416-932-2260

• **Ron Charach**, author of eight books of poetry, launches a first collection of essays, Cowboys and Bleeding Hearts: Essays on Violence, Health and Identity. Nicholas Hoare Books, 45 Front St. E. Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m.

• **Mattan Klein** and **Seeds of Sun**, the leading Israeli jazz ensemble in North America, perform at Holy Blossom Temple in celebration of Yom Yerushalayim, as part of the temple's Musical Heritage concert series. $26. Holy Blossom, 1950 Bathurst St. Thursday, May 21, 8 p.m. 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

• The percussive ensemble **Samba Squad** performs a 10th anniversary concert, $20, $15. Phoenix Concert Theatre, 410 Sherbourne St. May 22, 10 p.m. (doors open 9 p.m.) 416-588-0307, www.lula.ca

•Writer **Shlomit Kriger** is seeking short stories, songs or poems from Holocaust survivors for inclusion in an anthology of creative writing by Holocaust survivors. The deadline is May 29. For details, e-mail holocaustanthoology@yahoo.ca or write Kriger at P.O. Box 984, 1 Promenade Circle, Thornhill L4J 8O7.

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Eizenman looks to score on and off the ice

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Fans of Canadian Jewish hockey talent will be familiar with the name Oren Eizenman.

The Toronto native is a standout forward with Israel's national hockey program and last year received favourable appraisal from NHL scouts, when he was invited to the Vancouver Canucks' training camp before the start of the 2008-2009 season.

While he didn't make the big league this year – Eizenman, 24, was hobbled with a number of minor injuries that kept him from peak performance throughout the regular season, he said – his time playing for the Canucks' farm team, the AHL's Manitoba Moose, was productive.

In mid-season, Eizenman was traded to the Milwaukee Admirals – the Nashville Predators' AHL affiliate – and late last month, he helped the team sweep its semi-final playoff series against the Rockford Ice Hogs.

Though he managed just one assist in the series against Rockford, Eizenman's play evolved this year.

Known more for his scoring and playmaking, Milwaukee's coaching staff has asked him to become a grittier player with the Admirals.

Eizenman told The CJN it's a part he's happy to play.

"It's exciting," he said. "My game continues to become more well-rounded. In the past couple of months, I've focused more on the defensive aspects of my game, which has led to my coach being comfortable with me killing a lot of penalties, as well as shutting down the other team's top lines. I think this year has made me a much more versatile player."

The Admirals continued their quest for the AHL's Calder Cup with their West Division Final series against the Houston Aeros late last month.

While he's intent on continuing his quest to break into the NHL next year, Eizenman's off-season will prove challenging this year as well.

In addition to his hockey career, Eizenman will start his own business this summer with the launch of a hockey camp in Toronto geared toward helping kids aged five to 13 improve their game and learn from professionals.

Called the Young Stars Hockey Camp, Eizenman, along with friend and partner, Brandon Luft, are offering two week-long sessions of intense hockey skills training from Aug. 10 to Aug. 21 to "strengthen the Jewish community through a Canadian pastime," according to the camp's motto.

Luft said the hockey camp is a "50/50" partnership with the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre's Centre Camp and is also co-sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the United Way.

Sessions will take place at York University's Ice Gardens hockey facility, and Eizenman said he's working on bringing in some "special" instructors, hinting that he may be able to coax some of his NHL friends and colleagues to give some hockey lessons to campers.

Eizenman said he'll be the head instructor at the camp – where campers will get three hours of on-ice instruction per day – and he's eager to impart his experience and knowledge to the kids.

"I've wanted to do this for awhile. I wanted to give back to a community that has given me so much," he said.

"I felt there was a void for Toronto kids who wanted to get better in hockey. They should have the highest level of training possible. When you're young, you have the potential to develop skills. With kids, you really see huge improvements [over time]."

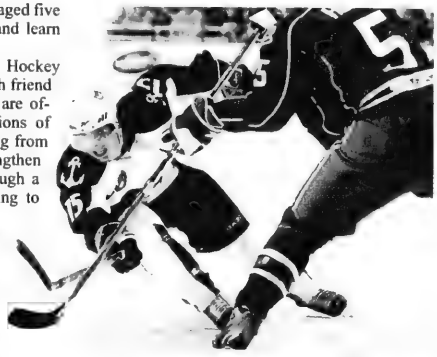
This is the second time Eizenman will run a hockey camp for youngsters. He had a brief turn as an instructor at another camp in upstate New York three years ago while playing for the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Engineers in NCAA Division I hockey.

"I've been playing hockey for a long time at a really high level, and this is an opportunity to pass on all the things I've been fortunate enough to learn from all the great coaches I've had over the years," Eizenman said of his new camp.

"I hope this experience can help some of the kids realize their dreams as I did," he said. "Hockey is the coolest job in the world, if you ask me. If I can help just one kid get there, I'd be very happy."

Eizenman added that he hopes his camp will blossom into a sort of farm system for Israel's national hockey program, and that discussions are underway with Israeli hockey officials to partner with the camp in the coming years.

For more information, visit www.youngstarshockey.com.



Oren Eizenman skating hard for the Milwaukee Admirals of the AHL earlier this year.

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Boxer who survived Auschwitz by fighting dies

JTA

JERUSALEM—Salamo Arouch, a Greek-Jewish boxer who survived Auschwitz by fighting fellow prisoners, has died.

Arouch died in a nursing home in Israel on April 26. He was 86.

Arouch served as a consultant on the 1989 film Triumph of the Spirit about his win-or-die fights staged by the Nazis. It was the first major movie to be filmed on location at the Polish death camp.

He had been a boxing star in his hometown of Salonika before being deported in 1943 to the death camp. Arouch has said he won 208 fights and had two draws during his time in the camp. Each fight continued until one of the competitors died either from the fight or by the gun of a Nazi soldier.

In 1945 he was transferred to Bergen-Belsen until he was liberated by Allied forces.

In Israel, Arouch was known as Shlomo. He boxed there as an amateur after fighting in Israel's War of Independence, then opened a shipping and moving business in Tel Aviv.

Solving Iran

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

Question: What is the endgame vis-á-vis Iran's nukes?

Answer No. 1: The Israeli government, based on evidence gathered by the Israel Defence Forces, decides that Iran is building nuclear bombs with the intention of using them against Israel. The air force attacks Iranian nuclear sites. Israel either completely neutralizes Iran's nuclear capabilities or risks a nuclear counterattack.

Answer No. 2: The United States, Europe and perhaps some of the more moderate Arab states negotiate peace with Iran. The Iranians pledge to not build nuclear bombs (or if they have already built bombs, to destroy them) in exchange for foreign aid and acceptance by the West.

Answer No. 3: As it turns out, Iran doesn't have the capacity, know-how or will to build nuclear weapons. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's blustering aside, its nuclear forays are, in fact, purely designed to provide cheaper electricity.

The true answer, I suspect, includes elements of all of the above. Iran, most probably, has a serious interest in building nuclear weapons, and as such, the Israelis must consider the risk of an attack and how to destroy or disrupt Iran's nuclear development. At the same time, Iran may be willing to negotiate a settlement that would see its nuclear program effectively become a non-threat to Israel. And there is also the possibility that Iran simply can't build a nuke – at least not right now.

On the surface, the Iran situation seems rather simple: a country that supports radical Islamists appears to be building nuclear weapons. The only logical reason it would be involved in such a project, seemingly, is to launch them at Israel, the country that its president has said he'd like to see wiped off the map.

But the story is much, much more complicated.

First and foremost, let's remember that Iran does not yet have any nuclear bombs, so all scenarios remain, for now, hypothetical. For years now, reports have suggested that the country is closing in on producing a nuke – Tehran may be three years away, five years away, two months away, etc.

Nobody seems to know exactly when Iran will be able to build a useable weapon. Iranian leaders, smartly, have kept their cards close to their chests. We have built up our own fear of what they might do with a nuclear bomb.

But Israel isn't Iran's only enemy in the region. In fact, Israel may not even be Iran's most likely target. Most of us forget that while Tehran is engaged in a war of words with the West and Israel, it's fighting an *actual* war against other Muslims. The internecine fighting between Shia-dominated Iran and Sunni-dominated Iraq and Saudi Arabia shows no signs of ending soon.

Indeed, Shia-Sunni fighting is likely to heat up, especially when the United States begins to remove its soldiers from Iraq. The Iranians are already working hard to destabilize Iraq, and they will probably ramp up those efforts when the Americans leave. This could quite possibly lead Saudi Arabia to interject, which would in turn increase the chances of a regional, Muslim-versus-Muslim war. In such a scenario, there's no reason to think Tehran wouldn't be willing to use nuclear weapons on Iraq or Saudi Arabia.

Don't misunderstand: the Iranian nuclear program still poses a threat to Israel. We're talking about a country run by Islamists with a known history of supporting anti-Israel terror groups. If Iran was to acquire nuclear capability, it would pose a serious danger to Israel, and Israel might be forced to act.

But, let's not forget that things are not so straightforward. Iran does not yet have nukes, so we have time to consider strategies that can be used if/when Iran goes nuclear. And, more importantly, a nuclear Iran doesn't necessarily mean a nuclear war for Israel. Time is – still – on our side.

Let's use the opportunity to explore all possible roads away from a Middle East war of destruction.

CREAM OF PARSNIP SOUP

2 tsp butter
1/4 c diced onion
5 c vegetable stock
Pinch pepper
3/4 tsp white balsamic vinegar
9 small peeled parsnips, chopped
3 diced shallots
3/4 cup white wine
3/4 tsp salt
3/4 c half-and-half

In large pot over medium-low heat, melt butter. Add shallots and onion; sauté, stirring about 4 min. Add wine, stir well, and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until wine is reduced by half, about 10 min. Add parsnips, stock, vinegar, salt, and pepper and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently, uncovered, until parsnips are completely tender, about 45 min. Remove pan from heat and use immersion blender to purée soup or cool slightly and purée in batches in food processor, transferring purée to clean saucepan. Whisk in half-and-half. Reheat when ready to serve.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

WORKMEN'S CIRCLE PERETZ SCHOOLS

Yiddish and Jewish culture were emphasized at these two Workmen's Circle I. L. Peretz schools in Toronto, shown here in a 1922 illustration. Top and centre right, the class and schoolhouse on Maria Street in West Toronto (the Junction). Bottom and centre left, the class and schoolhouse on Beverley Street. There was also another Peretz school on Crawford Street. This year, the Arbeiter Ring, as the Yiddish-oriented labour-based organization is called in Yiddish, marks its 100th year in Toronto.

Where lava once flowed

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Communities mature in different ways over time. Changes occur because of various factors. Anti-Semitism is one of them.

The Toronto Jewish community has developed dramatically in numbers and wealth since the 1940s. There was a huge population increase in the 1980s, when many Israelis chose life on Bathurst Street, as opposed to Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv.

Around that time, the gates of Russia opened, which allowed for an exodus en masse of Soviet Jews. Thirty-thousand Russians and 40,000 Israelis made Toronto their home.

According to the United Jewish Community website (www.ujc.org), we are the ninth-largest Diaspora Jewish community and "in nearly one generation, Toronto's Jewish community has doubled in size to almost 200,000 people."

Aggressive fundraising has set the tone for the changes in Toronto over the last few decades. The wealth and generosity of our mmunity members has helped Jews who t afford tuition to send their children to day school. Our community has also helped the impoverished with supplementary assistance. This approach – fundraising as the core of our growth – has produced some wonderful results, but it has resulted in an environment in which "the ask" became the prime motivator behind our activities and growth, and it allowed our community's soul to lag.

Our day school graduates, encouraged to make the marks for the bucks, mostly lost interest in Judaism as a thought process and a way of life, and Israel sometimes became a funky place to visit versus an existential commitment. While our community focused on securing the next "gift," our children heard our language and began to show a leviathan sense of entitlement. Jewish university students on campus seemed to turn away from embracing our Jewish homeland. Recently, for example, many have volunteered for short and simple programs with little to no responsibility for the participant.

Something was terribly wrong. We were raising lots of money and building buildings, but our souls were being left out of the equation.

Well, guess who's back – anti-Semitism – and all is changing again. Slowly but surely, the Jews of Toronto are waking up to the reality that fortunes raised – even those invested in Holocaust education – have done little to raise our Jewish consciousness or to decrease the numbers of irascible Jew-haters. Our soulfulness is returning as the epithets hurled at us are getting louder and nastier and it becomes impossible for us to close our eyes to the fact that during the war in Gaza, Jewish students were trapped in their campus offices by a virulently anti-Israel and anti-Semitic group.

Anti-Semitism once again looms over us like the sword of Damocles, and we are coming to life. The situation has ignited our spirit. While it is sad that a community growth spurt has been ignited by the hate directed at us, positive developments are happening – or as I like to say: "Where lava once flowed, flowers now grow."

One of the positive developments is the establishment of an organization by Marcel Cohen, 40, called Your Outreach Network of the Arts (YONA), described by this newspaper as "an organization that aims to bring people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds – particularly Jews, Muslims and Christians – together in non-partisan environments."

Another positive development is the launch of Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (DARA) by Dr. Michael Bloom, of the department of anesthesia at the William Osler Health Centre. DARA is a grassroots organization for doctors interested in fighting anti-Semitism, particularly in medical literature, academia and on campus. Well done, Michael!

I look forward to the seasons of growth as they unfold and a time when anti-Semitism and all hatred ceases, and we realize that community-wide involvement in the richness of Judaism can be motivated by an unstoppable pursuit of truth and the motivation to be Godly in nature.

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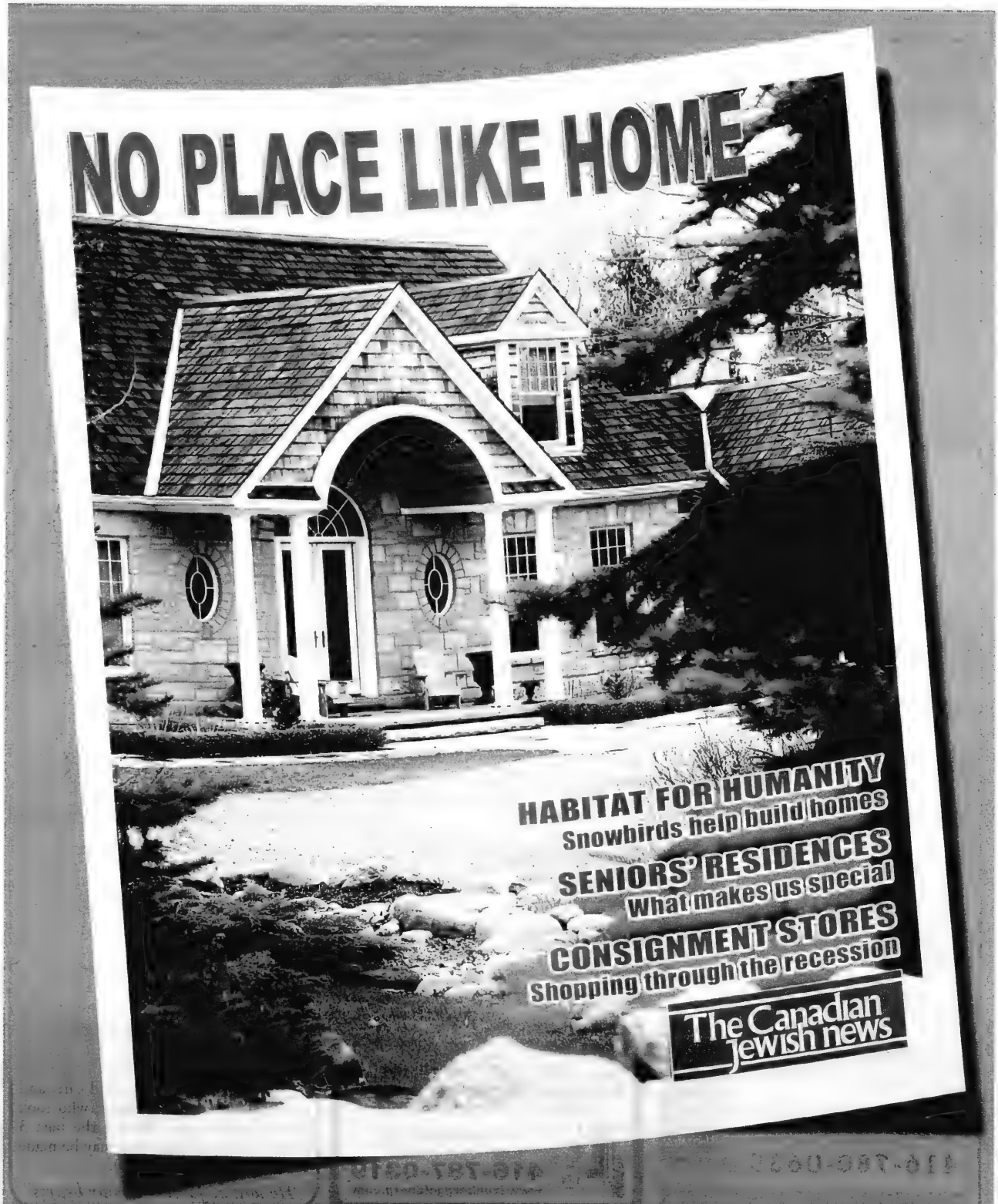
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Building homes for others – satisfying at any age

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Often referred to as as snowbirds, many seniors from the cold north relocate to warmer climates for the severe winter months.

Some occupy themselves with golf, tennis, cards, classes or a host of other activities.

Since I no longer play golf or tennis or spend much time sitting around the pool, this winter I looked for an activity that would both stimulate me and contribute something to the community.

I have been a volunteer all of my adult life. Most volunteer positions require an ongoing commitment, however, and since I would be south for only a few months, the choices were limited.

How fortunate I was to be acquainted with two men living in the same Hallandale condominium: Mel Katzman, 81, a semi-retired optometrist from Toronto, and Irving Burnstein, 82, a retired Montreal businessman formerly in the steel business.

Both were volunteers for Habitat for Humanity.

I was aware of Habitat for Humanity but had not previously been involved with it. It's an international, non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating substandard housing by building simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with low-income families in need. The owners of Habitat homes must have a strong commitment to the program. Families who are unable to qualify for conventional financing and are willing to work hard to improve their lives and the lives of their children are selected to participate in the program.

Working at a Habitat for Humanity building site in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., are, from left, Cynthia Gasner, Mel Katzman and Irving Burnstein.

The selection is based on need, willingness to partner by contributing 500 hours of sweat equity and by attending homebuyer educational workshops. Families must also be able to repay a no-profit, zero-interest mortgage on a monthly basis.

Since I enjoy working and repairing things in my home, often with the help of "do-it-yourself" manuals, I asked Mel and Irving if I could join them in their volunteer work.

To the surprise of my family and friends, twice a week throughout the winter months this year, I went to a building site in Ft. Lauderdale where 14 Habitat houses are being constructed.

I'm sure that the site supervisor was skeptical when I arrived on my first day – a 77-year-old Jewish great-grandmother who was going to tackle the physically taxing activities of construction.

That first day, I was assigned to painting the outside of a house along with several other senior volunteers, some from Canada and some retired and living in Florida. On the building site, there were also younger volunteers active inside and outside of other homes.

I was privileged to work along with Irv, who has volunteered with Habitat since 1995 and participates in the building as well as acting as a house assistant who directs and teaches volunteers, and Mel, who has volunteered for three years and also serves as a teaching assistant from time to time.

They and others taught me a multitude of construction procedures – proper ways to take measurements, how to handle power equipment, safety procedures and a number of other building skills.

As the weeks rolled by, my two days a week at the Habitat site gave me enormous satisfaction.

On one occasion, a woman and her four children stopped at the house that would be hers, and the joy on her face and that of her children meant more than any thank you.

"I've always been taught and believe that if you take something out of a community, you must put something back in," Mel says. "I hope that I can physically continue to give my time to such a worthy project."

When I was at the construction site for my last day of work before returning to Toronto, I said goodbye to my co-volunteers. The site supervisor presented me with a Habitat for Humanity shirt and a hat and said he hoped that I would come back to volunteer next year.

Alevai – I hope so, too.

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Hiring a designer can save you money

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

When redesigning your home, doing it yourself may seem like a good way to cut back on expenses. Brian Murphy, an award-winning designer with more than 30 years experience, says, however, that in the long run, hiring a designer will actually save you time – and money.

"You can save yourself money in the fact that after you've done something, [you won't] realize it's not good and have to change it, or buy something twice," he said.

"[Designers] can stop you from making mistakes."

Murphy, with his Toronto-based company Brian Murphy Design & Associates Inc., specializes in modern design. Their unique and artistic approach to shapes and colours stems from Murphy's art school education and background in landscape and interior plant design.

Trends for 2009 include a lot of glass, Murphy said. Glass in kitchens, as room dividers and on coffee tables. Glass stones are making an appearance with another trend – the modern gas fireplace, which uses a line of fire instead of the old method of attempting to recreate a real fireplace, logs and all.

Clean lines and modern design is also a big trend, even among Murphy's clients who previously favoured a more traditional look.

"A few years ago, it was very difficult to convince somebody to do a modern interior, but now I have clients who have been traditional for years who are now interested in doing modern."

Murphy has noticed people are being more careful with their money these days, either scaling back their design projects or doing one room at a time. He said, however, that great design does not have to come with a giant price tag.

"I visited with someone [recently] who was teaching Indian cooking classes. They had a very basic little apartment, but what they'd done was carefully organized the colours in the space so they were all very nicely co-ordinated, and the few items they did have in the house – none of them were expensive – were set up in such a way so that they weren't cluttered. It was a very clean, neat and airy space."

Another advantage of utilizing the services of a designer is that they often come up with ideas to bring new life to a home.

"One of the things you're going to get better with a designer is something that's fresh and exciting," Murphy said.

For more information about Brian Murphy Design & Associates Inc., visit the website at www.brianmurphydesign.com or call 416-293-4917.

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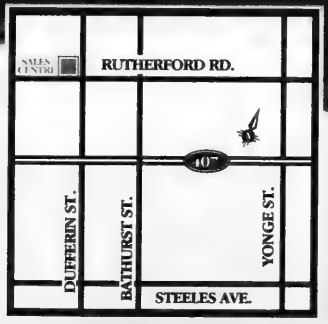

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Studio creates beautiful environmentally friendly living spaces

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

bsq. Landscape Design Studio Inc. (416-723-1959, www.bsqdesign.com) is a company dedicated to creating livable spaces. From the landscaped gardens on your property to renovated rooms in the house or a 10 x 20-foot shipping container converted to an office, all spaces created by the studio reflect the fact that owners Rob Boltman and Alex Bartlett are trained in design, construction, colour and design theory.

bsq.'s goal is to complement the home in a way that seems natural and almost effortless; to create gardens that look as though they have always been there and are appropriate for the community.

Boltman emphasizes that their work is not seasonal, and their outdoor work requires year-round consideration. For example, they take into account what plants will look like without their leaves so that the gardens do not suffer when the temperature changes. They factor in heights and screening, and always design first and build later.

Being eco-friendly is also an important aspect of bsq.'s planning. "We like to do as much environmentally friendly as possible," Boltman stresses, and they use recycled elements whenever feasible.

The company most recently received the IDS 09 Silver Award at the Interior Design Show for best booth design 200 square feet to 400 square feet for "10 x 20," a standard shipping container the company turned into an office.

"We took a project and applied it to our business," Boltman says. "We try to be green and make people think, which is our goal as designers in general."

The container incorporates solar power panels, a green roof, a rooftop deck and recycled materials. Boltman refers to 10 x 20 as their "school project" and looks forward to seeing it move to its permanent resting place on Matilda Street overlooking the Don Valley Parkway at Queen Street.

bsq. has also been the recipient of Canada Blooms' Environmental Award and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects' certificate of merit for excellence in design in landscape architecture.

Boltman is proud that they are receiving all the accolades and recognition for being environmentally friendly; however, in the end, he wants everyone to remember that his company also creates really lovely gardens.

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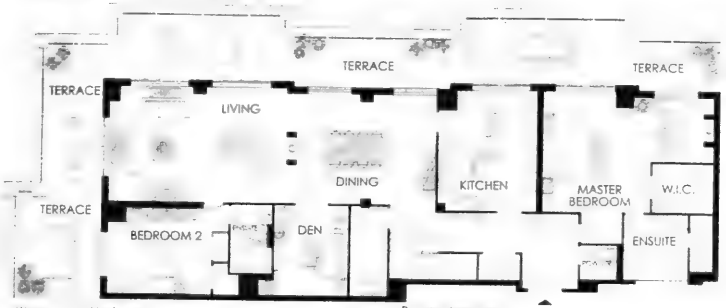

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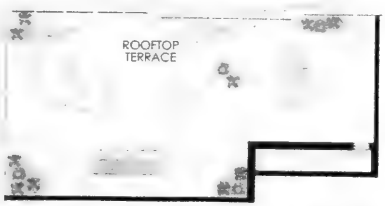

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What makes a home special?

The CJN asked local seniors residences about the simple things that make them special. The following are some of the replies we received.

Margaret Darte, one of **Hazelton Place's** longstanding residents, is 90 per cent blind and her walker is jokingly labelled "Virtually Blind," but Margaret has ears like a hawk and a heart as big as an elephant's. Without our requesting it and with her instinctive intuition, she gently soothes queries by my many tour visitors or calms upset residents.

Her history has given her the strength and character so appreciated by so many. Having lost a daughter who was tragically killed, she helped develop the Bereaved Families group and returned to school for her master's degree at age 55.

Our staff and residents at Hazelton appreciate all of our residents, but Margaret Darte is a resident who warms our hearts on a daily basis.

* * *

Celebrating special occasions together is a given at **Terrace Gardens**, from a baby shower to a bat mitzvah or even a wedding.

Our residents enjoy the music, food and dance that commemorate the special days and revive the memories of the happy occasion.

To help us celebrate, family, relatives and friends always participate. In addition, traditional foods accompany every Jewish holiday.

This year, Yom Ha'atzmaut was celebrated with an Israeli lunch that included shish kebab, Israeli salad, hummus and techinah. The music was lively and the flags were waving.

* * *

What makes life at **L'Chaim Retirement Home** so special is that you don't have to look for heartwarming events – they find you, every day. This is particularly true on Shabbat. I can't tell you how many times children have come to pick up their parents and the parents don't want to go. They don't want to miss Shabbat dinner here!

This is a good problem, one that leaves everybody smiling. For us, it's a big reward.

* * *

Resident Zev Selinger sends this response about **Cedarvale Terrace Nursing Home**, located in the Forest Hill area of Toronto.

I have been living here since October 2002, and I enjoy life very much.

There is a synagogue in the building, where the full range of Jewish life takes place during the year. The food in the kitchen is kosher and very tasty. I study with the rabbi once a week.

There is also rehab and physiotherapy, and a talk group run by a psychiatrist.

Movies are shown every week, and activities offered include bingo, tai chi, art therapy and special events such as talent shows. There is a birthday party every month for residents born that month.

The building is designed so that we cannot help but run into other people, and all nursing homes should be built this way.

* * *

Amica at Thornhill, is a boutique–style residence situated close to the historic Village of Thornhill, just north of the city. This elegant building is commonly compared to many 5 star hotels, for its beautiful decor, resort - inspired amenity spaces, wellness and vitality program, delicious dishes and unbeatable service. However, the heart of this location is really the "community within the community".

Rose Besser, wife, mother, Holocaust survivor and resident of Amica at Thornhill was like many, not ready to make the move into retirement. Her children played a large part as they felt mom could no longer be independent safely at home. This was a struggle to find the "right" retirement community for mom. It was not until this past year when her health decreased and Rose had to undergo surgery that she agreed to check into Amica at Thornhill for a short-term respite stay, following her rehab at Baycrest. Rose loved her lifestyle and decided to make the move permanent. "I have always been very active. Amica helps me to live my active lifestyle. It's fantastic atmosphere, where people are very pleasant. I would highly recommend Amica to all seniors."

* * *

Two years ago **Forest Hill Place** welcomed a resident who was losing her sight due to macular degeneration. From the onset she has fully embraced retirement living and actively participates in various social gatherings including lecture series, live entertainment and craft classes. In fact she is always making new friends, as she loves to take new residents 'under her wing' and show them around the residence. She is an inspiration not just to the other residents but to the staff and everyone she meets.

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'Green' paints perform as well as traditional latex

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

It's been 80 years since Naftali Reingewirtz set up his paint shop at 107 Baldwin St., near Spadina Avenue.

Reingewirtz's grandson, Gary Zweig, now runs Reingewirtz Paints (416-977-3502). Zweig, who is the third generation of his family in the paint business – his father, Seymour Zweig, ran the store for 50 years– says much has changed in the last few years to make paints more environmentally friendly.

Consumers are asking for paints with lower levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), he said. "These paints have no smell. They're better for air quality. They reduce air pollution, and they're performing as well as traditional latex paint."

He said that low-VOC paint is latex based and covers surfaces well. "A new technology locks the pigment into the paint so that it spreads well onto the wall."

Zweig advised people to use a latex paintbrush with these paints, which are available in flat, eggshell and semi-gloss, as well as a primer. "They work great and there's less drying time."

He added that Varathane and wood stains are also becoming more environmentally friendly

Changes in paint technology have been ongoing for years. About 35 years ago, lead was banned from paint for safety reasons, Zweig said, and over the years, latex has gained in popularity over oil-based paints, in part for health reasons.

He said many oil-based paints are not as widely available now as they were in the past, and they will probably become even more difficult to find after 2010, should the government enact stricter laws to protect the environment.

Zweig stressed that people should not worry about the esthetics of low-VOC paint because manufacturers such as Benjamin Moore, which he deals with, and Aura have improved the technology. "They're leaders in 'green' paint technology."

All the major paint companies are developing "greener" products to meet government guidelines, Zweig said. "Benjamin Moore is launching their new line this spring."

Zweig said that people need to be educated about low-VOC paint. "The public and the paint professionals have to adapt," he stressed.

Customers will not detect a difference in the quality of low-VOC, in fact, the faster drying time is advantageous, he said. "It can speed up a paint job. You can touch up a wall in 30 minutes, and you can recoat it in about an hour."

He said low-VOC paint is becoming more and more popular. "I get more people asking for it all the time. "

The one caveat of the new technology is that low-VOC paint will increase the price of a paint job. "'Green' paints are more expensive, but the price is worth paying for to keep the environment clean," Zweig said

For more information about the Reingewirtz Paints, visit www.paintstore.ca.

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Better to shop for the kids at a specialty store

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

If you are looking for a personal experience in planning and shaping your child's bedroom, a specialty shop is the best way to go.

Located at 1911 Dundas St. E. in Mississauga, Kiddiesworld of Furniture (www.kiddiesworld.ca, 905-624-9092) celebrates its 30th year in business next year. Carrying everything from cribs to beds to strollers, Kiddiesworld caters to all your furniture and accessory needs from tot to teen.

While the store has grown from its relatively humble beginnings into a 13,000-square-foot showroom, it has maintained its personal, family-run approach to the business. Founded by Jerry White in 1980, the store is now co-run by White's son Shawn.

"Back when we started, we only had six cribs on the floor. Now we've got 90!" says Jerry White. "We have a huge selection, but we are not a box store – the experience with us is very special.

"We carry all the furniture you will need for when your child comes into the world up until they are ready to leave the house," White says.

Kiddiesworld carries up to queen size bed sizes for teenagers, and such quality names as Nanart, Bugaboo and Young America. And it is constantly adding to and updating its roster. "It's important for us to be up to date," White says.

With such a vast selection of furniture on the floor, Kiddiesworld can cater to a variety of customers and price points.

"We have strollers that are as affordable as $30 and as high-end as $1,200," White says. "Our customers appreciate savings, but they are also very in tune with what they want."

To get the most bang for your buck, White suggests purchasing pieces with more than one function. Many of the nursery pieces are fully adaptable for a child and even for use into the teen years.

"People love the idea that a crib can morph into a double bed."

Kiddiesworld also offers a registry service, for moms-to-be. "We like to go through everything together with the customer – it's much more personal than doing it on a computer," White says.

The friendly, knowledgeable staff will walk you through every step, he adds, and "we are into our second generation of customers because of how much the original customers enjoyed their experience with us. Our best advertiser is word of mouth."

Continued on page B11

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Gifts for fussy moms

Continued from page B10

Another specialty shop for expectant families to consider is Dear-Born Baby at 72 Doncaster Ave., (www.dearbornbaby.com, 905-881-3334), the one-stop-shop for all your newborn's needs. Serving moms and tots since 1979, founder Cathy Scott knows a thing or two about babies.

"I started Dear-Born when I was a relatively new mom," Scott says. "I had two kids at home and was frustrated by the lack of products I could find for them."

Since then, Dear-Born has grown into a full-service destination offering everything from cribs to car seats to clothing and carriers. Boasting a 25-person staff as well as an onsite professional photography studio, Dear-Born truly caters to every facet of a baby's life.

Today, Dear-Born has grown into an online presence as well, offering its extensive selection of products to the online consumer. Shipping across North America, Dear-Born allows you to order gifts for those babies who might be out of hugging reach.

"Our website has been fabulous in connecting to our customers via new methods, such as e-mail blasts, an actively updated blog and our latest venture, Twitter!" Scott says. "New and expectant moms are spending massive amounts of time online, researching the latest and greatest in baby products, and this gives us the opportunity to interact with our clientele even before they stop by the store."

Scott cites eco-awareness and technological advances as the most important trends in the store today. "The green/organic trend has allowed for cottons in clothing and sheets to be made allergy and chemical free, which is very important with newborns."

Video monitors have also replaced voice monitors as the way to keep an eye on sleeping bundles. "People love that they can actually see their baby and know that they are safe," she says.

As far as other safety concerns, Scott warns against buying car seats and strollers second hand. "It's okay to cut back in other areas, but buying potentially unsafe pieces could put your baby at risk," she says. "Do your homework – make sure you know what's safe."

Dear-Born offers professional car seat installations, stroller tune-ups and repairs to ensure the safety of your baby.

The store's registry is a huge part of the business, because it enables new moms to be specific about the products they want for their babies.

"That way, gift-givers are sure that what they are buying is really going to get used," Scott says. "People want the best for their baby – we've definitely got it!"

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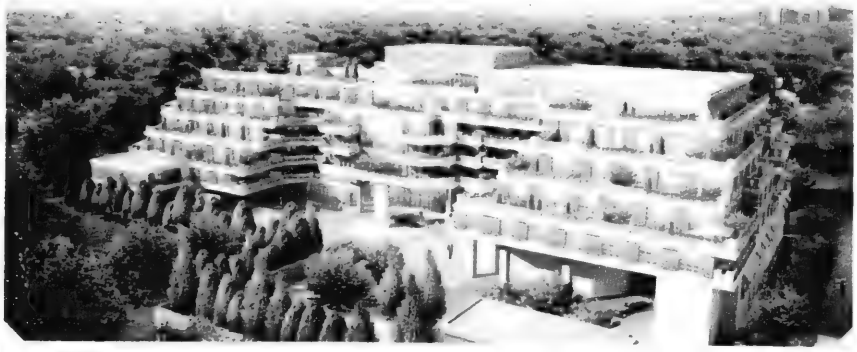

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

Whether you would like to live in the heart of downtown Toronto or in the suburbs, Tribute Communities offers the perfect place to live for those seeking luxury in a convenient location.

Tribute, which has built more than 25,000 homes in its 20-year-plus history, currently has three condominiums under construction, in Oakville, North York and downtown Toronto.

Slated for completion this summer, One Oak Park in Oakville overlooks the lake in beautiful Memorial Park. It consists of two 12-storey condominium towers – about 270 units altogether. Amenities include an exercise room, a party room and an outdoor swimming pool.

Scott McLellan, senior vice-president of sales and marketing for Tribute Communities, said One Oak Park has mainly one bedroom plus a den and two-bedroom units left for sale.

Located just north of Lawrence Avenue West, 1717 Avenue Road in North York, with 80 units in total, is expected to be completed by September 2010. A two-bedroom unit plus a den and a terrace starts at $785,000. Three-bedroom townhouses are also available, as are penthouse suites, starting from $2.4 million. Valet parking, a 24-hour concierge and fitness facilities with saunas are included.

The Tribute project Queen and Portland is due to be completed in early 2011. In downtown Toronto, it will be more than just a condominium. It features a 20,000-square-foot outdoor park on the fifth floor. Getting groceries (and clothes) will be a snap thanks to the Loblaws and Joe Fresh, which will be located below the units. One bedroom, two bedroom plus a den and three-bedroom units are available. Located near restaurants, shopping, nightlife and the Queen streetcar line, this 90-unit condo is in the ideal location for those who crave the true downtown experience.

For more information about Tribute's properties, visit www.tributecommunities.com or call 905-839-3500.

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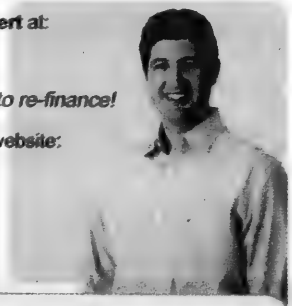

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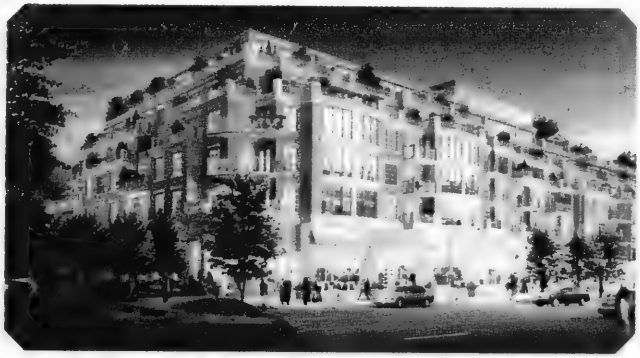


[Renderings courtesy of Tribute Communities]

Details make a house a home

Compiled by CJN Staff

Creating a community. Crafting a home. In both, the details make the difference, and once again, Remington Homes has embraced its commitment to Thornhill Valley and the families who live there by designing architecturally significant homes that are classic in design, tastefully appointed and built for convenience and comfort at an affordable price.

For those unfamiliar, Thornhill Valley is a true master-planned community conveniently located between Bathurst and Dufferin streets on the north side of Rutherford Road. The years of careful planning by a team placing great emphasis on traditional values is reflected in the balanced blend of single-family detached homes, luxury semi-detached and their newly released executive, freehold towns. Containing local parks, playgrounds and nearby schools plus offering close proximity to the Lebovic Community Campus, shopping, entertainment venues and major business corridors, Thornhill Valley truly embraces the concept of a complete family lifestyle and is an inviting place to call home.

On May 2, Remington Homes held a "Spin-to-Win" event at their sales office to celebrate the grand opening of their limited release of executive, freehold towns. Over 300 people attended and with only 26 townhouses available in this tiny enclave community, all but six were sold! To add to the excitement, a roulette table was set up in the middle of the sales office and all purchasers were given the chance to "Spin-to-Win" upgrades in their homes. Good fortune reigned supreme as winners walked away with granite countertops as their prize!

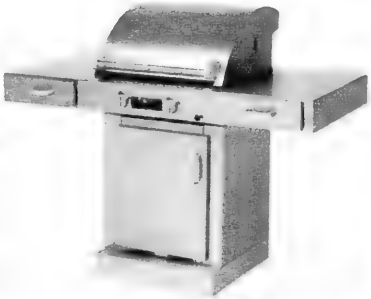
Additionally, May 2 marked the grand opening of four furnished model homes. These spectacular showpieces include two semi-detached and two detached homes, magnificently appointed and impressive to all who attended them. In fact, Remington Homes held an inventory clearance on all their semi's and singles that are currently under construction and quite successfully sold much of their inventory. If you are looking for a 2009 closing date, it is certainly the time to explore Remington's selection of quality homes…especially considering their reduced price!

Whether you're just beginning to explore the housing market or are ready to commit to buying a new home, Remington will exceed your expectations at every turn and provide you with the individual attention you deserve. Why buy old when you can buy new?! For about the same price, you can purchase a quality new home with all of today's modern conveniences, superior craftsmanship, fine finishes, exceptional design and energy efficiency. It should be noted that Remington provides their purchasers with an awe-inspiring, magnificently-appointed design studio complete with the services of qualified decorators. The selection will astound you. The design choices will delight you. And in the end, your home will become the sum of all your individual choices and define your personal lifestyle. This is the "artistry of living" and forms part of Remington's dedication to service excellence.

We recommend you visit the Remington Homes Sales Centre on the Northwest corner of Dufferin and Rutherford, open Monday to Thursday from 1pm – 7pm; Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 11am – 5pm. Don't miss out! Remington Homes offers serious deals for serious buyers!

The perfect steak awaits at Sobie's Barbecues

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to the CJN



Sobie's Barbecues (416-224-2526, www.sobies.com) has been helping Torontonians grill the perfect steak for the past 22 years.

In the last 10 years, owner Febian Frempong has seen the emergence of infrared technology in barbecues, which he says is causing a lot of people to consider a new way of grilling this season.

The infrared barbecue is modelled after the charcoal method of barbecuing: you can't see a flame, but you can definitely feel the heat.

The technology decreases cooking time by almost half, because it doesn't use the convection method of cooking food like gas and charcoal models do. Instead, gas is forced through thousands of holes in a ceramic plate, converting the heat into infrared energy. The infrared barbecue heats up very quickly and can cook at temperatures as high as 1,200 to 1,300 degrees.

The technology has also been adapted for indoor and outdoor saunas. As with the barbecues, you can feel the heat, but you can't see the heat source.

Frempong compares the method to sitting out in the sun: "You can feel the heat like the sun, but you don't get burned."

Sobie's Barbecues still provides customers with the option of gas or charcoal barbecues, but Frempong says the infrared models are becoming very popular. Great for searing, the barbecues appeal to the high-end griller.

Frempong's average customer is not someone who goes to the big-box stores in search of a barbecue, because they don't have the time and they want to use the very best.

And because customers have busy schedules, Sobie's can arrange delivery, setup and training for customers on how to use their new barbecues.

With the summer fast approaching, the time is now to set up your barbecue. The perfect steak is waiting.

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AMICA

MintoMidtown offers buyers the amenities of Yonge and Eglinton

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

If the hustle-bustle of downtown isn't your thing and the sleepy solitude of the suburbs doesn't grab you either, where else can you go to live?

For a growing number of Torontonians, the answer is midtown.

"Many [people who] have lived most of their lives near [Yonge and Eglinton]... love the area," says Darcia Rowntree, vice-president of sales with Minto, creators of the MintoMidtown condominium development in the heart of the area.

"They treasure the shops, the restaurants and the terrific convenience... [and] they don't want the bustle of Bloor or Yorkville."

Indeed, the famous Toronto hot spot provides a unique blend of green spaces and quiet side streets, with a bevy of arts and entertainment options.

Another feature many folks find alluring about Yonge and Eglinton is that it's right along the subway line, offering both convenience and an environmentally friendly way to travel.

If you're in the market for a condominium, keep in mind the types of perks and amenities the development offers, such as whether it has a 24-hour concierge service, state-of-the-art fitness facilities and an indoor pool, all of which are features of MintoMidtown.

It also has an entertainment lounge with a private dining room and bar, as well as a third-floor outdoor terrace that's fully landscaped and a courtyard.

"It is a wonderful community within the city," says Rowntree. "A true vertical neighbourhood with a terrific range of amenities."

These days, luxury suites and penthouses in midtown tend to offer two- and three-bedroom options.

MintoMidtown suites include such features as hardwood flooring, floor-to-ceiling windows, open-concept kitchen and family room designs, granite countertops, multiple walk-in closets, spacious living areas and a variety of energy-efficient elements.

To that end, Minto is in the process of gaining LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification and has a team in place charged with ensuring the development is particularly green.

Another important factor when searching for the right place to live is the developer.

Experience, stellar customer service and a penchant for developing condominium facilities that suit the lifestyles of residents are all features you should expect.

"One of the attractions that draws purchasers to Minto is our outstanding reputation," says Rowntree.

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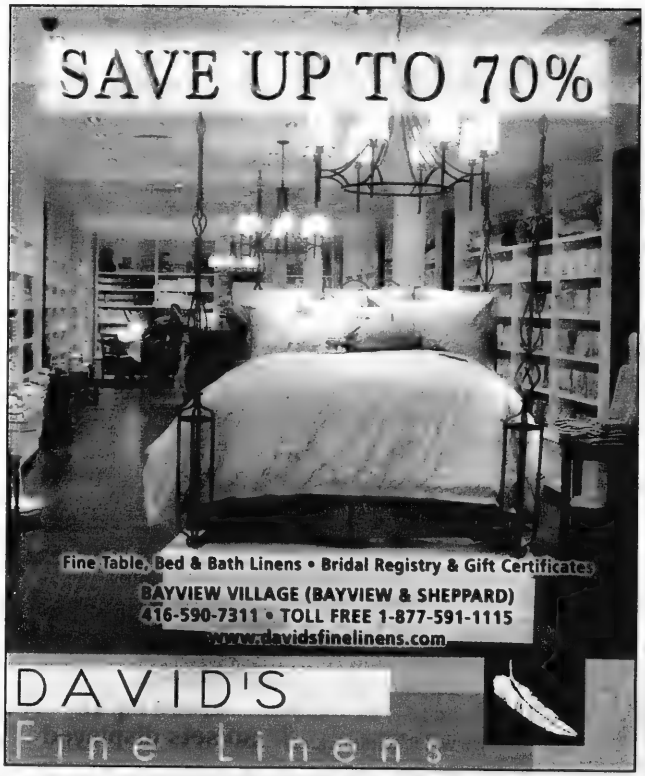
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Real estate company finds properties in Florida

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Got some extra cash on hand and looking for a warm weather vacation property far from the Great White North?

With the collapse of the U.S. housing market, Canadians are increasingly looking south for opportunities to obtain quality residences at affordable prices.

Florida Home Finders of Canada (FHFC), a licensed real estate company, is positioning itself to assist Canadians buy into the U.S. market, which has seen massive price drops in recent years.

Their pitch is simple: this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase a second home at prices that may never be repeated.

Wayne Levy, a partner at FHFC, said, "If you want that dream of the sun in Florida, now is the time to act on it."

News reports have highlighted the large number of properties subject to foreclosures and forced sales in the U.S. sunbelt after the puncturing of the real estate bubble. Sniffing a bargain, 150,000 Canadians purchased a second home in the United States in 2008 – 40 per cent of them in Florida.

Home prices are down some 40 to 50 per cent from their peaks in late 2005 and early 2006, Levy said.

'A financially attractive investment that is likely to appreciate'

"From our conversations with developers and realtors [in Florida], I believe the bottom has been reached." People who were "kicking the tires" in the fall are now purchasing, he added.

FHFC has relationships with American builders and is focusing on five Florida communities: Orlando, West Palm Beach, Naples, Fort Myers and Charlotte Bay. It can also put buyers in touch with agents in other cities, such as Miami and Hollywood.

The properties it handles were erected in the last few years and are in well-priced, gated communities that offer many amenities. Some properties resemble five-star resorts, with extravagant swimming pools, club houses, tennis courts, gyms, Internet cafes and spas. They're safe and they were constructed under terms of the most recent building codes, making them insurable against hurricanes, Levy said.

"They're spectacular and they're 40 to 50 per cent less than they were three years ago," he added.

Because of the economic downturn, some builders have been stuck with properties that potential buyers have walked away from (losing their deposit). That means buyers are in the driver's seat. One Orlando developer is "throwing in a $30,000 U.S. furniture package" for a home that once retailed for $300,000 and is now being offered for $175,000, he said.

'Experience the Sunshine State lifestyle first hand'

A new building in West Palm Beach geared to the 55+ crowd is available for $115,000 (US). Its amenities include tennis courts and a par-three executive golf course. In addition, there are no restrictions on the number of rentals per year, meaning a buyer who is not ready to retire can acquire the property and rent it for much of the year, making it a financially attractive investment that is likely to appreciate, Levy said.

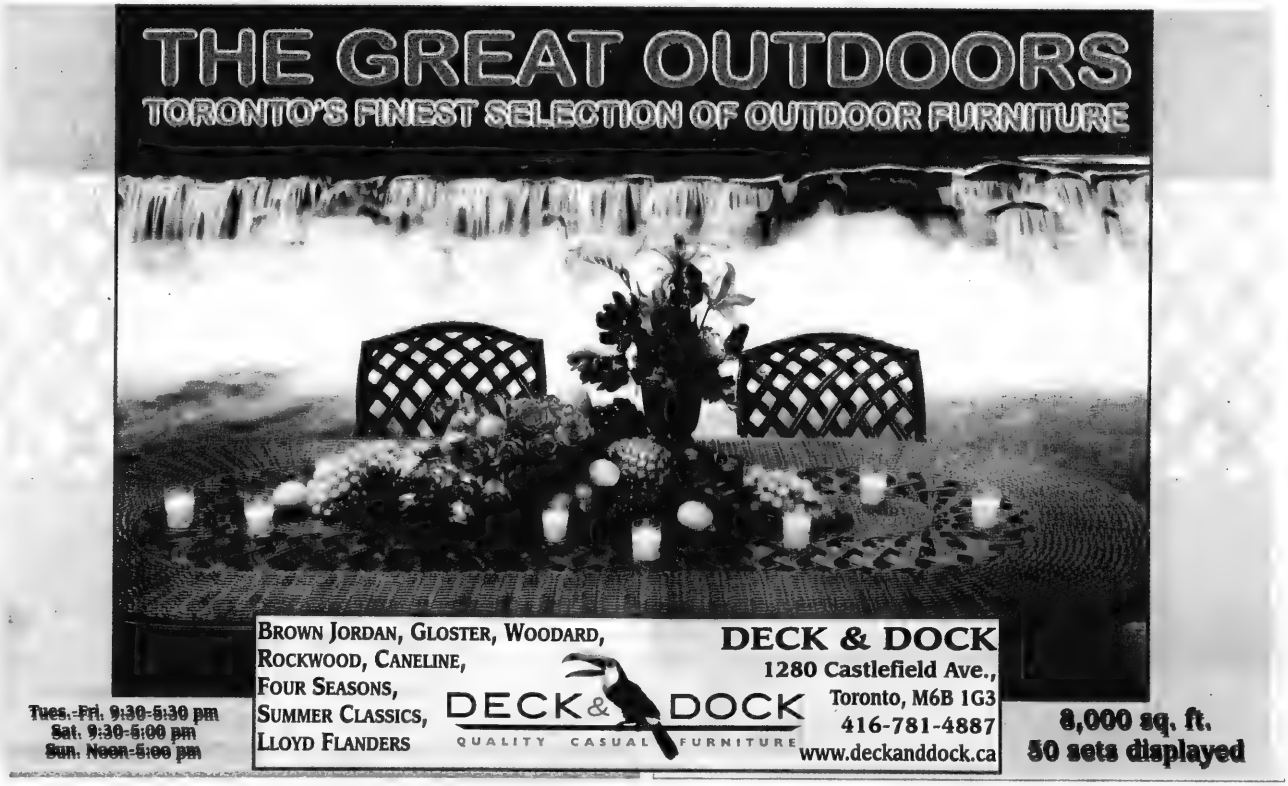
In some developments FHFC clients may be able to stay on site as a guest to experience the Sunshine State lifestyle first hand. FHFC clients may receive a credit of up to $1,500 (US) on closing when they purchase a developer's sell-off unit.

FHFC has relationships with Canadian-owned banks doing business in Florida and, ironically, "it's easier for Canadians to get credit" in the United States than Americans, Levy said.

Buyers are expected to come up with a 25 per cent down payment, and a typical open mortgage with a five-year term and 30-year amortization is available at 5.5 per cent.

If the Canadian dollar rises – it stood at around 84 cents (US) last week – those payments become easier to handle for those holding Canadian currency, Levy said, although he acknowledged buyers face a currency risk if the U.S. dollar appreciates.

Established in 1989, Florida Home Finders of Canada (www.floridahomefinders.ca) is a licensed real estate company that provides buyers with services including financing, insurance, legal and taxation issues and property management.



Unique home furnishings that also help save the planet

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

In tough economic times, people cut back. Less dining out, more staying in, less extravagant spending and more emphasis on smarter spending. At the same time, going "green" has never been more popular – every grocery store has an organic section or aisle, and even every child knows the importance of the three Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Three Greater Toronto Area business owners are among those currently addressing both your need to spend less and your desire to go green, going above and beyond the standard Rs by reducing waste through recycling, sometimes refinishing and/or refurbishing, and then reselling furniture and other household items for reuse.

LHL Design's Da-MaSk brand (416-919-9722, www.lhldesign.com) promotes "going green in the art world." Lorynne Lofsky, owner of LHL Design and co-creator of Da-MaSk, started with tile and carpet samples that were bound for landfill. Suppliers do not require samples to be returned, and they are therefore often discarded. When Lofsky recognized that there was "so much waste" in the industry, she started Da-MaSk in December 2008 to allow professional local artists to take non-renewable resources and give them a second chance.

Some of the items available are custom damask and flocking frames, paintings, mirrors, serving pieces, accessories and furniture, all created using refurbished or recycled items.

Encouraging economic and environmental sustainability, Da-MaSk works with its customers to take special items that do not necessarily work with their décor and change these items to meet their taste.

Lofsky's motto is, "Da-MaSk takes the things people want to throw out and makes them into something people would admire."

Da-MaSk will be selling a variety of its products for the first time in public, at the Israel Day festival on Sunday, June 7, at Mel Lastman Square.

Another company that helps with conservation is Contents For Homes (905-881-6666, www.contentsforhomes.com, contentsforhomes@rogers.com).

For the last 20 years, Wendy Tepperman has been buying and selling quality secondhand furniture. Her business, Contents For Homes, purchases a wide variety of home furnishings, ranging from antiques to modern décor, and sells them to the public seven days a week in her 4,000-square-foot store at 94 Doncaster Ave., just north of Toronto in Thornhill.

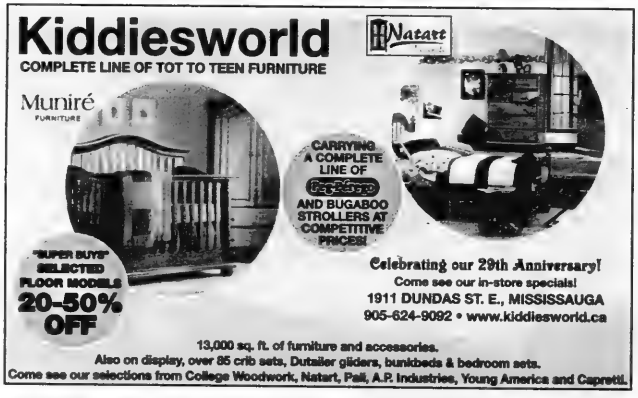
All furniture items acquired by Contents For Home are solid wood and do not need refinishing, and the price is always negotiable. Since Tepperman focuses on meeting the needs of her customers, furniture sets can be split up, appraisals can be arranged, and she can even organize a contents sale in a client's home if necessary.

When asked how the business has changed over the years, Tepperman said she recognizes that younger customers seem more educated about buying better pieces that will last longer, and can appreciate the "green" aspect of her business.

"This is recycling for your home," she says.

If you can't find exactly what you are looking for at the store, Tepperman will record your needs in her wish book and will call or e-mail to inform you when a piece that meets your needs arrives. With items arriving constantly, there's always a good reason to visit Contents For Homes. Perhaps your next visit will result in your finding a unique piece of furniture for your own home.

Continued on page B17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Modern patios furnished with sofas, love seats

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

There are some who refer to summer as bathing suit season, others think of it as patio season. For those of you who have been dreaming of breaking out the barbecue all winter, we've got just the place for you.

Located at 1280 Castlefield Ave., Deck & Dock is a virtual emporium of outdoor furniture for patios and cottages (416-781-4887, www.deckanddock.ca).

Originally located in Muskoka, Deck & Dock brings the great outdoors to Torontonians. Serving the Toronto area for more than 14 years, Deck & Dock has a vast showroom space that allows you to see outdoor furniture as it should be. "We have a very unique, nature-like setup with trees as far as the eye can see," said owner Dave Reburn. "That way the customer is able to envision the actual environment their furniture will sit in."

With a large selection of wrought iron, wicker, teak and aluminum, Deck & Dock has furniture for every taste. "We have everything from the very traditional to ultra-modern," he said. As such, the brands carried by Deck & Dock run the gamut from the century-old wicker brand, Lloyd Flanders, to the contemporary steel and teak brand, Brown Jordan.

"Our customers pay just as much attention to outdoor décor as indoor, so we like to help them with the overall concept," Reburn said.

The store offers more than 150 fabric samples to choose from. The fabric can then be custom fit to furniture, which is delivered within four to five weeks. With advances in fabric durability, such as acrylic finishing, cushions have become a major feature of outdoor furniture.

Casual café seating, as well as sofas and love seats, are becoming hugely popular in modern patios. "Since most patios are directly outside the dining room or kitchen, why not try something different," Reburn said.

New cantilever umbrellas allow for a more casual environment as well. "The cantilever umbrellas are suspended over the table from the side, rather than obstructing the middle of the table," Reburn said. Cantilevers can also swing 360 degrees to cover different areas of the backyard, as the sun shifts during the day.

For budget-friendly options, Reburn suggested trying a mix-and-match approach. "We are always updating our inventory, so there are lots of opportunities to choose some pieces from older seasons," he said.

Friendly and knowledgeable service is key at Deck & Dock. As well as its design and customization service, Deck & Dock offers the option and storing your outdoor furniture with them over the winter.

"We will pick everything up – clean it, store it and return it back to you next season," Reburn said. "We have lots of space."

Boasting a combined 60 years of experience, the staff is there to help you every step of the way – from design to delivery.

Store carries a lot of history

Continued from page B16

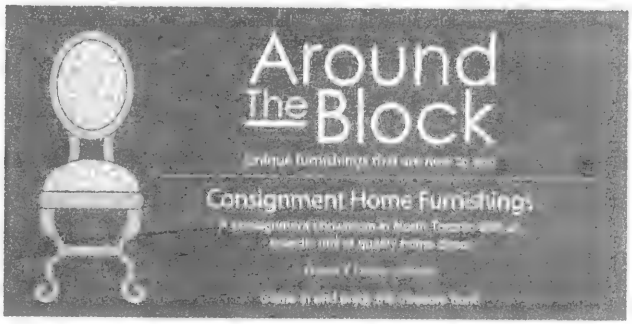
Still another place to shop for interesting items is Around The Block (416-546-1760, www.aroundtheblock.com, unique@aroundtheblock.com), where owner Warren Hales says that "in tough times, people still want to decorate, but are more price conscious," and that's why he encourages people to come to his store at 1903 Avenue Rd.

The consignment store has been in this location for a year and carries everything for your home décor needs, from furniture to candlesticks, antique to contemporary. Hales believes the items Around The Block carries are styles you are not going to find anywhere else and very good quality.

For example, if you are looking for something unique with a bit of history, he has a 100-year-old dining room set that he is sure will still be in use for another century – but will most likely be sold by time this article goes to print. The fluidity of the consignment business is like that; items in the store change regularly and something you admire today may be gone tomorrow.

Hales promises the items for sale at Around The Block will provide customers with "décor as unique as you are." His customers are either looking to work with him and his staff for a family estate sale or waiting to purchase something special to fill their home.

He believes that today's customer is more open to ideas and willing to mix and match pieces. He also knows how important it is to get it right – he keeps his website up to date with featured items available in the store and has a customer wish list so that any new items arriving in the store can be easily matched to a deserving home in need of something special.



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Real estate market is 'alive and well,' says broker

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The current global recession hasn't had a significant affect on most Canadians and the real estate market in Toronto reflects that.

Michael Harari, an associate broker with RE/MAX, said that although the price of homes and the number of sales are slightly lower than they were this time last year, he's confident that more Torontonians are going to enter the market this spring.

"I think it took about three or four months for people to get over the shell shock over what was going on in the economy. People are now coming back to life and saying, 'You know, I still have a job and the whole world didn't cave in overnight,'" Harari said.

Based on data from the Toronto Real Estate Board, he said there was only a five per cent drop in prices from March 2008 to March 2009.

"It shows that the amount of sales is down seven per cent from last year at this time. It's not terrible… In March, we reported 6,171 sales, which is down seven per cent from March the year earlier. Last year, they had sold 6,700 at that time," Harari said.

"The price of the transactions, the average in March of '09 was $362,000. That was down five per cent from March of '08."

He said that February was a slow month, but since March, he's seen an increase in the number of sales.

"Usually the spring is a better time. People start taking advantage of the weather, and the mortgage rates are very low, so people are probably taking advantage," he said.

"The prices have also readjusted from the year before, the prices are better, so all this comes in to one package. More people are out there buying."

He said that first-time home buyers are the ones who are pushing the market, while people who are looking to upgrade or downsize aren't as active in the market.

Darren Slavens, a broker and vice-president of Slavens and Associates Real Estate Inc, said that despite misconceptions that the real estate market is dead, "it's alive and well."

He guessed that some people may be biding their time to buy a home because they're waiting for a major drop in the value of homes.

Slavens said he doesn't think a major drop is coming, but with the real estate market, there are never any guarantees.

"The price [of homes] could decrease and it could increase… I'm a buy and hold kind of guy, but I think what people consistently forget is that regardless of the value of their home, whether it goes up or goes down, while they are owning they are paying down their equity and they are building equity in their homes."

Spring sees increase in sales

Slavens said that if someone buys a home for $100,000, but the following year, it's only worth $90,000, the homeowner is still in a better position than a renter.

"Instead of blowing your money on rent every month, which equates to nothing, you're still going to be making money in the long run because you're paying down the equity," he said.

Another advantage of buying a home right now, Slavens added, is that interest rates are so low – the Bank of Canada recently cut the key interest rate to 0.25 per cent.

"The money is so extraordinarily cheap. I just sold a condo to a guy who was paying $1,750 a month in rent, and I think with his purchase he's paying $1,800. Fifty bucks more a month, and he's building equity every month," he said.

"Money is so cheap right now and prices have come down, probably on average, a good 15 per cent, so it is exceptionally affordable to buy. The market that we predominantly deal in, people are secure in their jobs. If people are secure, or at least feel secure in their jobs and they have some cash that hasn't been depleted to far, it's a great time to buy. But you want to be secure in your job before you make a decision like that."

But the first step to buying a home, is getting pre-approved for a mortgage, Slavens said.

"I definitely recommend that they… speak to their Realtor about getting pre-approved, so they know what they can afford. I think the most important thing is to not put yourself in a position where you are going to be house poor. Make sure you can cover your monthly costs and not sacrifice too much of your life. With the way interest rates are right now, it is certainly attainable for pretty much everybody."

Michael Harari

Darren Slavens

Harari said that it is also important to do research on an area they are interested in.

"Knowing what the sales have been in the past, knowing what is available and getting into a certain area in the market and becoming familiar with it before blindly going in and buying something [is important]."

Harari added that a common misconception is that the value of Toronto homes are less than they used to be. As a result, some buyers put forth offers that are too low and they are not being taken seriously.

"Some people are trying to get homes worth much less than they are probably worth and they are not getting deals done because of that," Harari said.

As for the variable versus fixed-rate mortgage debate, Harari and Slavens agree that it's up to the individual to decide which works best for them.

But Harari personally seems to think he lost out on savings by locking in on a fixed-rate mortgage.

"I think most people are going variable at the moment. They're staying open," Harari said.

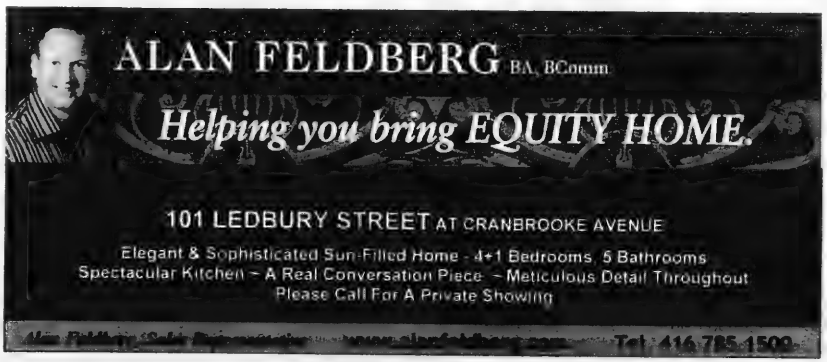
"I probably made a mistake by fixing myself in three years ago. I probably could have saved thousands of dollars. But some people like to know and don't want to live with a variable, and some people are more willing to live day by day and see."

Slavens said he is a fan of fixed-rate mortgages because they are not as risky.

"I think there is a misconception among people that when they have a variable rate and they decide they want to lock in, that they will be locking in at their variable rate or some sort of preferred rate," he said.

"It's important that people remember that when you decide to fix your mortgage, you're not going to be getting the best rate out there, you're going to be getting the posted rate. Your bank has already got you, your lender has already got you, so why are they going to give you their best rate?

"It is important not to be too greedy in these times and I think if you can get 3.5 or 3.6 per cent mortgages, you should just grab it and hold on to it for as long as you can."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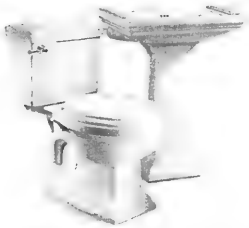

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This Week

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Netanyahu urged to back two-state solution. *Page 6*

Heebonics

Air Canada flyer co-founded resource for Jewish pilots. *Page 30*

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Yiddish author was overshadowed by her brother, I.B. Singer. *Page 38*

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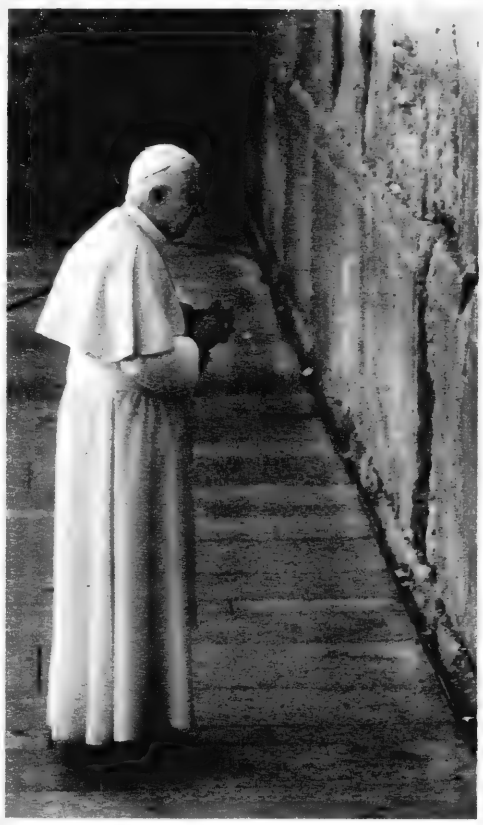

AT THE WALL: Pope Benedict XVI took time out from his Middle East tour to pray at the Western Wall last week. For more coverage of the Pope's visit to Israel, please see pages 4 and 32. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Canada, Israel mark 60 years of strong ties

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Israeli and Canadian politicians last week celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations between their two countries.

May 11 marked "a milestone that reflects the breadth and depth of the links between two democratic allies," Lawrence Cannon, Canada's minister of foreign affairs, said in a statement, after an all-party motion was passed in the House of Commons marking the occasion.

"One of the underlying strengths of the Canada-Israel relationship is the extensive network of informal links between our two countries," Cannon said. "There are some 20,000 Canadian citizens living in Israel, and many Canadians have family there. The Canadian Jewish community is 350,000 strong and acts as an important bridge between Canada and Israel. These strong ties give rise to significant co-operation between our two countries in business, education, culture, philanthropy and tourism."

Cannon also cited the ever-strengthening bond between Canada and the Jewish state, and pointed to recent examples "evidenced by increased co-operation in several areas, including public security, defence, trade and investment, and an increase in political-level contact."

According to the government of Canada website, "Israel is Canada's fourth-largest merchandise export market in the Middle East and North Africa… [and] Canada's top exports to Israel are machinery, electrical machinery, paper and newsprint, plastics, wood and aluminum. Canada's top imports from Israel are pharmaceutical products, electrical machinery, precious stones and metals, machinery, optical equipment and organic chemicals."

Continued on page 21

Avidgor Lieberman

Lawrence Cannon

To our readers

Due to the fact this issue of The CJN went to press on May 15, we will have full coverage of the Netanyahu-Obama meeting in the next issue. Until then, please consult our website, cjnews.com.

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MK hechsher to appear on Toronto-made airline meals – see page 20

The News in Brief

CORRECTION

The front page of last week's CJN misidentified Pope Benedict XVI. The CJN apologizes for the error.

CANADA

CIJA Urges Protest

TORONTO — The Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) is urging Canadian Jews to protest a conference at York University that CIJA says will "explore a one-state, bi-national solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians... which would spell the end of Israel as a Jewish state." CIJA CEO Hershell Ezrin said the event will add to the tense climate at York on this issue. "Israel-Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" runs June 22-24. Ezrin said the presence of "a few balanced speakers of high repute" won't be "enough to characterize the conference as one of high academic integrity."

Sculptor Resigns

TORONTO — A Toronto sculptor has resigned from the board and the arts advisory committee of the Koffler Centre for the Arts to protest its decision earlier this month to break ties with an anti-Zionist artist who supports Israeli Apartheid Week. Yvonne Singer, an associate professor of fine arts at York University, said in a letter of resignation that the move compromises freedom of expression, the Toronto Star reported. Artist Reena Katz got $20,000 from Koffler for an exhibit about Toronto's Kensington Market that opened in the market last week. Part of the Luminato arts festival, it will continue through July 26, but Koffler will no longer promote it. Centre officials said they didn't know about Katz's views when she got funding, but she says her views were well-known.

Actor Defends Play

TORONTO — Famed Canadian actor R.H. Thomson last week defended his decision to take part in readings put on by Crow's Theatre of the controversial play Seven Jewish Children at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille on May 17. "Discussion, dialogue, talk, conversation is what is needed, and this play is sparking that," Thomson told the Globe and Mail, adding he doesn't see himself on one side or the other of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. B'nai Brith Canada said the 10-minute play, by Briton Caryn Churchill, is anti-Semitic because it depicts Israeli Jews as "bloodthirsty aggressors and child killers." It wanted the play pulled from the city-owned theatre.

WORLD

Hotel Refuses Jews

VIENNA — An Austrian hotel refused to accept a Jewish family as guests. The owner of the Haus Sonnenhof in the village of Serfaus in the Austrian Tyrol told a Viennese Jewish family it doesn't take Jewish guests, citing "bad experiences" in the past, the daily Tiroler Tageszeitung reported. The Serfaus region has become popular with Orthodox Jewish vacationers in recent years. Local officials called the refusal "unacceptable."

Actress Bumped

MELBOURNE — A performance by an award-winning Jewish actress was cancelled by a Jewish group in Melbourne because of her participation in a controversial play about Israel. British-born Miriam Margolyes, 67, was slated to star this week in Seven Jewish Children, a play that critics say is anti-Semitic. The 10-minute play, sub-titled A Play For Gaza, was to be staged during a fundraiser for Australians for Palestine at the State Library of Victoria on May 18. It traces the history of Israel, from the Holocaust to the recent Gaza war. Margolyes was also set to entertain elderly residents May 12 at JewishCare, a facility in Melbourne, but was told she might offend residents who are Shoah survivors. "I think they're quite wrong. I would never get involved with anything which was either anti-Semitic or critical of Holocaust survivors," Margolyes said. She signed a petition by Independent Jewish Voices in 2008, but said she's a proud Jew and wants Israel to survive.

Demjanjuk Deported To Germany

BERLIN — Accused Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk arrived in Germany last week to stand trial for war crimes committed during World War II.

Police in Munich confirmed May 12 that Demjanjuk, deported from the United States May 11 on a medically equipped charter flight, had arrived and was taken to the hospital wing of Stadelheim Prison to await trial.

Demjanjuk, 89, was removed from his home near Cleveland, Ohio, on May 11 by ambulance and taken to the airport, accompanied by a doctor and nurse.

He's accused of having been a guard at the Sobibor death camp in Poland from March to September 1943, and having been involved in the murder of at least 29,000 Jews.

Demjanjuk, who contests the charges, has lived in a suburb of Cleveland since 1952. He was accused in the early 1980s of being a guard at the Treblinka death camp, but was released from jail in Israel after seven years, when another Ukrainian was identified as the guard in question.

The U.S. Justice Department again charged the retired autoworker with being a guard at Sobibor and revoked his citizenship in 2002 for lying about his Nazi past to gain entry to the United States. His deportation was approved in 2005. Germany requested his extradition in March.

Demjanjuk fought the deportation, appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court, saying he was too ill to make the trip and withstand trial.

Survivors Attacked

VIENNA — Five Austrian teens aged 14 to 17 were arrested after a neo-Nazi attack May 9 on Holocaust survivors. The survivors and others in a group from France and Italy were marking the 64th anniversary of the liberation of a concentration camp near Salzburg. Calling the incident one of the worst in postwar Austria, authorities said it shows the growing extremism among youth. The teens, who had no previous record, shouted "Heil Hitler" and wounded two people when they fired plastic bullets from air guns.

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CHAT students learn about lives of IDF soldiers

Parents tell of their sons who met tragic yet heroic ends

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The parents of two Israeli soldiers who met tragic yet heroic ends – Roi Klein and Noam Apter – were in Toronto last week as part of a North American tour to share inspirational stories about their late sons.

Aharon and Shosh Klein and Yossi and Pirhiya Apter visited students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (TanenbaumCHAT) on May 11 to screen documentary films about their sons, and to share personal stories about the soldiers' dedication to Judaism, and to Israel and its people.

The Kleins and the Apters, who stopped in Chicago, Detroit and Hamilton before coming to Toronto, were travelling on a tour organized by Lior Shtul, the director general of Bnei David, the Military Academy of Israel.

The school's mission is to foster a love of Torah and a commitment to the State of Israel, values that Roi Klein and Noam Apter shared.

In 2002, Apter was one of four students who was murdered in a terrorist attack at Yeshivat Otniel while working in the kitchen preparing a Shabbat dinner for about 100 students in the dining room next door.

Two terrorists began shooting into the school from outside, and one gained entrance to the kitchen.

In a split second, Apter – who had studied at the Kfar Haroeh Yeshiva before he began his service in the Israel Defence Forces at the Otniel Yeshiva by combining Torah study with army service as a paratrooper – made the decision to lock the door to the dining room, which gave the seated students a chance to escape.

Apter was shot dead. He was 23 years old.

Roi Klein, who was a major in the Golani Brigade of the IDF, was killed in the Battle of Bint Jbeil during the Second Lebanon War in 2006 after jumping on a grenade to save his fellow soldiers.

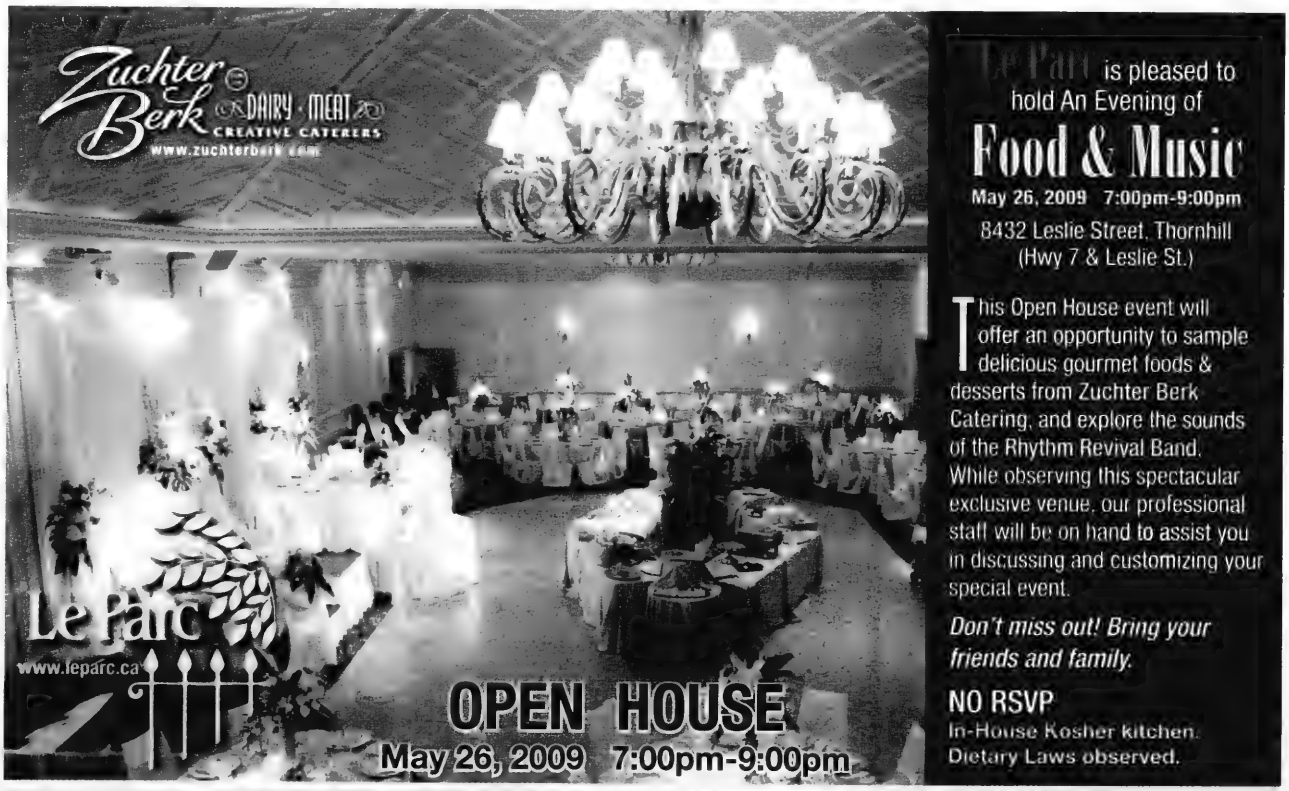
Klein, once a Bnei David student, was a religious man, a young husband and father of two, who was dedicated to the Jewish faith and the Jewish state.

During a mission in Bint Jbeil, Klein and his men were ambushed by the enemy. When Klein received word that one of his soldiers had been wounded, he and members of his unit worked to lift the wounded soldier onto a stretcher to take him out of harm's way.

When Klein spotted a live grenade that had landed near his men, he jumped on the grenade to absorb the explosion and save the lives of his soldiers.

Continued on page 5

Shosh Klein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Pope Benedict sees hatred up close

Pope Benedict and the other religious dignitaries at the special interfaith ecumenical evening last Monday, including Rabbi Sha'ar Yashuv Cohen, the Chief Rabbi of Haifa, were stunned into shock.

From the editor's desk...

The tone alone of the statement read by Sheikh Tayseer Tamimi, the Palestinian Authority's chief legal authority, left the other men of God sitting alongside the Pope on the small dais in the Notre Dame Pontifical Institute in Jerusalem on edge, uncomfortable and quite angry.

Tamimi spoke after the Pope had addressed the audience on the subject of peaceful coexistence and inter-religious understanding.

The Palestinian cleric, however, was not scheduled to speak.

Tamimi seized the microphone, so to speak, to hector the Bishop of Rome for 10 minutes about a subject on which he has shown affinity, acumen and acknowledged expertise: hatred of Israel and Jews.

His bilious rant against Israel was his usual fare: frenzied, almost ecstatic vilification. He accused Israel of all manner of war crimes: "killing Gaza's children," "bulldozing Palestinian homes," "destroying mosques" and "confiscating Palestinians' land."

He also called for the immediate return of all Palestinian refugees and concluded his hymnal to coexistence by urging Christians and Muslims to unite against the Jews of Israel.

The Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land, Fouad Twal, tried in vain to stop Tamimi. But Tamimi paid him no heed. He was determined to say his theological piece.

The Vatican representatives scrambled to distance themselves from Tamimi's tirade. Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office, issued the following statement:

"The intervention of Sheikh Tayseer Tamimi was not scheduled by the organizers of the meeting. In a meeting dedicated to dialogue, this intervention was a direct negation of what a dialogue should be. We hope that such an incident will not damage the mission of the Pope aiming at promoting peace and also interreligious dialogue, as he has clearly affirmed on many occasions during this pilgrimage. We hope also that interreligious dialogue in the Holy Land will not be compromised by this incident."

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesperson condemned Tamimi for abusing the inter-religious moment "in order to incite against Israel."

He described Tamimi's remarks as "words of hatred uttered by the sheikh, who instead of fostering peace and coexistence chose to plant seeds of division and confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between Jews, Muslims and Christians."

Pope Benedict stands with Latin Patriarch Fuad Twal, centre, and Sheikh Taiseer Tamimi, head of the Palestinian Authority's Sharia Courts before the ecumenical meeting began last week in Jerusalem. [Israel Sun photo]

In truth, however, the Vatican's organizers of the meeting should not have been surprised by Tamimi's unwelcome discourse.

As reported in the Jerusalem Post, Tamimi behaved exactly the same way in a similar forum during Pope John Paul II's visit to Israel in March 2000.

"Then, Tamimi called on 'the occupier' to stop 'strangling Jerusalem and oppressing its residents.' Citing land confiscations, house demolitions, settlements and the Baruch Goldstein massacre in Hebron in 1994, Tamimi said Israel had a long record of 'genocide' and 'shooting and wounding Palestinian children. He also refused to shake the hand of then-chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau."

Of course, Tamimi's explosion was disrespectful in the extreme to the Pope and to the intended dignity of the occasion. It also embarrassed the pontiff. Tamimi exploited the moment and the wide reverence for the bishop's cloth to spread hatred.

He made a mockery of the foundational idea of goodwill among men, of actually seeking common theological ground, and of simply trying to find answers to thorny problems.

Tamimi's instruction were undoubtedly eye-opening for the Pope. Tamimi holds a very important and prestigious position in the institutional hierarchy of the Palestinians. He is the chief judge of the sharia courts in the West Bank.

His opinions carry weight among his people. His opinions are religiously authoritative. They serve as precedents for further religious learning and education.

Pope Benedict urged inter-communal dialogue and co-operation. Tamimi urged intolerance and violence.

The Pope peered up close into the maw of unrepentant hatred last week. It must have been frightening.

– MBD

SeeJN

BIBLE CHAMPS: Students from Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School took top honours in the Grade 7/8 division at the National Bible Contest (Chidon HaTanach) in Montreal on May 10. Pictured, from left, are Zachary Zarnett-Klein, who won first place; Jordana Maged and David Ripsman, who tied for second place; Simon Gladstone, who ranked in the top 10, and their coach, Rabbi Saar Rozen.

Many inspired by sons' sacrifice

Continued from page 3

In the moments before the grenade exploded, he yelled, "Shema Yisrael HaShem Elokeinu Hashem Echad."

Klein was buried on his 31st birthday at Mount Herzel.

Following the presentation at TanenbaumCHAT during which the students learned about the two men, Shosh Klein, Roi's mother and Yossi Apter, Noam's father, spoke to The CJN about the purpose of their visits with Jewish communities in the Disapora.

"Our goal is to, first of all, tell his story and, second of all, convince the students in the audience to take the values of such heroes to their own lives," Apter said.

"We feel that this is a wonderful way of memorializing… our son."

He said that while he and his wife feel comfort when they share his story, they are also encouraged by the fact that many are inspired by it.

"Before I left Israel, I got an e-mail from a young girl, I think 18 years old. She heard us in Los Angeles last year, and after she heard us, she decided to move to Israel. She said that instead of going to college in L.A., she switched to learn at Tel Aviv University," Apter said.

Roi Klein's mother, Shosh, said she also sees the benefits of sharing her pain with Jews around the world.

"My son was a real hero, a kiddush HaShem. He gave his life, and the price that we paid for this tragedy is unbearable. It's terrible, and I want Jews abroad to feel that it's not easy. It's not easy to live in Israel," she said.

"By coming here and listening to them and having their support, we feel the strength… The fact that I can share with them gives me a lot of strength, and I feel that I am not alone."

Klein said she hopes people will remember her son as being a good man in all aspects of his life.

"I want people to know about my brave son and what kind of a great person he was and what a wonderful father and son and officer and everything."

Apter said the message he hopes to convey to people who learn about Noam is that "the decision to give your life in order to save the lives of your friends, it doesn't come in a moment at the end of your life. It's a way of education."

Yossi Apter

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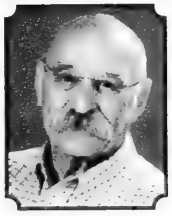

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May 26

Kirpans, Kippahs, Kashrut and other Krazy Topics in the Canadian Courts: **Ken Krupat** discusses Canadian legal decisions affecting minority religious rights. What has been decided? What will the Courts be grappling with in the next few years?

June 2

The Shanghai Jewish Ghetto – How 20,000 Jews escaped Nazi occupied Europe and made their way to the safe haven of Shanghai. Sculptor, artist and designer **Ian Leventhal** has made 18 trips to Shanghai over the last six years, exploring Jewish-Chinese history. In 2003 he received the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his work in saving the Jewish Ghetto area in Shanghai from certain destruction.

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Israeli PM urged to back two-state solution

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should explicitly come out in support of a two-state solution, says Colette Avital, the international secretary of the left-of-centre Labor party, a partner in Netanyahu's right-wing coalition government.

"He'll have to adopt that kind of policy at the end of the day," she said in an interview in Toronto just prior to Netanyahu's much anticipated meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House on May 18.

"Netanyahu doesn't want to be on a collision course with the United States," she added in a reference to Obama's espousal of the two-state model to resolve Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

Describing Obama as "a breath of fresh air" and a leader "who means business," she said he wants to advance the Arab-Israeli peace process and is therefore "a very good thing for Israel."

Although Netanyahu has said he is prepared to resume peace talks with the Palestinians without delay, he and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman have declined to openly endorse a two-state solution.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has warned that he won't negotiate with Israel unless the current Israeli leadership accepts the two-state model.

Avital, who lost her parliamentary seat in last winter's election after 10 years in the Knesset, observed that Netanyahu's immediate predecessors, Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, both former members of Netanyahu's Likud party, endorsed the two-state concept.

Urging Netanyahu to relent, Avital – Israel's former ambassador to Portugal and its former consul general in New York City – said that Israel has a vested interest in Palestinian statehood.

"If we want to continue as a Jewish state, we have to separate from the Palestinians," she said.

Ratcheting up her warning, she added, "Unless we reach an agreement with the Palestinians, we will end up as a minority in our own land and with a binational state."

Colette Avital

Here to speak to ARZA Canada, the Zionist voice of the Reform movement, she noted that support for a two-state solution in on the wane as a one-state solution is becoming increasingly popular in Palestinian and European circles.

Scoffing at Netanyahu's insistence that the Palestinians must recognize Israel as a Jewish state or face the possibility that the peace process may wither, Avital said, "We can live without this recognition. It is we who should define the identity of our state."

Avital, a candidate for Israel's presidency in 2007, advised Netanyahu to accept the Arab League peace proposal, which broadly calls for the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab world in exchange for Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 border.

"Not everything in the plan is what we like, but it can be a basis for talks."

Avital said she has no desire to criticize Netanyahu, who assumed office less than two months ago.

"He should be given a chance."

But she was fairly critical of Lieberman, who has ascribed Israel's diplomatic deadlock with the Palestinians to Iranian meddling rather than to Israel's occupation of the territories captured in the Six Day War.

"His views are extreme," she said, referring in particular to Lieberman's call for an Israeli Arab loyalty test.

Israel and the Palestinians both share responsibility for the current diplomatic impasse, she said.

The Palestinians should have developed the Gaza Strip after Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2005, while Israel should not have built more settlements during the Oslo peace process.

Asked about Iran's quest for a nuclear arsenal, Avital said that United Nations economic sanctions should be tightened if Iran, after talks with the United States, refuses to suspend its uranium enrichment program.

Declining to say whether she supports an Israeli military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, she said, "A nuclear Iran is a threat to the whole Middle East. It's the responsibility of the entire world. Why should Israel do the job for everyone else? It should not be left as an Israeli problem."

Turning to domestic politics, Avital said that if it had been up to her, she would have counselled Labour party leader and Defence Minister Ehud Barak not to join Netanyahu's government.

"But I respect his decision," she said, explaining that Barak had good reasons to join the coalition at a time when Israel faces enormous security challenges.

"It's probably a decision of responsibility, made for the good of the country rather than for the good of the [Labor] party."

But she said she doesn't know whether the move will benefit Labor.

Avital disputed former foreign minister Tzipi Livni's assertion that Barak will be a "fig leaf" in Netanyahu's government. "Barak has never been a fig leaf. He is a very strong person."

Asked what she would advise Barak to do if he fails to moderate Netantyahu's policies, Avital replied, "I hope he has the guts and courage to leave the government."

Avital also disagreed with a call by Amir Peretz, Barak's predecessor as defence minister and Labor leader, that the party – which won only 13 seats in the last election – should reinvent itself into "a new, genuine labour party."

Correction

A story in the May 14 issue ("Security funding renewed") incorrectly identified Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan. The CJN regrets the error.

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Iran should top the agenda

These words were written prior to the planned meeting in Washington between U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. There was a great deal of nervousness among Israelis and supporters of Israel prior to the meeting. Ever since Netanyahu assumed office, pundits in both countries have suggested that the differences between the two leaders are significant. They share neither the same philosophical approach, nor the detailed steps on how to achieve Mideast peace, let alone, perhaps, the same ultimate agenda.

We suspect the differences between the two leaders are not as significant as many experts say. The meeting this week will likely confirm this. However, even if the two leaders do diverge in some matters – even important ones – we hope and trust that the subject of Iran will be at the top of the agenda.

The rulers in Iran are the pre-eminent threat to peace in the Middle East, and one can argue, even beyond the region.

The evidence is now incontrovertible that Tehran is fully engaged in undermining and destabilizing not only the efforts to achieve peace, but the key governments that are striving for that peace.

Last week the Financial Times reported that Hezbollah, Tehran's Shia surrogate, has been deeply involved in assisting the Hamas rulers of Gaza. Sheik Naim Qassem, deputy secretary general of Hezbollah, told the paper that his organization has been providing Palestinians in Gaza with "every type of support" possible.

The report in the Financial Times came days after the Egyptian media disclosed the existence of a Hezbollah network on Egyptian soil. The Hezbollah operatives were discovered in late 2008, but the discovery was made public only last month.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak apparently, has had enough of the Iranian duplicity and deceit.

In a speech he gave in on April 23, he alluded quite plainly to the threat emanating from Iran. "We affirm our Arab identity and will not allow the interference of *regional elements that are opposed to peace and are pushing the region to the edge of an abyss.* [Our emphasis] Those elements seek to impose their influence and agenda on our Arab world, incite disagreements on the Arab and Palestinian scene and send their *agents* [namely, Hezbollah] to the region in order to threaten Egypt's national security, harm its borders, and compromise its stability."

There is no doubt that Mubarak and Netanyahu discussed those "elements" and their "agents" when they met last week at Sharm al Sheikh. Mubarak called the atmosphere during the discussions "sincere and constructive."

Both men understand the nature and extent of the threat that Iran poses to their respective countries. The subject will have a high priority on the list of subjects they will, in turn, discuss with the American president when they meet with him this month.

There is, of course, the subject of the potential deadly fallout from Iran's nuclear ambitions, too…

25 years ago in The CJN

Immigration minister John Roberts refused to allow Jewish Defence League and Kach founder Rabbi Meir Kahane to enter Canada because of the rabbi's convictions for supporting acts of violence in the United States and Israel. Rabbi Kahane was assassinated in 1990.

Dry Bones
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Hebrew manuscripts in Vatican library

In its efforts to destroy Judaism, the Catholic church has used many methods, including the confiscation and burning of Jewish holy books. After succeeding to destroy hundreds of thousands of sacred Jewish books, there are still some 800 Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican library.

In 1987, 57 of them travelled to various American cities as an exhibit. The Church described the exhibit as a "cultural cross-fertilization" of Christians and Jews during the Middle Ages. This lie was attacked as the fabrication it is by those who knew the manuscripts' history.

A committee of knowledgeable Jews asked the Church to return the manuscripts to the Jewish people and give them to Israel's national library. It has been more than 20 years since this request was made, and the Vatican has never responded. Major Jewish American leaders, including Seymour Reich, Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, supported the committee. Israel's Institute of Manuscripts has published a report showing that the largest part of the 800 works originated in a part of Germany where they were seized after a pogrom. One of the Catholic rulers in Germany presented them to the Vatican. If the Vatican believes that their claims for certain lands in and around Jerusalem are to be taken seriously by Israel, they must first signal their sincerity by returning these 800 manuscripts to the Jewish people.

Jack de Lowe
Raanana, Israel

* * *

Palestinians and the Jewish state

The Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, represents the fundamental Arab/Muslim position ("Abbas won't recognize Israel as a Jewish state," CJN, April 30). Why will the Palestinians not accept Israel as part of a peace accord? For the Palestinians/Arabs to agree to this is to admit that they no longer consider the founding of the State of Israel 61 years ago to have been illegitimate.

If Israel enters an accord without insisting on such recognition, it will be in for a rude awakening in the future. Israel will continue to live as a Jewish state, albeit a much smaller, endangered, and paranoid one. Its new neighbour, its internal Arab citizenry, and no small part of the Arab world at large will, amid strained relations, continue to charge that Israel is a racist state. After all, to be a particularistic Jewish state violates the very essence of democracy. And the Arab world insists that Israel, though certainly not itself, must live by quintessential democratic principles.

Israel must resist the deceptive and dangerous suasion of "friends" who would have Israel believe that it can achieve peace without recognition, even as accords are signed with a temporary, bogus governing body composed of two hostile rivals, one sworn to Israel's destruction.

Rabbi Abraham Cohen
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Diaspora needs more pressing

Without meaning any disrespect to Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, I would like to explain why I will not be making aliyah any time soon ("We're making aliyah and you should, too," CJN, May 7). I have a very simple criterion for deciding where is best to live. This criterion is not about where is most comfortable for me, nor is it related to what location offers me the most intense spiritual experiences. Rather, I ask myself the question of where can I be of greatest assistance to the Jewish people. I try never to ask what a location can offer me, but what I can give to it. At this juncture of Jewish history, where assimilation and apathy are rampant in the Diaspora, and even in our own community of Toronto, I know with certainty that this is the place where the battle for Jewish values will be fought most fiercely. I will not throw off that burden of responsibility so readily.

Shauna Cappe
Toronto

* * *

Day school funding

The May 7 edition of The CJN featured a photograph of a choir of a local Jewish day school being greeted by Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty at a ceremony at Queen's Park, at an event organized by the Yad Vashem Society to honour a group of Holocaust survivors ("Premier performance"). The caption stated that the premier shook hands with all of the students. Perhaps this is an indication that the premier has recanted from his harsh, vitriolic statements against faith-based education made during the last election campaign and is finally prepared to figure out a creative way to redress the longstanding, provincially sponsored unfairness toward the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in Ontario. If the premier has not changed his ways, then both the school involved and the sponsoring organization should have avoided falling into the trap that the photo-op provided. The irony of the juxtaposition of concern for the Jewish past with the thwarting of the Jewish future in Ontario is just too much for the hard-pressed Jewish day school community of Ontario to bear.

Jerrold Landau
Toronto

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Perspectives

The Obama-Netanyahu meeting

Time for straight talk

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

Before the negotiations begin, Israel and the United States have to get the negotiations out of the way. U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were to meet in Washington this week, culminating a period of coded back and forth messages on Iran and on resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

When they meet, the two leaders and their advisers will likely try to break the code and set red lines for each side: Israel on Iran, the United States on Palestinian statehood.

David Makovsky, a senior scholar with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said it was critical that each side make clear how far it will go toward meeting the other side's expectations.

"Each side should say what they cannot do, but they have to identify explicitly where they can say, 'Yes we can,'" he said.

Josh Block, the spokesperson for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), said the sides were set up for a "smooth visit."

"This is the first conversation at the highest levels between two very close allies," he said. "It's an opportunity for two leaders to build on existing personal rapport and to chart a unified course."

Another pro-Israel insider questioned whether the sides had actually managed to reach that point yet, suggesting the mutual pronouncements on the critical issues were still vague and lacking in the concrete details needed for policy foundation.

Insiders in both administrations, off the record, credit the other side with making the right noises.

Although the Obama administration has not outlined its Iran policy yet, Israeli officials say they are pleased with the signals coming from the White House, including Obama's extension of existing sanctions and backing in the Congress from Obama's Democratic party allies for toughened measures, which the president can use as a sword of Damocles should Iran resist his diplomatic outreach.

Even better from the Israeli point of view, is that the Obama administration has extracted a commitment from Russia to indefinitely suspend its delivery of the S-300 anti-missile system, which would have posed a serious threat to Israel's capacity to target Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program. Delivery of the system, according to U.S. and Israeli thinking, would have served as a disincentive for Iran to dismantle its nuclear program.

It helps that Dennis Ross, the Obama administration official shaping the Iran strategy, toured the region recently accompanied by military officials as well as diplomats. That was seen as a tangible sign that the Obama administration is serious when it says that nothing, including the military option, is off the table when it comes to containing Iran's weapons plans.

Meanwhile, Obama administration officials say Netanyahu has shown seriousness about accommodating Obama's push for renewed talks with the Palestinians. At last week's AIPAC conference, the Israeli leader retreated from campaign promises to focus only on Palestinian economic development, saying he placed equal importance on the security and political tracks.

Under Netanyahu, Israeli officials also are tamping down skepticism about U.S.-led efforts to bolster Palestinian security forces.

Gen. Keith Dayton, the U.S. general who heads the effort, last week said he felt the program now had "Israel's respect," and he was ready to almost double the number of personnel from 1,600 to 3,100. That, he said, would "reduce the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] footprint in the West Bank." Notably, AIPAC has signed onto U.S. efforts to provide the funds for the program.

Last week, ahead of his Obama summit, Netanyahu met with two regional allies that the United States considers critical in advancing peace with the Palestinians: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian King Abdullah II.

"We wish to expand this peace first and foremost with our Palestinian neighbours," Netanyahu said last week at his meeting with Mubarak in Sharm al Sheikh after effusively praising the Egyptian leader. "We want to see Israelis and Palestinians living together with the prospect of peace, security and prosperity."

The problem is that communication between Israel and the United States in symbols – and not through frank exchanges – has in the past created misunderstandings that hamper co-operation. Over the years, Israel's understanding of a settlement freeze has often been much more flexible than that of the United States – including, at times, annexing territory adjacent to settlements. This has sometimes fostered bitter feelings between the two.

In recent weeks, there have been similar tensions because of a failure on both sides to make parameters clear. Netanyahu's government has suggested it is committed to Palestinian statehood by re-committing to the seven-year-old "road map" peace plan, but has not said so outright. That has led to frequent and emphatic commitments to statehood from Obama officials.

Conversely, the failure by the Obama administration to specify what it will do should diplomatic outreach to Iran fail has sparked a flood of leaks in the Israeli press about Israeli government anxieties over whether Israel might one day need to go it alone in facing Iran. The vacuum has led Israelis to wonder whether routine statements from U.S. officials about wanting every nuclear state to join the non-proliferation treaty mean that the Obama administration is taking aim at Israel's nuclear program.

Such questions need not be answered in the light of day, but should be addressed, even if Netanyahu and Obama need to clear the room of advisers to do it, said Makovsky, who has just co-authored a book with Ross on past failures in Middle East peacemaking titled Myths, Illusions and Peace.

Presidential candidate Barack Obama visited Sderot in the summer of 2008. [RNS/Reuters photo]

Israelis watching

By DINA KRAFT
JTA

Start worrying. Details to follow.

It's an old joke about Jewish telegrams. And, according to Hebrew University political science professor Peter Medding, it's also a way to understand the jitters that some Israelis had as their new prime minister headed for the United States for his first White House meeting with President Barack Obama.

"What journalists and TV talking heads say, one ought to take with a grain of salt. There is an underlying fundamentally strong relationship between the United States and Israel," said Medding, a specialist in Israeli politics, cautioning against a seeming air of apprehension.

That said, he added that "with a new administration come fears it will be different, the sense that there is a new king who might make different policies, and people want to know which way America is going."

A recent poll indicates Israelis tend to be fond of U.S. President Barack Obama as a leader, but are unsure of what to make of his overtures to Arab countries, including Iran, and his judgment on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A joint Bar-Ilan University-Anti-Defamation League survey published this month, found that 60 per cent of Israelis have a favourable view of Obama, with only 14 per cent registering unfavourable opinions.

But only slightly more than a third of the respondents said that Obama was friendly or very friendly toward Israel – approximately half the number who did when the same question was asked of then-president George W. Bush in a 2007 survey. And those surveyed were divided evenly on the question of whether or not Obama has good judgment when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian track.

Eytan Gilboa, the Bar-Ilan political science professor who helped oversee the survey, noted that young people and religious Jews, especially haredim, tended to be more suspicious of Obama than other Israelis, according to the poll.

"The attitudes of the young people did surprise me," said Gilboa, who speculated that their thinking reflects a hardening of the political outlook of the young, many of whom supported the nationalist Avigdor Lieberman (now foreign minister) in the recent elections.

"Perhaps young people are more cynical about politics. They want clear messages," he said, "and are not impressed by the charisma and rhetoric of Obama."

Eti Doron, 50, who owns a toy store on a busy Tel Aviv street, told JTA that she was taken aback "with his reaching out to the Arab fundamentalist world.

"I know someone has to take off the gloves first to see what might happen," she said, "but when I see the headlines, I think, 'OK, maybe he's not so pro-Israel.'"

Israeli commentators and officials have been voicing concerns that Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could be heading toward a clash if they don't find some common ground.

Obama has made it clear that a Palestinian state is a priority and that he wants to involve moderate Arab countries in the process. Netanyahu, who had a stormy relationship with the Bill Clinton White House the last time he was prime minister, has yet to say definitively where he stands on the issue.

Recent statements from Washington – whether about Israel's nuclear program or suggestions that progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track might be linked to progress on ending Iran's nuclear ambitions – are also causing concern in some Israeli circles.

"I think that there is a sense of suspicion, a sense Washington is trying to create tension between Israel and the U.S., and I am very sorry about it," said Yakov Achimeir, a veteran Israeli journalist and commentator.

But he did not expect a confrontation in Obama and Netnayahu's meeting.

"It's not in the interest of an American president that his first meeting with the new Israeli prime minister will end with a clash," Achimeir said. "I think there will be an exchange of views, and I don't think they will reach agreement on every point, but I think it will give both of them more time to think about each other's views and then come with more concrete ideas."

Akiva Eldar, chief political columnist for the daily Ha'aretz agrees that the change in tone from Washington has taken Israelis off-guard.

"I would say that Israelis have been spoiled in the last eight years by George W. Bush, who sent a message of 'you can get away with anything, you can do whatever you want in Lebanon or Gaza, and you don't have to take the president of the United States too seriously,'" he told JTA.

Eldar thinks Israelis have yet to comprehend the nuances of recent U.S. behaviour that he says spell out the new political climate, including Obama's invitation to Jordan's King Abdullah II as the first Middle East leader to visit the White House (he was in Washington in April) and the president's upcoming trip to Egypt without plans to also visit Israel.

"Such acts would once have been considered a slap in the face, but nowadays the majority of Israelis don't really believe in what we all call the peace process or the two-state solution or the Arab League initiative or whatever Obama believes," Eldar said. "They believe he is naive… that either he does not know enough about the Arabs, or if he knows – and this is the worst-case scenario – he should be considered pro-Arab and we should not take him too seriously."

You are what you dream

"You are what you eat" is a well-worn cliché. We construct our identities out of bits of quotidian life – from our culinary style, fashion sense, and literary interests. We are what we eat, wear, befriend and read.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

On the other hand, dreams are considered too ephemeral to warrant serious attention. The word "daydream" connotes a meaningless diversion. However, dreams are actually a major force in determining our identities.

You are what you dream. Students with dreams of playing basketball will concentrate less on their grades, comparatively, than students dreaming of careers in astrophysics. In all likelihood, the aspiring athlete will focus on sports, and the aspiring scientist on academics. Dreams may be about the future, but they affect our current behavior profoundly.

That's why dreams are the basis of repentance. Repentance requires the penitent to resolve to improve in the future. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik notes that several philosophers have questioned the value of these resolutions. They argue that either the person will improve in the future, or they won't. What difference does a resolution make?

Rabbi Soloveitchik explains that our vision of the future is critical to our present. A sincere resolution or a powerful dream can transform immediately.

Indeed, dreams have transformed Jewish history. In exile, Jews were strangers in strange lands, despised and oppressed. It would seem ridiculous for members of this abject minority to have any sense of optimism. However, to the poor Jew living in a hovel inside a ghetto, the dream of redemption offered a lifeline. Even if everyone treated him as a cursed subhuman, the poor Jew could straighten his back and dream that he was only a few steps from the land of milk and honey.

These dreams of redemption not only maintained the Jewish connection to Israel; they transformed the lives of every Jew. By looking forward to the redemption, the Jew could maintain his dignity in the face of hatred.

At times, it was dangerous for Jews to dream. In 1968, Boris Kochubievsky wrote an open letter to the leadership of the Soviet Union stating: "I want to live in Israel… This is my dream… I will go to the homeland of my ancestors, even if it means going by foot."

Boris was thrown in jail. But he went to prison with his dreams intact. Today, 40 years later, the situation has changed. The Soviet Union can only be found in history books, but Boris can be found in Israel.

Boris' dreams changed world history. And we all need to learn how to dream like Boris, because in the end, you are what you dream.

Canadians uphold a proud human rights legacy

Canada stood tall – dare we say, glorious and free? – during the recent Durban Review debacle in Geneva, thanks to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's pre-emptive strike in boycotting the so-called UN anti-racism conference long before anyone else did.

Gil Troy in Montreal

Canada is now spearheading the push to reform the United Nations, while challenging liberal and autocratic hypocrisy worldwide. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's bigotry at an anti-racism conference defined Durban II as yet another festival of despots bashing the West and Israel. But more significant was the alliance forged beyond the conference halls between pro-Israel and human rights activists frustrated that the UN's Israel obsession hurts human rights.

Canadians such as MP and former Liberal justice minister Irwin Cotler and the executive director of UN Watch, Hillel Neuer, were essential marriage brokers in building this friendship, demanding the UN live up to its ideals and condemn the world's true human rights abusers.

During the first World Conference Against Racism, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa, the streets filled with anti-Zionists shouting vitriolic anti-Semitic slogans that Adolf Hitler didn't finish the job. Some human rights groups and pro-Israel groups began working to reform the UN human rights mechanisms.

Not surprisingly, Canadians such as Cotler and Neuer were crucial in launching this initiative. Many Canadians maintain great faith in the UN's founding ideals and are proud that John Peters Humphrey, a longtime McGill University law professor, drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Cotler, on leave as a law professor from McGill, is a world-renowned human rights crusader who has spent decades criss-crossing the globe defending the oppressed, including Nelson Mandela and Natan Sharansky. Neuer was Cotler's student at McGill, continuing this McGill – and Canadian – tradition.

When the UN started preparations to host a review conference in Durban, Neuer was particularly well-placed to head off another hatefest. Based in Geneva as the executive director of UN Watch, he has frequently highlighted the UN's anti-Israel obsession and its hypocrisy in letting dictatorships dominate the Human Rights Council. Working with various organizations in shifting coalitions – including its parent organization the American Jewish Committee, as well as NGO Monitor and B'nai Brith International, Freedom House and Freedom Now – UN Watch helped redirect the process.

Effective lobbying of the Ford Foundation and others cut off funds that NGOs would have used to replicate the Durban I sideshow. The UN, embarrassed by Durban I, agreed to shift the venue of this year's conference to Geneva, where the UN and Swiss police could better control events. Western diplomats worked to moderate the Durban Review declaration. In this environment, Canada's bold decision to boycott galvanized the forces trying to right Durban's wrongs.

As a result, in Geneva, there were no angry mass rallies against Israel. UN Watch and dozens of other groups hosted conferences and side meetings, giving dissidents and victims from Iran, Egypt, Cuba, Burma, Rwanda and Darfur opportunities to tell their tales. The participants denounced the United Nations for allowing oppressors such as Libya to chair the Human Rights Council, and for ignoring real abuses in their zeal to demonize Israel.

The largest demonstration appears to have been a festive gathering of 2,000 to 3,000 Israel supporters on the conference's third day. Joining one American, one Italian, one Israeli, and one French politician on the podium were two of us from McGill, Cotler and I, as well as Harper's parliamentary secretary – and personal representative to the side conferences – MP Pierre Poilievre. The MC, David Harris, of the American Jewish committee, joked that at these events, Canadians rarely outnumber Americans. May we always compete to lead the way on these issues.

"Please use your liberty to promote ours," Soe Aung, a Burmese dissident, begged at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights, Tolerance and Democracy, which celebrated 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention. While the first Durban sideshow embodied the UN at its worst, the second Durban side conferences tried to meet Aung's challenge.

If the UN starts to reform, history will honour the Conservative Harper – with his Liberal colleague Cotler – for not only saving the United Nations, but also for helping to save many liberal activists from their own moral myopia.

What I'm still learning from my mother

I loved the movie 50 First Dates with Adam Sandler. Sandler plays a guy who falls for a beautiful woman, but with a catch: she suffers from short-term memory loss. Since she can never remember anything, he has to romance her anew every single day. The movie has a magical happy ending: he makes her a videotape that she watches every morning, to remind her of who he is, and who she is, and they live happily ever after.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Toronto

But my mother's quickly fading memory loss won't have a happy ending. Her neshamah shines through the sometimes-vacant moments, and her smile lights up the room when I walk in, but she isn't sure why I'm there or who those nice boys with me are. When she smiles, I still see my mother as she once was, a long time ago.

She's my mother, but she's now my child, too. It's a cruel reversal.

Daily triumphs are small: I get excited when she can still ask a lucid question or when we have a two-sentence conversation. I feel like the mother of a newborn baby: She walked today! She said banana! She kissed me! I sometimes feel unconditional love for her rushing over me like waves, the sweet, patient love of a mother for a toddler. At other times, I feel uncontrollable sadness, like a mother watching her child continually stumble and fall.

There are some advantages to not having short-term memory. Fights and grudges don't last. You live in the here and now. I am learning a lot through this process, and I document the lessons in the hopes they will be comforting to me later and helpful to those who may find themselves in my position now. I hope I can carry these lessons from her dementia with me throughout my life.

1) There's no use arguing about anything – she won't remember and it doesn't bother her. 2) There's no use being aggravated because she lost something – she doesn't remember having it and she's not upset that it's gone. 3) Slow down: don't rush in, say hello, and rush out – time doesn't mean all that much, she can't follow when you speak quickly, and your stress gives her stress. 4) Keep it simple. She's happy with little things for a very short while: going out for dinner means more than the actual reason we're going out, which she can't remember. 5) Keep your expectations reasonable. Don't do things that are meaningful to you – do things that are meaningful to her. 6) Just sitting and holding hands is fine. 7) Don't correct her. It only embarrasses her and aggravates you. 8) Each day is different, so take it as it comes. Some will be good and some will be bad. It is what it is.

Ours is a religion of memory. It's incumbent upon the Jew to remember. But what we pray for is to be remembered: to live in such a way as to leave a legacy. To be remembered is to not disappear. To be remembered is to be validated. To be remembered is to be present even when absent. To be remembered is to be re-membered – to be a member once again of a community. My mom will be remembered even if she doesn't remember.

To remember and to be remembered are precious gifts – but they're different gifts. The first we can't control. The brain will do its own thing, regardless of what we want. No matter how many mementos and snapshots we paste into scrapbooks and photo albums, as much as we vow to "never forget," eventually, one way or another, we will. In the words of the Psalmist, "We fly away."

In 50 First Dates, even love can't reverse a brain injury, and it won't reverse my mom's dementia, either. But to be remembered is altogether possible, and it's what we can hope for.

The Kirshner File

Comic books were virtually created by Jews

Comic books, an iconic manifestation of pop American culture, were virtually created by Jewish Americans. "Jews almost single-handedly built the industry from the ground up, and Jewish involvement in it continues to be felt," said Arie Kaplan, a New York-based cartoonist whose work appears on the Cartoon Network and PBS Kids.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

And he should know. For about the past five years, Kaplan has immersed himself in this topic, plumbing its depths in an effort to ascertain the connection between comic books and Jews.

"I took my quest seriously," he said. Indeed he has. Kaplan's lavishly illustrated book, From Krakow to Krypton (The Jewish Publication Society), which he promoted recently in Toronto, is a definitive and accessible work, highlighting the contributions of such Jewish figures as Maxwell Gaines, Jerry Siegel, Bob Kane, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Will Eisner.

Gaines (Ginsberg), a former teacher and failed novelty salesman, was effectively the creator of the comic book. Siegel, a kid from Cleveland, and his Toronto-born collaborator, Jerry Shuster, dreamed up the greatest fictional hero of all time, Superman.

Kane (Kahn) and Lee (Lieber) respectively invented Batman and Spiderman. Kirby (Kurtzberg) devised Captain America and the Incredible Hulk, while Eisner gave us the Black Condor and Uncle Sam.

These cartoonists laboured during the golden age of comic books, from 1938 to 1952, when their language was formed and they started to differentiate themselves, in style and content, from newspaper strips.

Many of the cartoonists were penniless kids, underpaid "wage slaves" who never received proper financial compensation for their efforts and naively signed away all rights to their work to their publishers, according to Kaplan, the son of an architect and a Jewish school principal.

And a lot of them were Jewish in an era when anti-Semitic discrimination in employment, particularly at advertising agencies and publishing houses, was quite common.

Gaines, who launched the industry and transformed it into a thriving business, stumbled into it after reading old Sunday funnies in his mother's attic in the Bronx. Savouring their lush artwork and colourful narrative, Gaines hit upon an idea whose time had come. If he enjoyed these strips, maybe other readers would as well.

Newspaper comic strips already had been repackaged in book and magazine form as far back as the 1890s. "Gaines' main innovation lay in realizing that there was a business to be made out of these comic strip reprints, that people would buy these comic reprint magazines on a regular basis," Kaplan writes in From Krakow to Krypton, which is dedicated to his late Polish-born grandmother, Adele Pomeranc.

Fired up by the concept, Gaines contacted his friend, Harry Wildenberg, an employee in the sales department of Eastern Color Printing, the company that printed many Sunday newspaper comics sections.

In 1934, Eastern Color Printing published Famous Funnies, the first American retail comic book to be distributed to the public rather than folded inside a Sunday newspaper. Famous Funnies, which did not turn a profit until its seventh edition, lasted well into the mid-1950s, reaching a peak circulation of 400,000.

Kaplan says that the emerging comic book industry quickly became one of the few commercial success stories of the Great Depression.

By 1941, the United States supported more than 30 comic book publishers, producing 150 different comic books a month with combined sales of 15 million and a readership of 60 million.

Unlike pulp magazines, which catered to adults, comic books mainly appealed to kids. And the comic book hero they doted on in droves was Superman, a caped muscleman in red and blue tights whose alter ego was the milquetoast newspaper reporter Clark Kent.

Rejected by major New York dailies as being too fantastic, even for juvenile readers, Superman was, in Kaplan's words, "crudely drawn and broadly written."

Arie Kaplan [Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Gaines, however, was impressed by the Superman character and convinced DC Comics to buy it. The first Superman comic appeared in 1938. From that point onward, the Man of Steel from the planet Krypton never looked back. He was serialized in movies and radio shows.

"During the Depression, Superman represented hope and optimism," explained Kaplan, whose own comic book credits include the miniseries Speed Racer, the Cartoon Network Action Pack and the Papercutz series Tales from the Crypt.

"Today, he represents the same things. Look at us as a country. We're in a recession. We're worried about terrorism. All kinds of crazy things are happening. We need action heroes."

To Kaplan and some scholars, Superman is the ultimate metaphor for the Jewish experience. The last survivor of an extinct planet decimated in a Holocaust-like catastrophe, Superman is something of a refugee/ immigrant in a strange land. As for Clark Kent, he is a bookish and bespectacled nerd, perhaps a stereotypical Jew.

The comic book industry probably reached its apogee during World War II, when comics practically became "regulation army equipment" among American soldiers. Superman and other comic book heroes were thrown into the fray, and from 1941 to 1945, he battled a legion of Nazi agents. Legend has it that Germany's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, denounced him as a Jew.

In fact, Superman was not Jewish, as Kaplan observes. "Wishing to prove to the gentile public that they were good Americans, Jewish comic book creators were careful to fashion superheroes who were super-Americans, characters who would not be perceived as either Jewish or belonging to any specific ethnicity."

According to Kaplan, Harvey Kurtzman, the founder of Mad magazine, which debuted in 1952 and reached its heyday in the 1960s and '70s, is one of the most influential figures in the comic book industry. "Mad was the first satirical comic book to address the nation's ills and challenge its sacred cows," he writes. "Mad poked fun at politics and beloved institutions," he added. "It was hugely important, influencing Saturday Night Live, the Onion and the Daily Show. I'd be very surprised if Jon Stewart – the host of the Daily Show – didn't read Mad as a kid."

Kaplan also admires Art Spiegelman, the son of Holocaust survivors and the creator of Maus, the first comic book to win a Pulitzer Prize. In 1986, Spiegelman expanded Maus, based on his father's experiences as a Holocaust survivor, into graphic novel format.

It was a watershed. Maus brought the graphic novel into mainstream exposure, noted Kaplan, who graduated from New York University with a degree in playwriting and wrote for a New York area sketch comedy troupe before segueing into comic book writing.

"It's just really good storytelling. Spiegelman tells you about the Holocaust without being didactic or sentimental. Nor is he afraid to portray his father as a deeply flawed person, which makes him a more sympathetic character."

Apart from Spiegelman, Kaplan also likes contemporary Jewish comic book writers/ cartoonists such as Harvey Pekar (American Splendor), Brian Michael Bendis (Secret Invasion and Jinx), Bill Gaiman (Sandman) and Chris Claremont (Kitty Pryde).

He is thrilled to be in such illustrious company. "I've had so much fun writing comic books. It's amazing I get paid for it."

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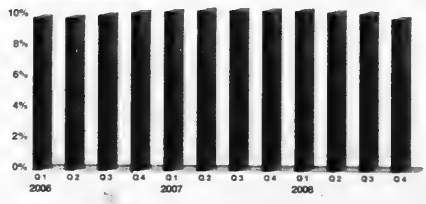

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USY region elects new board

Compiled by CJN Staff

USY's recent regional convention at Queen's University was attended by Kadimaniks (grades 5 to 7) and USYers (grades 8 to 12) of the organization's Eastern Canadian region United Synagogue Youth (ECRUSY).

During the May 7 to 10 convention, the attendees elected their 2009-10 regional executive board.

USY is the high school affiliate of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and Kadima is the middle-school affiliate. Kadimaniks and USYers from ECRUSY chapters in Ontario and Quebec attended the conference.

The theme of this year's convention, co-chaired by Daniel Hosiassohn and Jessie Schoenberg of Beth Jacob in Hamilton, was Olympiad 5769. Participants discussed the people they idolized and called heroes.

Tamara Rebick, youth chair of the Canadian region of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, who has completed 20 years of service with ECRUSY, spoke about the meaning of USY and community.

As social action and education are part of every convention, USYers and Kadimaniks discussed disability issues and raised more than $400 for charity.

They celebrated Tel Aviv's centennial, re-enacting the lottery of plots on the beach in Tel Aviv.

In addition to the activities related to the convention theme, there were late-night sessions on Conservative Judaism, ethics and organ donation.

Sarah Goldberg of Beth Jacob Synagogue, Hamilton, was elected president of the 2009-10 ECRUSY executive board, succeeding David Wallach of Shaar Shalom, Thornhill, Ont.

Also elected to the executive board were Israel affairs/executive vice-president Avital Sternin, B'nai Israel chapter, St. Catharines, Ont.; religion/education vice-president Joshua Seed, Beth David chapter, Toronto; social action/tikkun olam vice-president Emma Pascoe, Beth David chapter, Toronto; Sara Levine, Beth David chapter, Toronto; and Jacob Morris, Beth David chapter, Toronto.

Awards were presented to Beit Rayim Synagogue, Toronto, for chapter of the year; Beth Jacob, Hamilton, won the Eitz Hayyim for most improved chapter; and Stanley Roth, Beth David chapter, Toronto, won the Sharon Cole Memorial Merit Scholarship for his service to ECRUSY.

Maxwell Marmer, of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill, will continue to serve as ECRUSY's international communications vice-president and David Wallach, also of Shaar Shalom, will co-chair 2009 the USY international convention in Chicago, from Dec. 27 to 31.

New and old executive meets one last time. Please see photo, page 17.

LAG B'OMER CELEBRATIONS: Kids and parents alike celebrated Lag b'Omer at Chabad of Markham young families' movie night and barbecue, held at the synagogue. The same evening, the Jewish Russian Community Centre of Ontario held a celebration for about 1,000 people at Earl Bales Park, which included music, a barbecue, a bonfire, and a clown and acrobat show for kids. [Carolyn Blackman photos]

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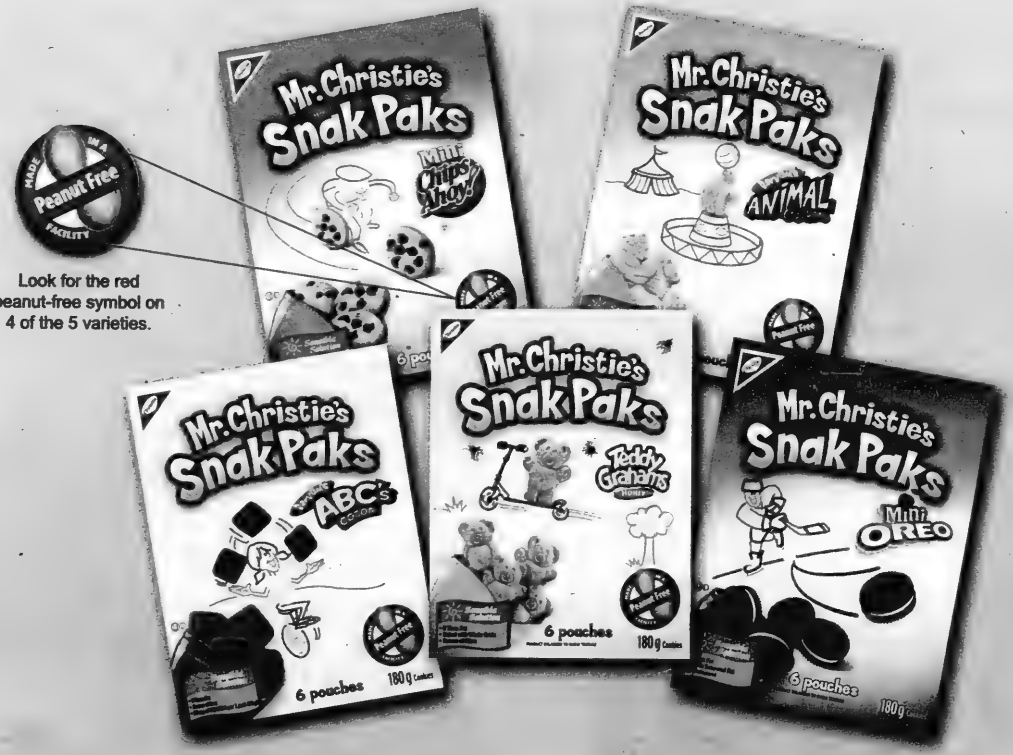

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Jewish Life

Friendship has no ulterior motive

By RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM

While preparing for Shabbat, Shmerl's wife turns to her husband: "Shmerl, something isn't right with this chicken. I'm going to throw it out."

Shmerl offers another suggestion: "Instead of throwing it out, dear, let's give the chicken to Beryl, who can't afford to buy a chicken for Shabbat. That way, it won't go to waste, and we'll do a mitzvah."

And they do. Shabbat morning in shul, Shmerl learns that Beryl is home, very sick. Shmerl returns home, tells his wife that Beryl is sick, and announces his intention to visit him. "You know, bikur cholim, visiting the sick, is a very big mitzvah."

The next day, he visits Beryl. Next Shabbat, Shmerl returns to shul and again, Beryl isn't there. He enquires, and learns that Beryl has died. After services, he returns home, tells his wife and says he will attend the funeral the next day. "You know, attending a funeral is a very big mitzvah."

After the funeral, he tells his wife: "Let's go to Beryl's house to pay a shivah visit. You know, nichum aveilim, comforting the bereaved, is a great mitzvah."

They make the visit. Upon leaving the house, Shmerl turns to his wife and says: "You know, dear, it's amazing! From one lousy chicken, four mitzvot!"

Friends like Shmerl, sadly, are not hard to find. Too many supposed acts of friendship are motivated by self-interest. Shmerl derives satisfaction from the mitzvot he is able to fulfil at Beryl's expense, satisfaction that Beryl's untimely demise does nothing to dispel.

In Mishnah Avot, we learn that true love and friendship are defined by the absence of any ulterior motive. Such love is exemplified by the friendship between David and Jonathan. The special Haftorah read this Shabbat (Machar Chodesh, I Samuel 20), tells their story. Jonathan demonstrates his love for David by warning David of Saul's plans to kill him. In helping save David's life, Jonathan knows that he will lose the chance to be king after his father's death – the throne will go to the folk-hero David. The friendship pact between David and Jonathan at the conclusion of the Haftorah cements their friendship into eternity: "The Lord shall be between me and you, between my descendants and yours, forever."

The story of Shmerl mentions four mitzvot. What these mitzvot have in common is the absence of a brachah, a blessing. Nowhere in the mitzvot of charity, visiting the sick, burying the dead or comforting the bereaved do we recite a standard brachah formula. Perhaps this conscious omission of a blessing is to thwart those who would use other people's suffering for spiritual gain. Each of these four mitzvot involves human suffering. Far be it from us to derive spiritual reward from their fulfilment. Thus, no brachah. No blessing.

Selfless friendship in the extreme is reflected in the question asked of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Meisels in Auschwitz by a youth named Akiva Mann. Akiva's dear friend Moshe was selected for death. Akiva wanted the rabbi's permission to substitute himself for his friend, on the grounds that Moshe was a Torah prodigy, a far better student than he. Not only would his friend live (at least, for the moment), but the world of Torah learning would be better served.

One can only imagine the tears that Rabbi Meisels must have shed when refusing young Akiva's request. Notwithstanding Moshe's greater learning achievements, Akiva's life was just as precious. The trade could not be permitted. But since the time of Jonathan and David, a more selfless act of friendship likely had not occurred, until that of Akiva on behalf of Moshe.

Rabbi Philip Scheim is the spiritual leader of Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue in Toronto.

Shavuot and shalom bayit

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

The holiday of Shavuot marks several events. It marked the start of the harvest and it's also the time that the Torah was offered to the Jewish people and unanimously accepted. One of the most beautiful and unique moments in our history is that instance when we all answered a question with one opinion and one voice. We all committed ourselves to Torah.

In many instances, the revelation at Sinai and the acceptance of the Torah is likened to a marriage ceremony. We stood at Sinai as a bride stands under her chupah with her groom. The Torah was offered as the marriage contract, and we accepted it, just as a bride is offered her ketubah and must accept. She walks around her groom seven times to weave their souls together, and the name of this holiday is Shavuot, which means "weeks," units of seven days. There are many parallels that build the image of a union of intimacy and legal bond, which constitutes both a marriage and the Jewish covenant with God.

But there's also a beautiful subtlety that exists within the texts we read, as well as an often-forgotten detail of Jewish history.

During the holiday of Shavuot, we read the book of Ruth. It's the story of a daring and compassionate Moabite woman named Ruth who bonds with her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, and ultimately becomes the first official convert to Judaism. Through the story of Ruth, the rabbis will subsequently build a formalized model of conversion.

An interesting theme also weaves through the text of Ruth concerning the women's loss of the men in their lives and the unusual circumstances that bring about a union between Ruth and Naomi's distant relative by marriage, Boaz. The fact that Ruth comes from the nation of Moab, along with many parallel and unusual words in the text, subtly leads us back to the book of Genesis and the origins of the nation of Moab. These origins lie within the story of Sodom and the family of Lot.

Lot is Abraham's nephew and the family's adopted son. He is raised by Abraham and Sarah and later chooses to leave the family and establish himself in Sodom. We meet him again when God sends angels to destroy Sodom and save Lot and his family. Only Lot and two of his daughters survive and are living secluded within a cave. The daughters, believing that the world has been destroyed and that there are no men left, decide to do something that's unfathomable. They intoxicate their father and lie with him so as to continue the human race. Each becomes pregnant and delivers a boy, one named Ammon and one named Moab.

At the conclusion of all these events, Abraham moves away, and the sages conclude that Abraham distances himself from his son, Lot, and the family splits up as a result of these women.

Ruth is a descendant of the nation of Moab, the nation that began within that cave. We are aware that we read the book of Ruth on Shavuot, because it's the moment when every Jew accepts Torah, whether they're a Jew by birth or a Jew by choice, and Ruth gives us the model of a Jew by choice. But there is also the subtlety of family images that wind through Shavuot – the "marriage" of the Jewish people and God, as well as the bonding of Ruth and Naomi and the unusual circumstances of the marriage of Ruth and Boaz.

The text informs us that Ruth, the Moabite woman, will ultimately give us the Davidic line. King David will come from Ruth's grandchild, and we are struck by the irony that the line of David, the messianic line, results from what happened in that cave.

But the historic detail that's often missed is that a descendant of Ammon, the other son from the cave, will likewise play a crucial role. Naamah, the Ammonite, will marry King Solomon, David's son, and it's through that marriage that the messianic line will continue. It's hardly a coincidence that two women, each descendants of the daughters of Lot, are crucial to the Jewish messianic legacy.

By bringing these female descendants back into the narrative of Jewish history, the original family of Abraham, Sarah and their son, Lot, are finally reconciled. The value of shalom bayit, peace within our home, is such a core value in Judaism that we are subtly taught that no family rift should ever be left unhealed, that peace and reconciliation must be achieved even if it takes generations.

At Shavuot, we celebrate the commitment to marriage, Torah and Jewish unity, and by remembering Ruth and Naamah, we understand how important peace is to bond these elements together.

As the midrash says: "The Holy One said: since Israel has learned to hate strife and love peace, so that they are now encamped as a single camp, the time has come for Me to give them My Torah."

Jewish Life

Masada symbolizes the spirit of Israel

By ALEX GROPPER

Past Forward

No other archeological excavation captivated the imagination of Israelis, and indeed the world, like the excavations of Herod's desert palace and fortress at Masada. Masada came to symbolize the spirit and determination of the new state of Israel that had been created a scant 15 years before the excavation.

The renowned Yigael Yadin, who had made a name for himself both archeologically and militarily, directed the excavations. As a young man barely 30 years old, Yadin had been chief of staff of the Haganah during the War of Independence. Afterward he completed his doctorate, writing his thesis on the subject of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which his father, Eliezer Sukenik, had obtained for Israel.

Yadin himself had played a role in obtaining the group of scrolls that his father had failed to secure. He was able to get the remainder of these priceless documents, which had eluded his father in 1947, in 1954. It is an amazing story involving intrigue and subterfuge spanning two continents and seven years. Ironically, it was an ad in of all places, the Wall Street Journal, that led to their return to Israel and the Shrine of the Book, where they are now housed.

But Yadin's archeological reputation was secured when he headed the major excavations in the late 1950s at the biblical site of Hazor, located at the entrance to the Upper Galilee as one ascends from Lake Kinnereth (the Sea of Galilee). It was the excavation at Hazor that first allowed Yadin to combine the logistical skills, which he had acquired as commander of the Haganah, with those of his chosen profession in archeology.

It was at Hazor that Yadin assembled a top-notch archeological team whose individual members would dominate archeology in Israel for a generation. From that group also emerged Yadin's right-hand man and architect, Immanuel Dunayevsky. Dunayevsky would play an important role in the upcoming excavations at Masada

At Masada, Yadin perfected the well-oiled archeological machine that he had put together at Hazor. The excavation at Masada was unique from a number of standpoints. Firstly, it got its labour force in a way that would revolutionize subsequent excavations in Israel and eventually other parts of the world as well.

It was while he was in England on sabbatical, in 1961, that Yadin put out the word by means of an advertisement in the London Times that he was looking for volunteers for his upcoming excavations at Masada. He was surprised by the overwhelming response.

The excavation at Masada was a logistical nightmare. The top of the site was virtually inaccessible to heavy machinery. It was here that Yadin took advantage of his army connections by using helicopters to transport equipment to the summit.

The discoveries were equally spectacular. Yadin found the lots with the names of the defenders that Josephus said were used to determine the order of their suicides. Among these lots was that of their leader, Ben Yair. Altogether more than 700 *ostraca* (pot shards inscribed with writing) were found written in Hebrew, Aramaic and even Greek and Latin. There were also manuscript fragments found that corresponded to those from Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. This led scholars to believe that some of the inhabitants from Qumran may have taken refuge on Masada after the Romans destroyed their habitation.

There is no doubt that Masada has served as an inspiration to the State of Israel. Youths go there for their bar mitzvahs, while units of the Israel Defence Forces go to Masada for their graduation ceremonies. It is an unwritten law that "Masada shall not fall again," giving us another example of how the Past marches Forward in Israel.

Rumours and hoaxes, Part 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

The Jewish Highway

Last week, we looked at how to spot rumours and hoaxes that are circulated – and re-circulated – on the Internet. Now it's time to play a little quiz. See if you can determine which of the rumours making the rounds are true, which are false and which were once true but are now outdated.

Rumours

1. The United Kingdom removed Holocaust education from its curriculum because it offended the Muslim population.
2. YouTube has been removing videos posted by the Israel Defence Forces.
3. An Egyptian cleric is calling for a boycott of Starbucks because he says its logo portrays Queen Esther.
4. Simon Cowell used an anti-Jewish slur on the TV show American Idol.
5. Signing an online petition is an effective way to get Google to remove offensive search results.
6. Sexpert Dr. Ruth Westheimer served as a sniper in Israel.
7. BMW omitted Israel from a regional map of the Middle East.
8. Norwegian supermarkets place labels on Israeli products to assist individuals who wish to boycott Israeli products.
9. In response to Mel Gibson's film The Passion of the Christ, Steven Spielberg is planning to direct a film about the Crusades.
10. As a teenager, former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell learned Yiddish while working at a Jewish-owned store in New York.

The Truth

1. False. Holocaust education is mandatory in British schools and continues to be part of the national curriculum. **[tinyurl.com/rumor01]**
2. False. **[tinyurl.com/rumor02]** The IDF spokesperson continues to maintain a page on the popular video site. **[tinyurl. com/ rumor03]**
3. True. Most see the logo as mermaid but not Egyptian cleric Safwat Higazi, who is calling for a boycott of the chain. **[tinyurl.com/rumor04]**
4. False. E-mails claim that Cowell used the word "Jewped" in reference to a contestant being allowed to continue by the other three judges. The Anti-Defamation League reviewed the video and determined the word Cowell used was "duped," after one of the judges spoke positively about the contestant. **[tinyurl. com/rumor05]**
5. False. The ADL recommends against it. Names on online petitions have been copied and posted to anti-Semitic websites, where offensive commentary has been written about those signing the petition. The ADL recommends writing to Google directly to express concerns rather than signing a petition. It also says that Google has been very responsive about removing hate sites that rank high in its results. **[tinyurl.com/rumor06]**
6. True. In 1944, Westheimer, then Karola Ruth Siegel, 16, joined the Haganah as a lookout and sniper. **[tinyurl.com/rumor07]**
7. Outdated. The automaker did omit Israel several years ago and has apologized. "As a car manufacturer we are not involved in Middle East politics, do not support any of the given political attitudes and did not aim to make any kind of political statement." **[tinyurl.com/rumor08]**
8. False. The Norwegian Jewish community has inspected supermarkets and has found no evidence of singling out Israeli products beyond normal "country of origin" identification that applies to all products. **[tinyurl.com/rumor09]**
9. False. Calling it a "vicious, totally fabricated story," Spielberg representative Martin Levy said that "nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who knows Mr. Spielberg would know that he is dedicated to doing what he can to rid the world of hatred and intolerance wherever it exists." **[tinyurl.com/rumor10]**
10. True. Powell's family "moved to a largely Jewish neighbourhood in the Bronx, where Powell picked up some proficiency in Yiddish from his neighbours and through working at Sickser's baby equipment store in his teenage years." When Powell was asked about his Yiddish skills at an American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference, he responded, "Well, yes, I do understand a bissel." **[tinyurl.com/rumor11]**

So how did you do?

0-3 correct. You understand a bissel about hoaxes.

4-6 correct. Rumour has it you're learning.

7-8 correct. You're almost an urban legend yourself.

9-10 correct. You're an e-mail maven!

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Netivot celebrates 25th anniversary

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Now that Netivot HaTorah Day School is celebrating its 25th anniversary, people understand that "it's not an experiment.

"We're part of the landscape," school president Dov Rosenblum told The CJN. Since he became involved as a parent some 14 years ago, he has seen Netivot become "a mature school."

The coeducational modern Orthodox, Zionist day school runs from nursery to Grade 8, and has 550 students, most of them located in Netivot's building in Thornhill, where it moved in 1993.

Last fall, the school opened a small southern preschool branch housed at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

As a modern Orthodox school, one of its main precepts is "having a relationship with all Jews, and with the greater world," said Rosenblum.

But, he noted, educational excellence is "at the top of the agenda."

On May 25, a 25th anniversary dinner will be held at the Paramount Banquet Hall honouring the memory of Avrom Silver, a school founder. It will be the culmination of a series of events honouring the anniversary.

Proceeds will go to an endowment fund in Silver's memory.

Earlier this year Netivot reunions were held in Toronto and Israel, where about 16 per cent of the school's almost 900 graduates have moved, according to statistics provided by the school's director of development, Alan Steinfeld.

At least 15 alumni serve in the IDF, he added. Alumni can also be found in the fields of medicine, business, science, law and accounting, Steinfeld said.

Steinfeld, who describes himself as Netivot's resident historian, said that he and his wife felt "it was worth taking the chance" of sending their oldest son to Netivot's first junior kindergarten class, held at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue. He was among 42 JK, SK and Grade 1 students that year, and the first of the four Steinfeld children to attend Netivot.

"We really liked the *hashgafah* [religious philosophy] of the school. It suited our personal *hashgafah*," said Steinfeld, who has been on staff since 1987.

At Beth David, Steinfeld recalls, the gym did double duty as a lunch room, and students sat at tables on wheels that had to be moved out of the way for gym class.

He added that, now that the school has its own building, it is able to have a basketball team and can offer other extracurricular activities that weren't previously available.

In the late 1980s, Steinfeld said, the school needed more classroom space, and the higher grades were housed at Temple Sinai.

Four years later, there was a third campus, located for a year at Thornhill's Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

"Certainly the growth of the school has been a phenomenal change," said Steinfeld.

For further information about the dinner, call Shaindy at 905-771-1234, ext. 25 or go to www.netivot.com/dinner.

Hillcrest preschool turns 80

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Hillcrest Progressive School will celebrate its 80th anniversary with an onsite birthday bash on May 26 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Now a Jewish preschool in Toronto's Hoggs Hollow area, Hillcrest began its existence in 1929 as Ontario's first Jewish day school.

Associated Hebrew Schools – Toronto's oldest Jewish day school, which celebrated its centennial last year – began as a Talmud Torah and did not become a day school until the mid-1950s. Eitz Chaim, the second-oldest day school in the city, also started as a supplementary school, and became a day school in the 1940s.

Hillcrest Progressive School – "progressive" referring to modern educational philosophies – was originally located in a rented house on Christie Street. In 1934, it was chartered under the name of Central Jewish Institute, which is still the name of the entity that operates the school.

Hanna Shlesinger, 83, who taught three-year-olds at Hillcrest's current location from 1975 to 2002, told The CJN in a phone interview that some of her childhood friends attended the preschool's predecessor on Christie Street.

"I remember just that [the original school] was a wonderful place to be," Shlesinger said. "Everybody had a good time, plus the fact that they were learning something."

She recalled that the house had a turret on top, and said she believes it is now a private home.

Hillcrest principal Queenie Spindel, back left, with nursery teacher Melissa Alonzi and her students, take a moment to pose for the camera on the school playground. [Frances Kraft photo]

After a few years on Christie Street, the school moved to 574 University Ave. in the early 1930s, according to information on its website. The University Avenue property was expropriated for the building of what is now Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Hillcrest was in its own building on Avenue Road until 1955, when it moved to its current location.

Shlesinger, who taught at Holy Blossom Temple before joining Hillcrest, said one of the things that stood out for her about the preschool was that "warmth radiated when you opened the front door.

"It was a great place to work. So many teachers have been there for so long."

Hillcrest's principal, Queenie Spindel, has been with the school for 23 years. The Capetown native, who started as a nursery teacher, said most of the teachers have been with the school for more than 15 years.

"We have a special slogan – 'Every day is a special day' – and we truly believe it is," she said.

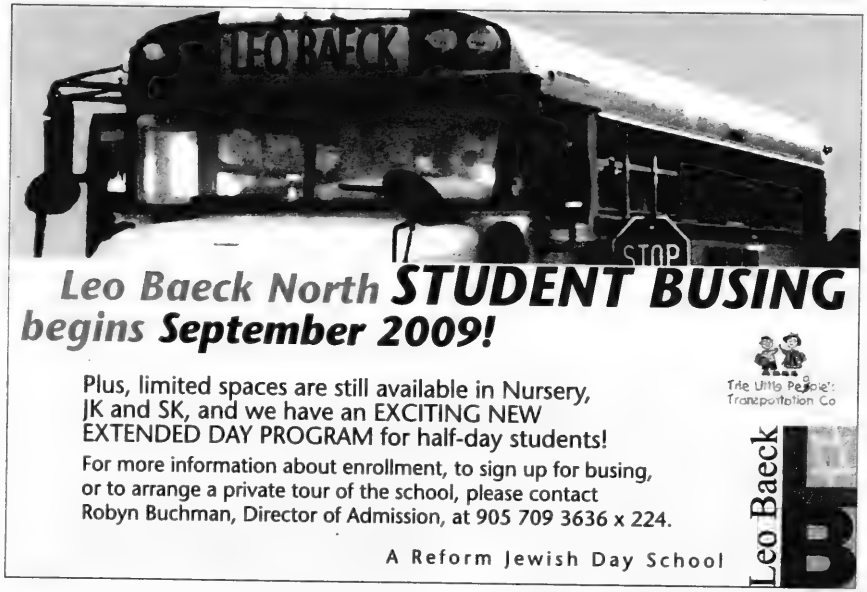
The school building is an old farmhouse, originally set on two acres of land, a portion of which was sold in 1977 to fund an upgrade. "It's as if you're in the country and yet there's the city around me," Spindel said.

A playground behind the school, complete with a bike path under a bridge, lends itself to parades for Yom Ha'atzmaut and Sukkot, she added.

The private, non-profit preschool, which is not affiliated with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz), serves 165 students from age 2 1/2 to 5, and also runs a summer day camp.

Shabbat and Jewish holidays are celebrated at the school, and a once-a-week Hebrew teacher supplements the children's Hebrew language education.

For further information about the birthday celebration, or to purchase tickets ($20 each, or free for children under age 2), call the school at 416-489-8355.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Haifa hospital planning major upgrade

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

During Israel's war with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, Haifa's Rambam Health Care Campus was in the line of fire for the Islamic terror organizations' long-range missiles.

Some 60 rockets fell within a one-mile radius of the medical facility – which serves two million residents of Israel's north – and some splashed into the Mediterranean close to the hospital grounds. One missile "fell very close, adjacent to the hospital buildings and it shattered hospital windows," said Rafael Beyar, general director and CEO of the hospital.

Rafael Beyar

Beyar, who was in Toronto recently to meet with Canadian Friends of Rambam and other potential supporters, said no one was hurt in the barrage, but the hospital had to reorganize the way it treated patients. People were moved to the basement while sections of the facility were closed.

Though life has returned to normal, that wartime experience prompted a re-evaluation of the hospital's strategic plans to better take into account a nightmarish worst-case scenario.

Rambam has adopted a bold new concept that will see construction of an underground three-level parkade that can be quickly turned into an emergency hospital. Within 48 hours, the parking lot will be evacuated and converted into a 1,700-bed hospital, able to withstand missile bombardment, as well as chemical and biological attacks.

The bottom level is reserved for Rambam patients, the second floor for patients transferred from other hospitals, and the top level will serve as a fortified emergency ward. "I hope this will be a facility that nobody will need," Beyar said.

The underground facility itself is part of an even larger project for the 70-year-old Rambam.

The redevelopment plan, code-named "The Vision of David," will see the fusion of medical services, biotechnology, research and education facilities in one large campus, most of it above ground. Total cost for the project stands today at $300 million (US), with the price of the underground hospital alone set at $100 million.

Above the parking lot hospital, Rambam will establish new children's oncology and cardiovascular hospitals. A biomedical discover tower will house a clinical research institute.

Rambam gets half of its capital funding from the government of Israel, but it relies on the private sector to make up the rest. With a seven-year timeline for completion of the project, the first building is expected to be completed in three years.

Until recently, Rambam was not as active as other institutions in soliciting financial help abroad but it is increasingly turning to these supporters –and within Israel – to help fund the hospital's expansion. Haifa native Sammy Ofer has put up $25 million towards the underground hospital project while an unnamed Canadian benefactor has put up a similar amount for a new oncology hospital, Beyar explained.

"We often come to the western countries to meet our friends," he added.

Canadians appreciate the importance of the hospital in serving Israel's northern population, regardless of religion. Jews, Muslims, Christians and Bah'ais all are treated there and can be found as members of the hospital's staff, he said.

Rambam was the campus where Technion faculty members Avram Hershko and Aaron Ciechanover conducted the chemistry research that earned each a Nobel Prize. Rambam staff co-operate with local high-tech firms to develop new drugs and devices. It is an incubator where staff come up with new ideas, develop them in conjunction with the private sector and test them at the hospital and other research facilities worldwide, Beyar said.

Canadian Friends of Rambam is a grass roots organization that assists the Rambam hospital provide medical services. For more information, email cframbam@gmail.com or call Suzanne Kaye at 416.560.0546.

USY LEADERS MEET: From left are Rabbi Jen Gorman, Eastern Canadian region United Synagogue Youth regional youth director and current and former Eastern Canadian region United Synagogue Youth executive board members Sara Levine, Jacob Morris, Max Marmer, Emma Pascoe, Sarah Goldberg, Ayelet Seed, Samara Strub, David Wallach, Avital Sternin and Josh Seed.

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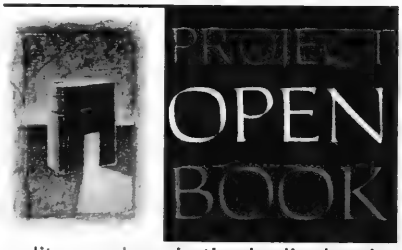

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Toronto man honoured for fostering Polish-Jewish ties

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

A Toronto man has been awarded a Polish medal for building bridges between Jews and Poles.

Peter Jassem, chair of the Toronto chapter of the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, received the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland in a ceremony at the Polish consulate last month.

The medal, which is given to Poles or foreigners who have rendered great service to Poland, was presented to Jassem by Marek Ciesielczuk, the Polish consul general in Toronto.

Jassem, a 56-year-old architect who immigrated to Canada 21 years ago from his native Poland, said he accepted the Knight's Cross in the spirit of advancing "dialogue and reconciliation," promoting better Polish-Jewish understanding and preserving "the unique and rich heritage of Polish Jewry."

In an interview, Jassem said that members of the foundation consist of persons of Jewish and Christian descent.

"This is a forum where can can jointly educate ourselves and each other, and discuss the complex issues of Polish-Jewish relations."

Peter Jassem

The foundation was established in 1988, shortly after Jassem arrived in Canada.

The founders of the Toronto branch were, among others, Rabbi Dow Marmur, Frank Bialystok, Louis Lenkinski, Henry Dasko and Sharon Weintraub.

Jassem joined the organization and became its chair about seven years ago.

He said it has helped him explore his Jewish roots.

Born near Poznan, and a resident of Szczecin prior to immigrating to Canada, Jassem is of mixed descent.

"My father's roots are Jewish and my mother's Christian," said Jassem, who discovered that his surname was shared by Polish Jews in the United States.

The discovery had a profound effect on him. "It was an emotional moment and a milestone in my own self-definition. All of a sudden, I had a feeling of reaching a resting point in my journey. I had a feeling of harmony and relaxation. I felt much richer. Now I could relate to a double heritage."

Jassem said his late father was of indispensable assistance in his genealogical search for his Jewish identity.

"My mother also provided enriching facts of how her Catholic parents harboured a Jewish girl during [the Holocaust], or how they embraced a Jewish son-in-law. She keeps sending me articles on Polish-Jewish issues."

The fraught relationship between Jews and Poles has improved against the backdrop of a Jewish revival in Poland and a surge of interest in Jews among Poles, he noted.

"More than 100 books on Jewish history and tradition are published annually in Poland. Hundreds of articles appear in the press. Cultural and research centres have been opened. Associations have been formed. Exhibitions, festivals and cultural events take place. Public debates and kitchen table conversations on many complex issues are commonplace."

And Poland's relations with Israel are exemplary, he added.

But outside Poland, Polish-Jewish relations are in need of improvement. "There are many stereotypes on both sides of the divide," said Jassem. "This is where our role begins as an educator and bridge builder. Progress is slow but noticeable."

Fond of speaking of Jews and Poles' "millennium-long common history," he said that the foundation has worked hard to promote its objectives.

Jassem, a member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada, said that the foundation marked the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, promoted the première of Roman Polanski's film, The Pianist, and presented an exhibition of prewar photographs of Polish Jews preserved by Polish Christians.

In addition, the foundation participates in Holocaust Education Week and book promotions.

"We've also created an annual award for the best student paper on the history of Polish Jewry and on Polish-Jewish relations.

"As well, we co-sponsored the first English translation of Yehiel Trunk's Poyln: My Life within Jewish Life in Poland, Sketches and Images, published by the University of Toronto Press."

Jassem, too, is the Canadian representative of the North American Council of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, set to be built in Warsaw on the grounds of the former ghetto.

According to Jassem, the museum will be the most important institution of its kind, on a par with the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C ., and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

"No visit to Poland will be complete without a visit to the museum. It will be a place to begin an exploration of the lost world of Polish Jews, and a place of dialogue and civic engagement."

Jassem said that Poland's current president, Lech Kaczynski, initiated the project when he was mayor of Warsaw.

Kaczynski also changed the status of Polish Righteous Gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust, recognizing them as the equals of Polish soldiers and insurgents who battled the Nazis.

Apart from his role at the foundation, Jassem is on the executive of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, an international organization that has created a database on Polish Jews and is dedicated to improving state-of-the-art Jewish genealogical research.

Players pitch for Israel

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Daniel Warner is pitching for Israel – again.

He is preparing for the second annual Pitch for Israel softball tournament, Aug. 23 at the Powerade Centre in Brampton, which raises money to allow children from families living below the poverty line to attend summer camp.

Warner, 26, a managing partner at Campus Marketing Agency and a student at York University's Schulich School of Business, was recently honoured by Jewish Family & Child's Homework Club for initiating last year's tournament in partnership with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

The tournament raised $30,000, half of which went toward sending local children to camp through a partnered program between JF&C and UJA Federation, and half to support federation's partnership with the Israeli city of Eilat, where it supports programs for the city's children.

A graduate of Hebrew day schools and the University of Western Ontario, Warner started the tournament because he was "keen" to raise money for kids who didn't have the opportunity to go to camp.

As a baseball player, he said, he thought it would be a great idea to run a tournament.

"The Toronto Blue Jays, JUMP [Jewish Urban Meeting Place], Birthright NEXT and CIE [Canada Israel Experience] were our presenting partners in the inaugural Pitch for Israel, and I look forward to working with them again this year."

He said he is targeting young adults aged 21 to 34 to form teams – players of any skill level are welcome – for this year's tournament, and teams will be split into male and female. Each team is guaranteed three games.

Nearly all of last year's teams are returning, he said, but new players can join either individually or as a team. Tournament sponsors include Fabricland, Spinmaster, Mac Cosmetics and Dynamic Funds.

For information on playing in the tournament, volunteering or joining a committee, call Warner at 416-540-7373, or e-mail daniel@campusmarketingagency.com.

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On Campus

McGill Ghetto Shul raises funds in Toronto

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

When Hava Glick left Toronto to attend McGill University she found a spiritual home at the Ghetto Shul, a grassroots congregation that caters to students living in and around the student ghetto in downtown Montreal.

Glick, 23, a McGill graduate, says the Ghetto Shul provides a social network for out-of-town students like herself.

"It was the social hub of the ghetto. People would come out for these incredible Shabbat dinners. We'd get between 60 to 100 people a week."

Rabbi Daniel Leibish Hundert

She is among the alumnae and students who will be talking about the Ghetto Shul's importance for out-of-town students at an upcoming fundraiser in Toronto.

Spiritual leader Rabbi Daniel Leibish Hundert and his wife, Dena, will be attending this parlour meeting, which takes place in a private home in the Bathurst-Eglinton area on May 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Glick is also an organizer of an alumnae reunion on Shavuot, which will be held at the shul's new digs at 3458 Park Ave. in Montreal, May 28 to 30.

She attributes the shul's popularity to Rabbi Hundert's charismatic leadership.

"He's an amazing connecting force between people."

Her words are echoed by Rachel Rosenbluth, 19, a first year environmental studies student.

"I was just looking for a way to find meaning in Montreal after spending a year in Israel."

She describes Rabbi Hundert and his wife as "inspiring in the way they find meaning in every aspect of life."

Rosenbluth was a regular participant at the weekly Shabbat dinners and the Tuesday jam nights.

"It's a place to go chill… People connect through the music."

Rabbi Hundert is a native Montrealer with an eclectic background that includes Jewish day school, an alternative international college and five years at yeshivas in Israel.

While his family strongly identified with their Jewish roots – his Toronto-born father, Gershon, is a Jewish studies professor at McGill – Rabbi Hundert says he became shomer Shabbat on his own at the age of 17.

"Shabbat became something very special for me."

He has also been playing saxophone since his bar mitzvah, and music continues to play a large role in his life and it's an important liturgical component of the Ghetto Shul.

He says the shul, which is now in its eighth year, was started by Rabbi Avi Poupko in 2001 as way of offering a Shabbat venue for McGill students living downtown.

Its initial home was an upper duplex in the student ghetto.

"People came right away on the first Shabbat," Rabbi Hundert recalls.

"The meals were very communal."

By the third year, the shul had to rent a hotel ballroom for High Holiday services to accommodate the 300 to 400 worshippers who attended.

Rabbi Hundert, 32, became the spiritual leader – he had just returned from Israel and was starting undergraduate studies – when Rabbi Poupko left to go to Israel.

The synagogue managed to survive financially through student and parent donations, membership fees, and – mostly – from the substantial funding allocated by Hillel and Federation CJA in Montreal.

"We have been getting 75 to 120 students a week, for Shabbat," the rabbi says, adding that students like the shul because "it doesn't feel like a traditional space."

The shul was supported by Hillel, which doesn't offer consistent Shabbat programming.

When there were some problems with the shul's premises because of fire code regulations, services moved to Hillel House for the 2007-08 academic year.

"The existence of the shul was hanging in the balance at that point," recounts Rabbi Hundert.

"It was not clear if it would survive."

However, Hillel board members have been helping the shul work toward getting charitable status as an independent entity because Hillel and federation are no longer able to provide the same financial support that the shul was able to rely on for the past seven years, due to budget cuts made across the board, explains the rabbi.

Some Hillel board members have joined the Ghetto Shul board and helped to secure a new venue, a two-level storefront on Park Avenue, he says.

"We've raised the money for a year's rent. It was a tremendous show of confidence from families of current students, alumnae and other supporters."

He says they have now initiated a major fundraising drive in Toronto, where the largest number of student members reside.

He stresses that the shul attracts students of all denominations.

"It's all about community. For most people, the Ghetto Shul is a home away from home."

To find out about the Shavuot alumnae reunion in Montreal or the Toronto parlour meeting on May 24, contact Hava Glick at 416-554-1972.

To donate, visit www.supportghettoshul.com, or call Hillel at 514-845-9171.

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KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

MK replaces COR as hechsher on airline meals

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Jewish Community Council/Vaad Ha'ir in Montreal is now the sole certifier of kosher food on Air Canada and many other airline flights originating in Canada, replacing COR of Toronto, after Canada's largest airline switched its kosher catering contract to a new joint Israeli-Canadian venture under the MK hechsher.

The agreement between the Vaad, Air Canada and kosher meal providers that came into effect May 1 is historic, Vaad officials said, because it puts into place the "highest" standard of kashrut under an MK Mehadrin hechsher that they say is acceptable even to haredim.

The new deal represents a coup for the Vaad, which now oversees the kashrut for all airline meals – including Air Canada's and specific El Al meals – prepared at Cara Airline Solutions' kosher kitchen in Toronto. Some 29 airlines – including KLM, Air France and British Airways – will now have their kosher meals supplied by Cara with an MK (Montreal Kosher) hechsher, instead of a COR certification.

But it also signified a loss for Montreal kosher caterers and restaurants, which had prepared kosher food for flights out of Montreal under the MK hechsher, as well as for the Toronto-based Kashruth Council of Canada, whose COR hechsher had been on all kosher meals made in the Ontario capital. The Air Canada meals had been supplied by another company, LSG Sky Chefs, in partnership with Zuchter Berk Creative Caterers of Toronto.

Now all kosher airline meals prepared at the Toronto Cara facility will bear the MK Mehadrin stamp, while the COR stamp will appear only on airline meals prepared by LSG Sky Chefs, said Rabbi Saul Emanuel, the Vaad's executive director.

Rabbi Emanuel said the new "partnership" between the Vaad, Cara, and Hamasbia Airline Food Industries in Israel – which supplies "special kosher" meals for haredi passengers on flights from Israel – will bring an unprecedented level of quality, consistency and service to the kosher traveller.

"This is a very, very big deal," he said.

HamasbiaCanada, a new company formed out of the Cara and Hamasbia Israel partnership, is the entity that will run the kosher airline meal operation.

Rabbi Emanuel said kosher meals on Air Canada and other airlines' flights from Canada are to be produced out of the huge Cara kosher kitchen facility on the outskirts of Toronto's Pearson International Airport. The kitchen was revamped over the last few weeks to meet MK Mehadrin-level standards and is manned by Cara employees, who prepare the meals.

A HamasbiaCanada sign has already replaced a "Cara Airline Solutions" sign on the exterior of the kosher kitchen, and the facility's kashrut is being overseen solely by Montreal Vaad mashgichim.

The new arrangement came about as a result of concerns expressed by Air Canada over the inconsistent quality of kosher meals served to passengers on its flights from Canada, Rabbi Emanuel said.

According to Rabbi Emanuel, when Air Canada saw the higher quality of Hamasbia Israel "special kosher" meals – meaning meals acceptable to haredi Jews – on its flights from Israel (the company also supplies "special" meals on El Al flights from Israel), the airline began consulting with Hamasbia Israel's president, Azriel Tauber, on ways to improve kosher meals coming from Canada.

Within a few months, Rabbi Emanuel said, Air Canada notified its kosher supplier in Toronto that it would be switching from LSG Sky Chefs to Cara's kosher kitchen, which also prepares meals for El Al flights from Canada.

He said Cara at the same time was in the process of consulting with Hamasbia Israel's Tauber, a longtime acquaintance of Rabbi Yonasan Weiss, chief rabbi of the Montreal Vaad's Beth Din, and Tauber recommended to Cara that the Vaad's MK Mehadrin certification be used for meals prepared at the Cara kitchen.

"On that basis [HamasbiaCanada] was started," Rabbi Emanuel said. "By Air Canada switching to Cara, that's what allowed this project to happen."

Calls to Air Canada and COR officials weren't returned by the CJN's deadline, but in an April 30 posting on its website, the Kashruth Council said it "wishes to advise the community that Cara Airline Solutions, a provider of kosher airline meals, is no longer under COR supervision."

Isaac Drookman, owner of Zuchter Berk, called the new deal "a disaster" because "it makes both kashrut agencies [MK and COR] weaker," since there's now a "second option" and each might seek to encroach on the other's turf.

"COR and the MK are at war," he said.

Under the agreement, all kosher meals prepared by HamsbiaCanada at Cara will be sealed and shrink-wrapped and bear the HamasbiaCanada and MK Mehadrin labels and insignias. A green label will indicate a pareve meal. Red will signify meat; blue, dairy; and mustard colour, fish.

Meals for El Al flights out of Canada will also be prepared at the newly configured kitchen, but only the airline's "special kosher" meals will be sealed. Non-"special" kosher meals will continue to be certified by El Al's own chief rabbi.

Rabbi Emanuel said the deal was finalized in mid-April, leaving less than two weeks to meet the May 1 start deadline.

The process, he said, included many trips to Toronto by Vaad officials, consultations with suppliers, marketers, and food production experts, adjusting meal ingredients to the MK Mehadrin-level "gold standard," and Cara using its own team of engineers and designers to accommodate and put into place "technical changes" needed to revamp the kitchen.

In an interview from Israel, Tauber said he was "extremely happy to have a partner who is trustworthy and who is making every effort to make this story a success."

"With both parties open-minded and committed to doing the right thing, it made things easier," he said.

Rabbi Emanuel thinks the new kosher kitchen will be the largest in North America, estimating that it will prepare more than 100,000 meals annually.

He declined to disclose how much the Vaad will earn from the new arrangement, but he was adamant that it's not about the money.

There are also plans to have high-quality mehadrin-level kosher food available at airports as well as in the frozen food sections of grocery stores.

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Friedmann Abraham Izig

Leurs enfants (noms en 1952):

Friedmann Simon né à Anvers en 1942
Friedmann Jakobus né en Belgique en 1945
Friedmann Benno né en Belgique en 1946

Leur cousin, Jean Quevy, né Isaac Farkas
Portable Jean Quevy: 00 32 (0) 475 24 79 00
00 32 67 77 17 94 (numéro de téléphone)
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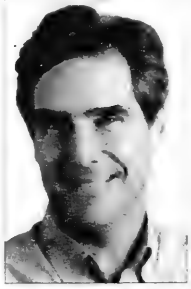
Ignatieff reflects on shared goodwill

Continued from page 1

In another statement, Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff reflected on the goodwill shared by both countries, calling it "a relationship between proud allies, built on our mutual respect, our common commitment to democracy and our shared hopes for a peaceful future."

He added: "On May 11, 1949, Canada recognized Israel's independence. I am proud that it was a Liberal government that did so."



Michael Ignatieff

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman took time to emphasize the importance of the relationship, terming it a "special friendship."

"Not only was Canada one of the 33 countries who voted for the establishment of the state in the UN on Nov. 29, 1947... the Canadian representative also played a central role in the passing of the resolution," Lieberman said, and he singled out the important role of the Jewish community in Canada "in the preservation and strengthening" of the relationship.

"The diverse relationship between the two countries is currently expressed by [a] free-trade agreement, [a] joint industrial [research and development] fund, and bilateral co-operation in many fields, including agricultural research, water treatment, internal security, legal co-operation, relationships between universities and cultural exchanges," he added.

Also marking the occasion was the Canada-Israel Committee.

Its chair, Moshe Ronen, thanked parliamentarians for their continuing support of Israel.

"On behalf of Canada's pro-Israel community, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to all members of Parliament for their unanimous support of this resolution. We are particularly thrilled that Israel's Knesset adopted a similar resolution today," he said.

"The multi-partisan support given to today's resolution in [the] House of Commons speaks to the demonstrable growth in the Canada-Israel relationship over the past several years. As we look to the future, I am confident that Canada's relationship with Israel will continue to flourish."

Commemorative events for the anniversary are scheduled to continue throughout the rest of 2009 via "a number of diplomatic, cultural and academic events in Canada and Israel," according to the ministries of foreign affairs for both nations.

Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and western Canada, told The CJN that all events planned by the Israeli and Canadian embassies for this year will be done "under the headline of 60 years of diplomatic relations," and he alluded to major upcoming Israel-themed events at Toronto's Luminato Festival and later this year at the Toronto International Film Festival. He added that Montreal's Les Grands Ballets Canadiens is also scheduled to perform in Tel Aviv later this year to mark the Israeli city's 100th anniversary.

OMISSION

The caption with the picture "Reena Groundbreaking" (CJN, May 24) should have given credit to photographer Barry Shainbaum. We regret the omission.

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BATHTUB PROJECT

Amy Kaldor and Samahra Zatzman, co-chairs of the Bathtub Project – an event organized by Hillel at York University to raise awareness about violence against women – collected new and unused toiletries donated to women's shelters in the Greater Toronto Area. The products they collected late last month include soap, shampoo, razors, toothbrushes and deodorant.

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Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto: M

A Foundation for the future

By Barbra Green

Ten years ago, Vision magazine profiled three philanthropic trailblazers in a story about a bold and unprecedented gift to the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto.

Driven by shared values, priorities and a mutual desire to help build a thriving Jewish community, Morris Perlis, Allan Silber and Ed Sonshine (Counsel Corporation's then President, Chairman & CEO and Vice-Chairman, respectively) made a record donation of $10 million in personal stock to establish the first donor advised funds.

The gift, which took advantage of the Federal government's then drastic cuts to capital gains taxes for donated securities, brought the Foundation's assets to $71 million and opened the floodgates for similar donations.

Chaired at the time by David Goldstein, the Foundation's assets grew from $71 million to over $200 million today. Now chaired by Honey Sherman, the Foundation encompasses over 490 individual funds and has over $160 million in planned gifts (designated as bequests in wills or donated life insurance policies). In addition, every year the Jewish Foundation distributes millions of dollars to support organizations and programs across Canada, Israel and around the world.

The growth has been both dramatic and profound. And just as the Jewish Foundation has flourished, so too have the three families that raised the charitable bar in Toronto a decade ago. Ten children, ten daughters and sons-in-law and 15 grandchildren later, the spirit and tradition of giving continues.

Indeed, the Perlis, Silber and Sonshine children, together with their spouses, are embracing philanthropy and their community – seeking out projects and roles that resonate and inspire.

When Alan, Herschel and Nathan Perlis decided to collaborate on a fund with the Jewish Foundation, camp was the obvious focus.

"For me and my brothers, and our wives, camp was probably the most integral part of what created our background, our Jewish being," said Alan. "We wanted to help people who couldn't have the same experience that we had, because for us, this was the most important experience growing up."

Pam and Alan Perlis with their children Ethan (l) and Chloe.

Every year, the three couples will contribute to the newly-created Perlis Family Camp and Community Fund, with two-thirds dedicated to camp scholarships and the remainder to building the fund's capital.

For the next generation of Sonshines, a strategic restructuring of their parents' fund has placed increased responsibility for grant-making in their capable hands. For Daniel Sonshine, the current co-chair of UJA Federation's Jewish Chamber of Commerce, this new challenge has allowed his family to dream bigger, broadening their scope to include United Jewish Appeal, Mount Sinai Hospital, Zareinu, and a new program they're spearheading at the Speech and Stuttering Institute.

While individual interests and circumstances undoubtedly impact their charitable choices, their parents' actions remain the common denominator.

"Philanthropy and charitable work have always been a huge part of our parents' lives," said Daniel. "I remember being a bit amazed when they made that Foundation gift ten years ago. It showed me just how important giving really was to them. As a result of their lifelong approach to charitable work, community involvement and philanthropy have always been things that I value."

"For my parents, when it came to tzedakah, it wasn't a matter of if, but a matter of where," said Josh Silber. "In our own unique ways, I hope my siblings and I will be as effective as my parents were in stressing the importance of giving."

Alan Perlis echoed the sentiment when it comes to his growing brood.

"I hope that they'll continue the giving, continue the tradition that was started by my parents and passed on to my brothers and our wives," he said, "that we'll raise them as well as our parents raised us to understand the importance of giving and philanthropy and helping others."

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto and you: a partnership that benefits us all.

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto is dedicated to creating permanent resources to meet the challenges and needs of the Jewish community.

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JEWISH FOUNDATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Meeting community needs and challenges

Bat mitzvah leads to making a difference

By Alan T. Domb

In today's challenging times, it's heart-warming to hear about a Toronto teen intent on making a tangible difference in the lives of others.

Lainie Yallen enrolled in the Jewish Foundation's B'nai Tzedek Youth Philanthropy program after being inspired by her older brother's bar mitzvah initiative to dedicate a playground in Kiryat Shmona, Israel.

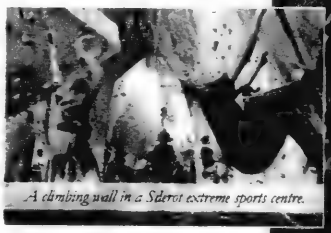
"I was thrilled to be a part of the excitement and attend the dedication with all our family," says Lainie. "When it came time for my bat mitzvah, I knew that I wanted to make a difference too."

And that's exactly what Lainie has done, choosing to direct her bat mitzvah gifts to the creation of an extreme sports centre in Sderot, Israel.

"The children of Sderot need a safe place to spend their leisure time; a place that will help ease the tensions in their lives, and where they could play and just be kids," she says. "They cannot play outside or at outdoor playgrounds because being outside presents too serious a security risk. This will be a place where kids can just be kids and try to forget about their worries of the constant attacks."

Lainie's fund at the Jewish Foundation has almost reached her fundraising goal and now that she is a Bat Mitzvah, has already established her first legacy.

"I am happy that I have begun to do my part toward *tikun olam* and that my project, which I hope will bring much happiness to the lives of children who live in much worse conditions than I do, is a real act of *chesed* and *tzedakah*. I hope that it is the first of many that I will be able to do as I become an adult."



A climbing wall in a Sderot extreme sports centre.

Lainie Yallen enjoying her bat mitzvah.

For information on B'nai Tzedek, contact Angela D'Aversa at 416.631.5833 or adaversa@ujafed.org

Young woman's dream comes true

By Daniel Horowitz

As Esther Berman's plane began its descent into Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport, she, as well as her fellow passengers, shared the unmistakable surge of excitement, anticipation and Jewish pride unique to that special moment.

But, while the others on her plane simply rolled up their window shades to take in the view, Esther, who is clinically blind, didn't have to scan the scenery to know she was finally in Israel.

Esther's first trip to the Jewish state was aboard a Canada Israel Experience Taglit Birthright Israel journey. Made possible by a donor at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, Esther was accompanied by a "shadow," David Lifshitz.

"My experience on that trip was priceless," said Esther. "It has given me unforgettable memories and created a feeling of closeness to Israel that I didn't even know before."

Esther's experience was made possible by Torontonian Harry Shilling, who created an endowment fund at the Jewish Foundation.

"The Harry Shilling Israel Fund was created to send disadvantaged young people to Israel, and I am thrilled that Esther Berman was able to do just that," enthused Shilling. "To know that she went and experienced Israel for the first time makes me feel better than if I had gone myself. To help a young person achieve something that otherwise wouldn't be possible makes me so very happy, and so proud."

"Being in Israel gave me such a peaceful, fulfilling sensation, and it was just so great to be able to be Jewish there," said Esther, 23. "For once, I didn't have to fight for my Jewish rights; I didn't have to fight my university to defer an exam so that I didn't have to write it on a Saturday; I didn't have to ask my employer to give me extra days off so I could observe Jewish holidays. In Israel, all those troubles were so far away. I could freely observe Shabbat and just be as Jewish as I wanted."

Esther's Birthright Israel experience also took place during a very special time for Jews worldwide, making her trip that much more memorable.

"Being in Israel during Chanukah was a very special experience for me," she explained. "It was so amazing to be in a place where almost every household had a menorah in its window. That was not something I was used to, that's for sure."

Esther's maiden voyage to Israel had everything she had hoped for, but, even in her wildest imagination, she didn't realize just how much she would experience on her journey, with the assistance of David.

"Going to the Kotel was a memorable, life-changing and emotional experience," she said. "It is unbelievable how this one particular spot can take over one's thoughts and feelings just by being there."

Some of the other highlights of Esther's trip included riding a camel, shopping in Jerusalem and hiking.

"It was an unforgettable experience, one that I will always cherish, and if it wasn't for the efforts of CIE and the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, I wouldn't have been able to go on a Birthright Israel trip by myself," said an emotional Esther. "It is because of them and Mr. Shilling that I finally got to experience Israel."

Esther Berman enjoys Jerusalem with her "shadow," David Lifshitz.

To establish your own Donor Advised Fund, contact Ronit Holtzman at 416.631.5738 or at rholtzman@ujafed.org

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
Across the street. Across the globe.

Just a Second Shop celebrates 25 years

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Just a Second Shop (JASS), operated by Jewish Family & Child, is set to celebrate its 25th anniversary on May 31.

Located at 4117 Bathurst St., south of Sheppard Avenue, the store, open six days a week, offers new and gently used clothing and small household items at reasonable prices.

Ron Prosserman, volunteer chair for the anniversary celebrations, said that the store is "one of the more exciting ventures at JF&CS. It helps our most vulnerable women, children and Jewish families with their clothing needs, and enhances their lives and dignity."

He said that JASS serves 50 to 60 clients of JF&CS and Jewish Immigrant Aid Services weekly – clients on financial assistance can select a certain number of items at no charge – and has at least 800 members "on the books."

Last year, he said, proceeds from the store helped send a number of youths to Jewish day and overnight camps.

Donations of nearly new clothing and small household items such as dishes, cutlery and small appliances, books and toys in good working condition are always welcome, said Prosserman, and can be deposited at the yellow collection boxes located in front of the store, at Associated Hebrew School on Atkinson Avenue, at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on Bayview Avenue.

Donations are also received through clothing drives by individuals or Hebrew day schools and from canvassing of manufacturers or retail outlets for new merchandise, he said.

He said that he asks people to be "thoughtful" when donating items. "They should be gently used and the clothing should be preferably in season. We have to pay to discard anything we can't use."

JASS offers variety of new and gently used clothing and small household items.

Rachel Landy, a volunteer co-ordinator at JASS, said that they concentrate on customer service. "Our staff and volunteers speak a number of languages, so everyone feels welcome when they walk in the door, whether or not they are paying customers.

"The store is run like a real business, and the staff [exudes] a lot of positive energy."

Prosserman said they're all looking forward to the anniversary celebrations. "We're having door-crasher specials, music, and some extra special fashions. We're putting in extra effort to make it an exciting day."

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Junior fundraiser is at it again

Compiled by CJN Staff

Amanda Belzowski is only 11 years old, but she's already an experienced fundraiser who knows how to get people to give to a worthwhile cause.

And one fundraising event that's dear to her heart is the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's annual Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart.

This year, Amanda will hold her 11th annual lemonade stand on Sunday, May 31. Amanda's stand has raised more than $100,000 for the cause to date. She'll be joined by her brother, Joshua, 3, who will be fundraising too, with his own stand – the first annual cookie counter. Their goal this year is to double their fundraising total to $200,000.

You can find Amanda and Joshua from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 10 Brian Cliff Dr., off Lawrence Avenue East, west of Leslie Street, across from Edwards Gardens.

The money they raise will help fund life-saving heart and stroke research for children and adults.

Amanda has her own website dedicated to fundraising for the Ride for Heart, www.lemonade4heart.org, where you can find out how to sponsor her.

Amanda's silent auctions at her lemonade stand always have something special to offer. This year, for the second time, famed magician David Copperfield has donated tickets to his show in Las Vegas. The highest bidders will get to meet him and tour his warehouse. The prize includes airfare and a suite at the MGM Grand Hotel.

Also up for auction will be a basketball signed by the Toronto Raptors and a hockey stick signed by the Toronto Maple Leafs.

The Toronto Argonauts are providing a luxury suite at a 2009 regular season game, along with a pre-game field tour at a regular season game and an autographed jersey from CEO Michael "Pinball" Clemons.

Two-time Olympic gold medal gymnast Lance Ringnald has contributed a number of Olympics-related items, and pointe shoes signed by a prima ballerina from the National Ballet of Canada will also be auctioned off.

Donald Trump has also donated an autographed copy of his new book, Think Like a Champion, for the auction.

Popular children's performer Dan the Music Man will put on a show at noon. Life-size children's cartoon character Dora the Explorer, donated by Daytime Enterprises, will be there to greet kids, and Bulldog Fitness will bring dance pads for aerobic workouts for kids. Lionel's Pony Farm will also offer pony rides from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Amanda and her family will also join more than 13,000 other cyclists June 7 in this year's Becel Heart & Stroke Ride for Heart. Call416-486-RIDE (7433) or visit www.rideforheart.ca for details.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

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Marnina, Grant and Koby Sernick announce Gilad's arrival. Grandparents and great-grandparents Ricki & Hart Sernick, Sydney Blinick, Bonnie & Hank Webber, Helen Ziderman, Shoshana Katz.

Mazel tov, Jessica & Stuart, on your recent engagement. With love, Marilyn & Robert Gruneir and Esther & Len Silverman.

Mazel tov Mary & Sidney Brown of Kitchener celebrating 60 years of marriage. Continued life, love and nachas from your children, grandchildren, family and friends.

Megan Levine, mazel tov on your bat mitzvah. Your loving parents, Pam & Gordie, sister Alisha, grandparents Esther, Steve, Art, Carol, aunts, uncles and cousins.

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Mazel tov to Shimmy Klein & Michelle Feintuch on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Michelle Davidoff & Lior Gabay.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Rachel Catallo & Joshua Russak.

Mazel tov on the recent upsherin of Alex Jonah Markovitz.

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By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New Deadlines. Monday, May 25, is the deadline for the June 4 issue, and Monday, June 1, is the deadline for June 11. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com. and info@cjnews.com

Thursday, May 21

ABOUT ISLAM

Temple Har Zion presents **Gerald Zeidenberg** on "Islam and the Western World." 1 p.m. Refreshments. Non-temple members $5.

Friday, May 22

KABALAT SHABBAT

Interactive Kabalat Shabbat and dinner with The House. 6:30 p.m. Shaarei Tefillah, $25. 416-482-9025.

Saturday, May 23

SHABBAT IN HALTON-PEEL

Conservative egalitarian B'Nai Shalom Congregation holds Shabbat services for Jews in Mississauga, Oakville, Burlington and area. Service starts 10 a.m, at a hotel in Oakville, kiddush following. New members welcome. www.bnaishalom.ca, e-mail info@bnaishalom.ca or call 905-901-9889.

Sunday, May 24

RASHI'S DAUGHTERS

Author **Maggie Anton** discusses the daily lives of medieval Jews. Anton will sign copies of her books. Bring your own, or buy at the lecture. Co-sponsored by the library committee and sisterhood of Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue. Free. Refreshments. 416-533-5500.

MITZVAH TECHNIQUE

Nehemia's Mitzvah Technique and Mitzvah Mechanism: **M. Cohen-Nehemia** shows how to prevent postural and spinal deterioration. Free. 10 a.m.-noon, Bathurst JCC. Call 416-636-1880, ext. 390.

GHETTO SHUL

The Ghetto Shul in Montreal provides a Jewish experience for McGill students. A fundraiser for the shul in the Bathurst-Eglinton area of Toronto presents student testimonials, **Rabbi Leibish Hundert**, multimedia presentations. 8 p.m. Call **Hava**, 416-554-1972.

Monday, May 25

YALDEINU

Author **Naomi Ragen** speaks to mothers and daughters about her life, women's issues, war, terrorism and activism for Jewish women. Dessert reception and book signing. 7-9 p.m., Sephardic Kehila Centre. Tickets $75, $140 mother and daughter pair, $36 students. 905-482-3374, www.yaldeinu.org. Yaldeinu provides scholarships and camps for Jewish children in developing countries and victims of terrorism in Sderot.

Z'HAVAH

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Z'havah chapter for sisterhood members in their 30s and 40s presents "The Jewish Truth About Food," with holistic nutritionist **Ora Stebben**. Includes healthy energy bar demo. Members free, guests $5. 7:30 p.m., Fischtein Hall. RSVP 416-633-3838.

JEWISH BOOK AWARDS

Helen and **Stan Vine** Canadian Jewish Book Awards: 21st annual celebration of excellence in contemporary Canadian writing reflecting Jewish themes and subjects in history, fiction, Yiddish and more. Al Green Theatre, 8 p.m. 416-636-1880 ext. 352, ababins@koffleratts.org. No charge.

Tuesday, May 26

JEWISH JESUS?

York University professor **Barrie Wilson** discusses "Who Stole the Jewish Jesus?" 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion. Non-Temple members $5.

Continued on page 27

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What's New

Continued from page 26

IT'S OK TO SAY NO

Ted Borovoy, retired teacher and principal, presents one-session workshop for parents. Topics include parental authority and discipline. 7-9 p.m., Jewish Family & Child, 4600 Bathurst St., 4th floor. Register 416-638-7800, ext. 215, **Shawna Sidney**, or online www.jfandcs.com. Free.

NUTRITION AND THE BRAIN

Dr. Carol Greenwood, senior scientist, Kunin-Lunenfeld Research Unit, discusses the relationship between your diet and your mind. Part of Baycrest Speaker Series on Aging, Innovation & the Mind. 7-8:30 p.m., Winter Garden. Free admission and parking. Light refreshments. 416-785-2500, ext. 6218, or speakerseries@baycrest.org.

Wednesday, May 27

PRE-SHAVUOT BAKE SALE

Third annual bake sale to benefit Small Wonders, which helps local Jewish couples struggling with fertility issues. Kosher, home-baked goods, COR items, floral centrepieces. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the home of **Goldie Hauer**, 371 Cortleigh Blvd. Call 416-913-9279 or e-mail torontobakesale@yahoo.com.

TAKE MY HAND

Musical celebration benefiting Alli's Journey, which raises funds for education, research and support for young adults with cancer. 7:30 p.m., Toronto Centre for the Arts, George Weston Recital Hall. Tickets $25 and $75. www.ticketmaster.ca or phone 416-872-1111.

TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

Beth Sholom Synagogue Chai Society goes to the theatre. Lunch at noon. Bus transportation both ways. $68, limited tickets. Call **Rivy**, 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

HANNAH CRIED

Medical, halachic and personal perspectives on Infertility. Panellists **Dr. Fay Weisberg**, **Shira Benson, RN**, **Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl** and **Roslyn Kaman**. 8 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Sisterhood members free, non-members $5.

Thursday, May 28

TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT

Pre-Shavuot Torah study sessions

Chabad of Danforth-Beaches, 2273 Queen St. E. 11 p.m - 1 a.m. Call 416-809-1365, rabbi@chabaddb.com.

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. Midnight to 5 a.m., Shacharit followed by breakfast, 5 a.m. Speakers **Rabbi Tzvi Heber**, **Rabbi Avraham Bartfeld**, **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, **Rabbi Nachum Berlat**, **Rabbi Moshe Stern**.

Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Services 7:15 p.m., followed by dinner and all-night study. Members $16, non-members $20. Call 905-889-4975, or office@shaarshalom.ca.

Temple Kol Ami **Rabbi Daniel Gottlieb** and Temple Har Zion **Rabbi Cory Weiss** lead joint study session at Leo Baeck Day School, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill. 11 p.m.-1 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC All-night Jewish Learning Festival. 9 p.m.-5:30 a.m. Come for an hour or two or stay the whole night.

Other News

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Shaarei Shomayim and Mekorot Institute of Torah Study for Women offer 4-week course on the Scrolls May 27-June 24 (no class June 10), with **Hindy Najman** of U of T Centre for the Study of Religion. Concludes with guided tour of exhibit at Royal Ontario Museum. 8-9:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim. Register 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

ISRAELI ARTISTS GROUP

This year's show includes paintings, sculpture, pottery, textiles, jewelry, photography. Grand opening May 21, 8 p.m., exhibit to May 24. J.E.H.Thoreau Macdonald House, 121 Centre St., Thornhill. www.israeliartistsgroup.com.

MEDICAL ETHICS

Torah in Motion, Orthodox Union, Yeshiva University's international conference, Aug. 20-23, at Chateau Fairmont, Tremblant, Que. Information and registration at www.torahinmotion.org. or rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

JOKERS TRIVIA GROUP

Meets 4th Wednesday of each month, Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes. 7:15 p.m. **Irv**, 416-661-2541.

PARENTING WORKSHOPS

Jewish Family & Child offers two workshops. "Effective Parenting" – 4 sessions helping parents of children 2 to 11 raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. Tuesdays (started May 19) 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Building.

"One Family, Two Homes" – 3 sessions for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate, age-appropriate groups. Thursdays, May 27, June 4 and June 11. Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Information or registration, **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Jewish Women International of Canada offers trained speakers on domestic abuse. Also, wool needed for mittens, hats and scarves for inner-city school children. Call 416-630-9313 or info@jwicanada.com.

ONE FAMILY FUND

Fifth annual bike ride to show solidarity with Israel's victims of terror. 50-km and 20-km routes. May 31, 9:30 a.m. Unionville. For information or to register, www.onefamilyfund.ca/bike.

FOLK CHOIR CONCERT

Toronto Jewish Folk Choir 83rd annual concert salutes **Theodore Bikel** and **Srul Irving Glick**. May 31, 3 p.m., Leah Posluns Theatre. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at door; children 12 and under free. 416-636-0936, e-mail tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

JUST A SECOND SHOP

Celebrate 25th anniversary of the Just a Second Shop, 4117 Bathurst St. Starts Sunday, May 31, 10 a.m. Savings on new and gently used clothing. Doorcrasher specials. A program of Jewish Family & Child, the shop offers clothing and household items at reasonable prices.

HEALING SERVICE

Jewish Healing Service, Sunday May 31, Adath Israel. Facilitated by **Rabbi David Seed** and **Yehudit Judy Shier Weisberg**. Sponsored by JF&C. Call 416-638-7800, ext. 287.

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday, 10 a.m., Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-5444.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Movie Day, Thursday, May 21, 1:30. Sunday dance June 7, evening of nostalgia, with live music. 7-10 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, June 10. Casino Niagara, June 23. Lunch and Laughter, June 18, noon. Information: call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881/

Bernard Betel Centre seeks friendly visitors. Don't be a superhero – just be yourself. 1-2 hours per week – your choice of days. **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

Baycrest Programs: 416-785-2500.

Spousal Bereavement Group, widows/widowers 55+. 10-week session Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Wagman Centre, begins May 29. **Shawn Fremeth**, ext. 2986.

Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library needs volunteers to help visitors check books in and out, sort and shelve library materials, assist with special projects and help those wanting to access online health information. Good command of English and computer skills required. Training provided. Contact Volunteer Services Department, ext. 2572 or alefkovitz@baycrest.org.

Seniors Support Program. E-pals send friendly weekly e-mail messages. You will be matched with a trained volunteer based on your interests, situation and language. Ext. 2247.

Dear Abby Discussion Group meets Thursdays, 2 p.m.-3 p.m. in Fireside Lounge. Stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills by providing advice in this group discussion.

Soul Food Poetry Discussion Group. Share your passion for poetry. Learn bios of different poets and their work. Wednesdays, 3 p.m.-4 p.m., Fireside Lounge.

Montrealers' Group. Join Shawn in Fireside Lounge and share Montreal stories. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Koffler Centre and BJCC present Treasures in Jewish Literature book review series. May 26, 1 p.m., **Gary Levine** reviews the novel Everything is Illuminated by **Jonathan Safran Foer**, as well as the movie version. Lipa Green Building. $15 at the door.

Te-Amim Music Theatre's world premiere of Ten Green Bottles: From Vienna to Shanghai, a journey of fear and hope. Based on a book by **Vivian Jeanette Kaplan**. Al Green Theatre. May 24, 2 p.m. $20. www.mnjccorg, call 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

Koffler Chamber Orchestra concert From Russia with Love under the direction of violinist **Jacques Israelievitch**. May 31, 7 p.m. Toronto Centre for the Arts. $20, students $10. Tickets www.ticketmaster.ca or call 416-872-1111.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

Visit the transformed Art Gallery of Ontario May 29. Ext. 155.

Kids and Teens program, Congregations Darchei Noam, First Narayever, Kiever, Kolel. Ext. 154.

Mircea Popescu: Foreign & Familiar photography exhibition, until June 15, Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Ext. 133, visualarts@mnjcc.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are Ispeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 24

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Norma Lepofsky	May 1/09	182 Old Forest Hill Rd
Ida Gold	May 2/09	2121 Bathurst St
Shirley Wolfson	May 2/09	78 Waterloo Ave
Miriam Zimmerman	May 4/09	233 Reecroft Rd
Tema Frankel	May 4/09	484 Steeles Ave W
Joyce Rose	May 5/09	35 Esterbrooke Ave
Gertrude English	May 7/09	306 Finch Ave E
David Grosh	May 8/09	21 Grand Oak Dr
Mark Freedman	May 9/09	9 Alexandra Wood
Archie Levkoe	May 9/09	410 John St

HEBREW BASIC

Jerry Bijmolt	May 2/09	20 Alcaine Court

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Zeifman, Sylvia	May 11/09	436 Glencairn Ave
Snider, Lillian	May 2/09	64 Bainbridge Ave
Bachner, Mary	May 1/09	25 Mortimer Crt
Feinstadt, Eda	May 2/09	Private
Weinstein, Ada	May 3/09	Private
Zeidenberg, Sol Richard	May 5/09	
Kornberg, Charles	May 5/09	393 Hounslow Ave
Giblon, Jerome Harvey	May 6/09	53 Montressor Dr
Trilisinsky, Raisa	May 6/09	Private
Brown, Dorothy	May 7/09	101 Latimer Ave
Goldstein, Gordon	May 8/09	33 Prue Ave
Abecassis, Simi	May 12/09	
Eisen, Marcelle	May 8/09	Private
Davis, Sidney	May 9/09	
Krieger, Cecil (Cicel) Zusha	May 10/09	
Reading, Dinee	May 10/09	317 Worth Blvd
Eisenstein, Joseph	May 10/09	
Klein, Robert	May 11/09	23 Shenstone Rd
Sadovskaia, Lioubov	May 11/09	6250 Bathurst St
Almassy, Ethel	May 11/09	10 Tangreen Crt
Ozersky, Israel	May 10/09	39 Crosby Ave.

The unveiling of a monument to the memories of the late
MAYTIE & MAX SIVKIN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 24 at 1:30 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Dufferin St. N. of Major Mackenzie
Community Section # IIIII (5)
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HELEN HABER ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 7th at 10:30 a.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park Cemetery
C.H.B.S. (Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society) Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HASKELL ZABITSKY ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st at 11:00 a.m.
Beth Tzedek Memorial Park
5822 Bathurst St., north of Finch
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling. To place any other related notice, please call 10 DAYS prior to publication date.

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Obituary

Lawyer advocated for Gaucher patients

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Mark Freedman, a highly respected condominium lawyer and leading advocate for patients with Gaucher disease (GD), a rare genetic disorder occurring most commonly in Ashkenazi Jews, died May 9 of lymphoma at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. He was 55.

Despite his own battle with GD, which began when he was studying law at the University of Western Ontario, Freedman never complained, his wife, Judy Jacobs, said in a eulogy.

Mark Freedman

Friend Stephen Karr – a partner at Harris, Sheaffer, which Freedman co-founded in 1992 – recalled Freedman's attendance at meetings "on days when he could barely muster the strength to come into the office, and his clients were never aware of what was transpiring."

GD, caused by an enzyme deficiency, affects the blood system and bones. Excruciating bone pain, which Freedman suffered in the early years, is a common complication.

Karr's eulogy began with words he wrote to honour Freedman this month at an Ontario Bar Association dinner, where Freedman was to receive an award for excellence in real estate. Freedman, who co-wrote what Karr called "the seminal textbook on the Condominium Act in Ontario," taught in the Ontario Bar admission course from 1994 to 2005, wrote articles and lectured frequently, and appeared on local television. The Canadian Condominium Institute named him Man of the Year in 1987.

He served for the past three years as co-chair of State of Israel Bonds, Toronto's builders' division, and from 1988 to 1991 as chair of the board of governors at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue. In 1991, he founded the National Gaucher Foundation of Canada and was president until 2007.

Freedman lobbied successfully for the funding of an effective but prohibitively expensive drug for Gaucher Disease, first in Ontario, then across Canada, spending six years meeting with government officials.

He and Jacobs first learned of the drug known as Ceredase (now used in a form called Cerezyme) in 1991, she said.

Dr. Joe Clarke, speaking at the funeral on behalf of Freedman's medical team, said the first Ontario patient to receive Ceredase – a two-year-old who likely would have died in two or three years without it – is now 17 and doing well.

Clarke lauded his "clear and redoubtable sense of justice, superb organizational skills and single-minded commitment."

He said Freedman "was at the forefront of research directed at developing alternative treatments." In Israel last year, Freedman met with researchers working on a simpler form of Ceredase, which Clarke said "looks like it may be at least as effective as the original drug, and much cheaper."

Grateful patients and their families, some of whom had travelled hundreds of kilometres, were among the estimated 900 mourners at the funeral.

Jacobs – who met her husband as an undergraduate at McGill University, where Freedman studied microbiology and immunology – recalled his ability to connect with people from all walks of life.

A native of Portsmouth, N.H., Freedman "never lost that small-town openness, compassion and respect for others," she said. "And he was so able to laugh at himself."

Karr said everyone used to gently kid Freedman about the couple's frequent trips. "But," he added, "Mark understood his condition well, and he understood the fragility of life, and was not going to put off his passion for travel until some later time."

Freedman is survived by Judy Jacobs, his wife of 32 years; his parents Robert and Selma Freedman of Portsmouth, N.H.; his brothers Alan of Andover, Mass.; and Bert, of Portsmouth.

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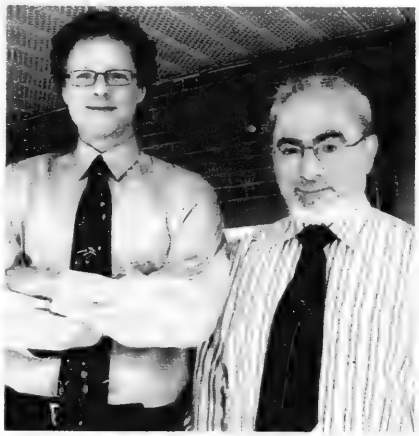
Book on wills tells the story of life

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

At the end of their 212-page book on wills and inheritance, authors Les Kotzer and Barry Fish tell a story that pretty much sums up the lessons to be learned from practising this particular branch of the law.

It arises out of a seminar they hosted on wills and estates, in which a questioner bares her soul discussing the disagreement she had with her brother over a business their father had left them. Can you separate a business relationship from a personal one involving a brother, they are asked, prompting a volley of responses from the seminar participants that goes on for hours.



Les Kotzer and Barry Fish [Paul Lungen photo]

As they sum up the evening, the lawyers say: "We came here so that we could help you learn something about the law; but as it turned out, you helped us learn something about life."

In 80 vignettes, distilled from a combined 50 years in the practice of law, Kotzer and Fish have put together a fascinating and eminently readable compilation of incidents that describe the human condition.

Titled, Where There's an Inheritance, the book is less an exposition on the law applicable to wills, and more about the people whose lives turn for the better – often for the worst – over the way in which a loved one's estate is distributed. Kotzer and Fish also co-wrote The Family Fight...Planning to Avoid It and The Family War...Winning the Inheritance Battle.

It is shocking to see how even the best of families can be torn apart over an inheritance, how once close brothers and sisters will never speak again after the death of a parent. Money, apparently, changes everything, often not for the better, but the book also presents heartwarming stories of siblings rediscovering the closeness of their relationship after their parent's death.

The stories are "reality," explained Kotzer, who has appeared on Canadian and American television and radio shows to discuss wills. "This is not a book of fables."

Indeed. There's the story of the mother who loaned large sums to both her son and daughter. After her husband died she found herself in dire financial straits. When she asked her children to help her by paying back some of the money, they became angry, turned her down and her son even told her to "prove it" – demonstrate that the money he'd received was a loan and not a gift.

Then there's the one about grandfather's prized gold watch, which was purchased in the 1950s after the family pooled together $3,000 (a huge sum back then). The grandchildren's great-aunt had been given the money and asked to purchase the watch. When the grandchildren went to get it appraised decades later, it turned out it was worth only $389 – their great-aunt had pocketed the difference!

Then there was the case of the uncle who became guardian and executor for his nephew and niece. The will instructed him to transfer a substantial inheritance to them when they turned 18. Despite his advice to them to permit him to continue to manage their estate, they demanded the money. It didn't take long for both children to burn through their entire inheritance.

Of course, not all the stories are so disheartening. Cynthia was a mother who at the end of her life was saddened that her children had grown apart. As part of the will-reading, she prepared a photo album showing the way the two had grown up – extremely close and loving siblings. A posthumous letter reminded them how they had looked out for each other as they grew up. Cynthia's wisdom and love brought the siblings together and the two were no longer cold and distant, Kotzer and Fish write.

Wills have to be tailored to the specific needs of clients, Kotzer explained. And they have to be able to stand up over time. "You have to look down a long road," added Fish.

"The book takes you deep into what can happen, the good, the bad and the ugly," said Kotzer. "After you read it you will realize the depth of what you need to know."

One incident, told in the book, affected Kotzer's own views on life. After an appearance on Citytv's Breakfast Television, he received a request to meet with a terminally ill patient to compose her will. The woman came to his office on a cold, windy, rainy, miserable day. When he went down into the parking lot to meet her, she had her hand out the door and commented, "what a beautiful day." Kotzer learned that "Rachel" had died only a few weeks after their meeting. "That woman changed my outlook on life," he said. "You learn to appreciate what you've got."

The book, he continued, "will change the way people look at life and family."

And though a good portion of the stories show how families can come to blows over property, it also demonstrates that "it's not worth fighting over. Families will see themselves in some of these stories. There may be solutions [to their problems] and people won't feel alone. They're not alone."

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Air Canada pilot co-founds organization to mentor would-be Jewish flyers

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

To say that Matthew Ritter is a frequent flyer would be an understatement.

On any given day, Ritter may be in Montreal, Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary, Vancouver, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle or Miami.

Or maybe even a Caribbean destination such as Barbados.

Ritter, 31, is an Air Canada pilot, a captain who, on average, flies 15 to 16 days per month.

Flying a narrow body, twin-engine, medium-range Brazilian-made Embraer 175 or 190 plane – which can accommodate 93 and 73 passengers respectively – Ritter typically makes one to four trips a day when on duty.

Such is his schedule that he may fly from Toronto to Ottawa on one day, and from Seattle to St. John's, Newfoundland, via Toronto, on a more hectic day.

Ritter's shortest flight takes him from Vancouver to Victoria, while his longest one takes him from Calgary to Newark.

Not surprisingly, he enjoys his job immensely.

"I love it," he said during a recent break. "I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to fly such amazing machinery. I know I'm very privileged. I worked hard to get to this point. I don't take it for granted."

Air Canada pilot Matthew Ritter
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Ritter joined Air Canada about four years ago and flew for a regional carrier in the United States, Chautauqua Airlines, prior to that.

Based in Toronto, he is a member of the fairly exclusive club of Jewish pilots employed by Air Canada, Canada's flagship airline.

Although he personally knows 10 Air Canada pilots who are Jewish, he has heard that 20 to 30 are on its employment roster.

In percentage terms, this means that less than one per cent of Air Canada's pilots are of the Jewish faith.

Ritter – whose father was once executive director of the Canada-Israel Committee and now heads the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association – decided to enter the aviation industry when he was 23.

After graduating from the University of Ottawa with a major in psychology, he met a seasoned Air Canada pilot who encouraged him to consider a career as a pilot and became his mentor.

Before meeting him by chance, Ritter considered flying nothing more than a hobby and had already applied for medical school, fairly certain that he would be a doctor.

I don't think I would have become a commercial airline pilot if not for him," said Ritter, whose appetite for flying was whetted when he accompanied his father on Air Canada's inaugural flight from Canada to Israel in the mid-1990s. "It was just one of those fluke events."

Having opted for aviation, Ritter studied at the Delta Connection Academy in Sanford, Fla., graduating in the winter of 2004.

"It was an intense program with a lot of tests," he recalled. "A very regulated, fast-paced environment, not necessarily for everyone."

Asked what it takes to be a pilot, he listed several qualities: dedication, conscientiousness, a passion for aviation, a sense of responsibility and leadership and decision-making and inter-personal skills.

Hired by Chautauqua Airlines in Orlando, Fla., Ritter flew to such short-haul destinations in the southeastern United States as Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Charleston, S.C.

A dual Canadian-U.S. citizen by virtue of his Boston-born mother, Shari, Ritter joined Air Canada in the summer of 2005.

Aside from being a pilot, he has also been a simulated flight instructor for Air Canada. "You learn a lot about the aircraft and meet many people."

When he is working, he arrives at the airport 75 minutes prior to takeoff. He meets fellow pilots, prints out a flight plan, speaks to a dispatcher, checks weather reports and discusses operational and administrative issues.

From the moment he takes his seat in the cockpit, Ritter is vigilant. "Safety is paramount," he said. "I don't take my job lightly."

After landing at a destination, he exercises one of three options, depending on his schedule.

He remains on the aircraft, waiting to fly to another city. He deplanes and rests before taking the helm of a new aircraft. He stops at a hotel for a layover.

"Flight hours are strictly regulated," he said.

At the moment, he has no plans to apply for time-consuming international routes because his family comes first.

He and his wife, Jennifer – the chief executive officer of Make-A-Wish Canada and the former director of UJA Federation's Holocaust Centre of Toronto – have two toddlers, both boys.

Ritter, whose younger brother Jonathan works for a large brewery in a management position, is the co-founder of a new organization, Jews in Aviation, which he describes as "a Jewish aviation clearing house."

Connecting Jews in the industry, and co-founded by Howard Cooper, an American general aviation pilot, its members are found in Canada, United States, Israel, Mexico and Britain.

"We're trying to create a network of aviation professionals who can serve as mentors and advisers. It will be a resource for Jews who want to pursue a career in aviation, which is a little foreign to the Jewish community in the Diaspora, but not, of course, in Israel."

The web address of Jews in Aviation is www.Jewsinaviation.org.

Ritter, who said that less that one per cent of Air Canada pilots are Jewish, is the co-founder of an organization called Jews in Aviation, a network of pilots that can be a resource for Jews who want to pursue a career in aviation.

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U.S. will know before any Iran strike: Israel

By ALUF BENN
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Israel has acceded to American demands by pledging to co-ordinate its moves on Iran with Washington and not surprise the United States with military action.

During a trip to Jerusalem earlier this week, CIA chief Leon Panetta informed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that U.S. President Barack Obama demanded that Israel not launch a surprise attack on Iran. The message expressed concern that Israel would cause an escalation in the region and undermine Obama's efforts to improve relations with Tehran.

However, the content was nothing new: the Bush administration also sent tough messages to Jerusalem a year ago, including a demand that it not strike Iran. Israeli officials believe that U.S. foreign policy professionals are vehemently opposed to an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, so this position was transmitted from the previous administration to the present one.

The U.S. expects Israel to co-ordinate its military actions with Washington, a condition to which Jerusalem has agreed due to its dependence on U.S. aid. Senior officials in the Bush administration testified to Congress that Israel had consulted them before deciding on its 2007 air strike on an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor. They said Israel had explained that it considered the Syrian project an existential threat and therefore had to act.

In his first trip to Israel as CIA chief, about three weeks ago, Panetta met with Netanyahu, Defence Minister Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Mossad chief Meir Dagan. Panetta was White House chief of staff under Bill Clinton from 1994 to 1997. In this capacity, he and his president weathered a stormy phase of the peace process, the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres' brief term as prime minister and the advent of the first Netanyahu government. During those years, Clinton visited Israel three times, so Panetta got to know the Israeli leadership.

In the Senate confirmation hearing for his appointment as CIA chief, Panetta said he has no doubt Iran is working toward nuclear weapons capability.

The Iranian threat will play a central role in Netanyahu's talks with Obama, Congress and senior U.S. officials during his visit to Washington next week. After the prime minister returns, Lieberman goes to Washington for his first visit. He will head the strategic dialogue between the U.S. and Israel, which will focus on Iran.

LAG B'OMER CELEBRATION: Israelis took time out from the pressures of daily life last week to celebrate Lag b'Omer. Here children around an open fire roast marshmallows. [Israel Sun photo]

Obama declares Jewish American Heritage Month

JTA

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama declared May to be Jewish American Heritage Month.

In a proclamation signed last week, Obama writes that the Jewish American tradition "exemplifies the strength of the American immigrant tradition" and that "the focus on preserving traditions is a notable characteristic of Jewish culture."

"Jewish Americans have immeasurably enriched our nation," the proclamation states. "Unyielding in the face of hardship and tenacious in following their dreams, Jewish Americans have surmounted the challenges that every immigrant group faces and have made unparallelled contributions."

Canadian Technion Society
Israel Institute of Technology

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of members of the Canadian Technion Society will be held in Ottawa on Sunday, June 14, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Sunday June 14, 2009

4:00 pm **Annual General Meeting,** Soloway Jewish Community Centre
6;00 pm **Dinner,** Soloway Jewish Community Centre
Guest Speaker: **Her Excellency Miriam Ziv,** Israel's Ambassador to Canada

Monday June 15, 2009

8:00 am **Breakfast,** Fairmount Chateau Laurier Hotel
Guest Speaker: **Dr. Henri Rothschild,** President CIIRDF
10:00 am **Tours** (optional - choose one of the following)
• Supreme Court
• Bank of Canada Currency Museum
• National Art Gallery
12:00 pm **Lunch,** Parliament Bldg, Commonwealth Room
Guest Speaker: **Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.,** Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Americas)
2:00 pm **Attend Question Period in the House of Commons** (if Parliament is in session)

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Politics abounds on Pope's mission of peace to Israel

By MARCY OSTER
JTA

The Pope made sure his various messages were heard by Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas, left, and separately, by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right. [Israel Sun photos]

JERUSALEM — Coming as a self-described "pilgrim of peace," Pope Benedict XVI vowed to fight anti-Semitism and called for a Palestinian state in the moments after his arrival in Israel for his recent five-day visit.

But controversy marked the visit from the start, as the Pope's supposedly non-political trip abounded with politics and his hosts in Israel and the Palestinian Authority parsed his words with nearly talmudic precision, eyeing support for their positions.

On his first day in Israel, May 11, the Pope was criticized for not being contrite enough about the Holocaust on behalf of the Catholic Church. Later he cut short an interfaith meeting of clergy after a Palestinian Muslim cleric launched a surprise attack on Israel during an impromptu address.

"I come, like so many others before me, to pray at the holy places, to pray especially for peace – peace here in the Holy Land, and peace throughout the world," Benedict said during a welcoming ceremony at Ben-Gurion International Airport, where he was met by President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Benedict would repeat that desire for peace and interfaith dialogue in every appearance in the early days of his trip, which the Vatican insisted was non-political.

But his visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust memorial, sparked criticism by former Israeli Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau and Knesset speaker Reuven Rivlin, who greeted the pontiff at the museum.

"I am deeply grateful to God and to you for the opportunity to stand here in silence – a silence to remember, a silence to pray, a silence to hope," the Pope said.

The cry of those killed "echoes in our hearts. It is a cry raised against every act of injustice and violence. It is a perpetual reproach against the spilling of innocent blood."

Following the visit, in which the Pope did not enter the actual museum due to an exhibit that offers an unflattering portrayal of Pope Pius XII, who has been accused of being silent in the face of Nazi atrocities against the Jews during World War II, Rabbi Lau criticized the Pope's speech in an interview on Israel's Channel 1.

Rabbi Lau, a survivor of Buchenwald who serves as the chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, lamented that while Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in his address at the museum nine years ago offered a moving personal expression of grief, the current Pope did not go that far, instead offering the Church's "deep compassion" for those killed in the Holocaust.

"I personally missed hearing a tone of sharing the grief," Rabbi Lau said. "I missed hearing 'I'm sorry, I apologize.'"

Rabbi Lau also said that the pontiff, who is German by birth and was a member of the Hitler Youth, did not mention the Germans, or Nazis, as those who carried out the genocide, and used the word "killed" instead of "murdered" to describe how the Jews died. And, he added, the Pope never said that six million were killed, saying only "millions."

Rivlin also criticized the Pope.

"With all due respect to the Holy See, we cannot ignore the burden he bears, as a young German who joined the Hitler Youth and as a person who joined Hitler's army, which was an instrument in the extermination," Rivlin said on Israel Radio. "He came and told us as if he were a historian, someone looking in from the sidelines, about things that should not have happened. And what can you do? He was a part of them."

Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi fired back, noting that the Pope has denounced the Nazis and spoken of his German heritage in previous speeches, including during a visit to the Auschwitz death camp, and used the six million figure during his remarks upon arriving in Israel.

Lombardi also said four times that the Pope never served in the Hitler Youth, whose members were volunteers, but that he was forced to join anti-aircraft troops against Allied aerial raids near his hometown.

The Pope stopped an interfaith conference in Jerusalem after the head of the Palestinian sharia court accused Israel of killing women and children and urged the Pope "in the name of the one God to condemn these crimes and press the Israeli government to halt its aggression against the Palestinian people."

Criticizing the incident, a papal spokesman said, "We hope that such an incident will not damage the mission of the Pope, aiming at promoting peace and also inter-religious dialogue, as he has clearly affirmed in many occasions during this pilgrimage. We hope also that inter-religious dialogue in the Holy Land will not be compromised by this incident."

During a brief visit to the Western Wall, the Pope placed a handwritten personal prayer between the stones of the wall, asking God to "send your peace upon this Holy Land, upon the Middle East, upon the entire human family," according to a text released by the Office of the Holy See.

Following his quiet reflection at the wall, punctuated by the whirring of camera lens shutters, the Pope made a courtesy visit at the compound of the chief rabbis of Israel. He had made a similar visit to the grand mufti of Jerusalem before his wall appearance.

The Pope, who travelled with a 40-person staff and 70 reporters, and stayed at the Papal Nuncio's residence in Jerusalem during his visit, visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Bethlehem and Nazareth, where he celebrated an open-air mass.

Upon the Pope's arrival, Operation White Robe, which included 80,000 police officers and security guards, went into effect to protect him.

The Pope arrived in Israel after spending two days in Jordan, where he celebrated mass before an estimated audience of 25,000 in a soccer stadium in Amman.

He visited Mount Nebo, from where the Bible says Moses saw the Land of Israel. The Pope said the site was a reminder of "the inseparable bond between the Church and the Jewish people."

Benedict also visited the King Hussein bin Talal Mosque in Amman. He did not remove his shoes while visiting the mosque and engaged in silent reflection rather than prayer, according to reports. In a meeting there with Muslim leaders, the Pope called for a "trilateral dialogue," including the Church, to help bring Jews and Muslims together to discuss peace.

The Pope and Peres planted an olive tree at the president's residence, followed by a performance of a choir made up of Jewish and Arab girls and Israeli tenor Dudu Fisher, who sang Bring Him Home from the musical Les Miserables, minutes after the Pope met with the family of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

"Old divisions have aged and diminished," Peres told the Pope. "So more than the need for another armoured vehicle, we need a strong, inspiring spirit to instil both the conviction that peace is attainable and the burning desire to pursue it.

"Ties of reconciliation and understanding are now being woven between the Holy See and the Jewish people," Peres added. "We cherish this process and your leadership. Our door is open to similar efforts with the Muslim world."

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Ambassador's wife exhibits paintings in Tel Aviv

By MARK ELLIOTT SHAPIRO
CJN Israel Correspondent

JERUSALEM — Clara Hirsch, an accomplished artist and wife of Canada's ambassador to Israel, Jon Allen, recently exhibited her work in the Greater Tel Aviv Area.

Hirsch's month-long show, at the Machon Hamayim gallery in Givatayim, was made up of mixed-media works – paintings that incorporated photographs, primarily of her family members. In her paintings, the geographies of Canada and Israel were combined.

The subject of the exhibit was the immigrant experience. The works focused particularly on the experience of the artist's parents and their children – Hirsch and her brother – who left post-Holocaust Europe to make their home in Canada.

One of the most fascinating elements of the exhibition is the ambiguity of the paintings. The boundaries separating the Canadian and Israeli landscapes are not clear, and the viewer is suspended in some twilight area between Canada and Israel.

Similarly, looking at the paintings, the viewer is also suspended in time, somewhere between Canada in the 1950s and contemporary Israel.

An effective artistic expression of the immigrant experience, the works are suspended in space and time between the old home and the new one.

"Clara Hirsch's family was only one of many Jewish families that left eastern Europe after the war; impoverished, emotionally damaged and trying to pick up the pieces of shattered lives. The 'baggage' these Holocaust survivors carried was figuratively and mentally laden with pain and worry," the exhibit's catalogue stated.

"Hirsch's paintings create a dialogue between images from the past and her present reality. Her paintings are empathetic and moving, constructed with a careful hand, and emerge from a reservoir of gentle and conflicted emotions."

Her paintings create "a dialectic between her personal familial archive and her present environment. Her works sharply contrast her rekindled connection to her Jewish immigrant past and her life in Israel," the catalogue stated.

The exhibition's curator, Doron Polak, wrote: "William Shakespeare wrote that memory is the 'guardian of the soul' – and we, as viewers, have no choice but to join her [Hirsh] wandering and experience her feelings as they are represented by her markers in time."

Ambassador Jon Allen and his wife Clara Hirsch on opening night of her exhibit in Tel Aviv.

Hirsch told The CJN that the exhibition is "a marking of time of my immigrant past and my present life in Israel."

She feels "very much at home in a multicultural society like Israel," she said, and through her art she tries to convey that she has "empathy for the immigrant experience."

Hirsch and her brother as children in one of the pieces of art in the exhibition.

Israel Briefs

Riot mishandled, army says

A deputy company commander was discharged from the Israeli army after his rifle discharged during a riot, killing a fellow soldier. Staff-Sgt. Noam Adin Rechter-Levy was killed during an operation in the West Bank Palestinian town of Bir Zeit on May 7. The investigation, which included a ballistic analysis, showed that Levy was killed by a bullet discharged by his deputy company commander while the latter was engaged in a physical struggle with a Palestinian rioter, according to a statement issued by the Israel Defence Forces. During the operation, dozens of Palestinian residents rioted and attacked the force. In the subsequent struggle, the commander's rifle apparently shifted, causing it to discharge, which mortally wounded Levy. The investigation found that the force's attempt to disperse the rioters was mishandled. The company commander was also disciplined and removed from any command position for the next two years.

Abdullah presses Netanyahu

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would not declare his commitment to a two-state solution in a meeting with Jordan's king. At last week's meeting in Aqaba, King Abdullah II pushed Netanyahu to come out for a two-state solution, according to reports. The meeting preceded Netanyahu's scheduled visit to the White House this week. Abdullah was the first regional leader to meet with U.S. President Barack Obama last month. Netanyahu promised he would pursue peace talks with the Palestinians but stopped short of consenting to the request on two states. "I am aware of the need to promote negotiations with the Palestinians and intend to hold [separate] negotiations on diplomatic, security and economic [issues] negotiations, not one of which will come at the expense of the other," Netanyahu told his host. The Prime Minister's Office said the two leaders had agreed to be in contact after Netanyahu's meeting with Obama.

Katsav trial begins

Former Israeli President Moshe Katsav went on trial in Tel Aviv on sexual offence charges. Katsav was formally charged in Tel Aviv District Court on eight counts, including two counts of rape and one count of committing an indecent act using force. All the allegations involved aides when he served as minister of tourism and as president. The trial will resume Sept. 1 after the court's recess.

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Israel's ancient past a must-see for visitors

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

BEIT SHE'AN, Israel — What's new in Israel these days?

How about antiquities?

Israel's hip new image may be uppermost and toppermost on the minds of Israel's travel gurus – what with the country's great restaurants, wineries, clubs, concerts and elegant seaside promenades to promote – but there's much to be said about visiting scenes of the country's ancient past.

Whether it's Jerusalem, Caesarea, Beit She'an, Tzippori, Masada or Acre (Akko) – the latter, at 1,000 years of age, the baby in this grouping – Israel's ancient sites remain an intriguing window onto the nation's past. The first four attest to the sophistication, wealth and comfort of ancient times, while the latter gives evidence to the tremendous construction and scale of the European incursion into the Holy Land during Crusader times – almost yesterday in this ancient land.

Many years ago, during a visit to Israel, I passed through Beit She'an, changing buses to take the local transportation to nearby kibbutzim to visit friends.

In recent years, however, archeologists have made it a destination in its own right, thanks to digs that have revealed a handsome Roman/Byzantine-era centre – one of the 10 cities of the Decapolis and once the most important city in northern Israel. The city was situated in the strategic corridor along the Jordan Valley and across from the Jezreel Valley, and for the Romans, it provided a good launching-off point to send soldiers in any direction to quell disturbances.

It's that Roman-era city that's on display today, though its history goes back much further. Archeologists have uncovered 19 levels of civilizations dating back 4,000 years. Students of the Bible will recall that after a battle at nearby Mount Gilboa, the residents of Beit She'an displayed the bodies of King Saul and his sons on the city walls.

Like other Roman-era cities, Beit She'an featured a main street running north/south and an east/west cross road. Shops lined either side of the collonaded street and graceful, towering columns – until recently, underground – frame both sides of the 150-metre-long Palladius Street, named after a fourth century governor.

Like other Roman cities, Beit She'an had a substantial theatre, which was built in the first century CE and seated 7,000.

The remains of bath houses, temples and shops still can be found at the site. The city's heyday came to a crashing end in 749 CE when an earthquake devastated the city. At its peak in Byzantine times, Beit She'an was home to as many as 40,000 people.

Caesarea was one of the mega-construction projects initiated by Herod 2,000 years ago. A prolific builder, he was responsible not only for the expansion and renovation of the ancient temple in Jerusalem, but he also fortified Masada, built Herodium and took a tiny Phoenician port and turned it into one of the largest ports in the world at the time. Attesting to the grandeur of the project, black and red granite was shipped from Egypt's Aswan area and marble was brought from Crete.

The city was named after Herod's Roman ally, Augustus Caesar, and was built to take advantage of trade between the Roman world and the east.

A museum in the old city shows how Caesarea appeared back in the day, with a white marble temple facing west for all incoming visitors to see, a massive hippodrome (the oval track still exists) and a semi-circular theatre that seats 15,000 spectators.

A little to the north, you can still see the remains of an aqueduct that supplied water to the city. The aqueduct – only a few hundred metres still remains – ran 17 kilometres from Mount Carmel. Tzippori is another gem that has been excavated in the Galilee, a few kilometres from Nazareth. A city that thrived in Byzantine times, it was home to large communities of Christians and Jews. A synagogue uncovered in Tzippori featured intricate and beautiful mosaic floors that included human representations as well as a Jewish zodiac.

Roman-era ruins in Beit She'an. [Paul Lungen photo]

Also known by the Greek name Sepphoris, Tzippori was in mishnaic times (sixth century CE) a centre of Jewish religious and spiritual life in the Galilee.

Akko (Acre) is another archeological marvel that bills itself as "one of the wonders of the world." The United Nations apparently agreed, naming it a World Heritage Site. Although the city predates biblical times, much of today's old city dates back only to Crusader and Ottoman periods. It is, as our local guide described it, "an open air museum."

Above ground you can visit Crusader and Ottoman quarters, a colourful suk, Turkish baths, seaside restaurants, a Baha'i temple and the Ottoman-era citadel that was used by the British as a prison. It was from that prison that in May 1947 the Irgun staged a jail break. Earlier, prisoners had tried digging their way out, only to find massive amounts of rubble and earth below, which was used to support construction of the Ottoman city above.

That area below the prison cells has now been excavated and an underground Crusader city revealed. Visitors can view a complex of halls and a church, built by the Hospitallers knights. So far, about 20,000 square metres has been excavated of the Crusader citadel, less than four per cent of the original city. "Everything is as they left it," according to a local guide, adding Akko is "the Pompeii of the Middle East."

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Garfinkel play falls just short of its promise

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

You really want to like House of Many Tongues. Running at Tarragon Theatre until June 3, Jonathan Garfinkel's latest play features some sweeping themes and charismatic characters, and the dialogue rolls off the stage naturally. But the second act is marred by too many flaws to make it the five-star play it could potentially become.

House is a Middle East story pitting an Israeli man against an Arab man, both laying claim to a Jerusalem house. They squabble and point fingers, sometimes guns, and they each make a case for residing in this residence. But the house – itself a character (Fiona Highet) – is indecisive on who the rightful owner should be. The compromise between Abu Dalo (Hrant Alianak) and Shimon (Howard Jerome) acts as the meat of the play, while another more subversive plot begins to hatch.

Shimon's 15-year-old son, Alex, wants to bring peace to the Middle East, through an unusual method. Calling himself the "test-tube baby of the Dalai Lama and Woody Allen," Alex (Daniel Karasik) breezily believes oral sex exchanged between Israelis and Palestinians could broker the kind of accord the government only dreams about.

Alex's manifesto serves as the humorous counterpoint to the darker tension brooding between the adults. And by the end of the first act, you truly begin to care for Alex, his father and the poetic Arab banging away at a typewriter in the kitchen.

If only the threads of House didn't come loose in the second half. First, there's a "camel" character played by Raoul Bhaneja of Train 48 fame. There's nothing insightful or even entertaining about this role; the more snarky lines the camel spews, the more irritating he becomes.

Garfinkel – who also wrote The Trials of John Demjanjuk – throws in another adolescent for Alex to play with. Abu Dalo's gothed-out daughter feels like a jarring addition, as if the playwright desperately needs a subject for Alex's sexual experiments. She fails to be as punchy as she should be, and instead that heft is carried by Alex. Kudos to the 21-year-old Karasik for his excellent portrayal of a boy masking his pain with a flippancy every parent would recognize. He saves the brief exchanges between the two innocent teens.

Even though House doesn't live up to its early promise, fans of snappy dialogue and Jewish humour will find some shining moments in the two-hour production. All actors bring more to the stage than just Garfinkel's text, and Richard Rose's direction fleshes out personalities through touching gestures or swift glances. Best of all, Highet playing the house, offers some creative uses of opening and closing a front door.

You can't help but wonder what House could have been with some tighter editing and a punchier ending. The clunky inclusion of uninteresting characters weighs down this play, but luckily some stellar performances save it from crumbling completely. Alianak is mesmerizing as Abu Dalo, his face a map of emotions in almost every scene. Jerome delivers his woe-is-me lines with the comfort of an actor who's experienced some Jewish pain. And Niki Landau doesn't overdo her role as Alex's cousin-seduction target.

An Arab and an Israeli battle over a Jerusalem house in House of Many Tongues. [Cylla von Tiedemann photo]

House of Many Tongues runs until June 3 at Tarragon Theatre Mainspace, 30 Bridgeman Ave. For tickets, call 416-531-1827.

Vancouver musician pays tribute to Pete Seeger

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

What could be more perfect than singer/guitarist Michael Friedman performing at a Pete Seeger tribute concert? After all, Friedman has known Seeger since he was two years old.

"Way back in the 1950s, my father had a little folk group and my parents helped organize concerts for Pete Seeger, Earl Robinson and others from the United States folk movement. Pete and Earl were blacklisted under the House Un-American Activities Committee, so our house became sort of a whistle stop for travelling musicians," Friedman recalled in a phone interview.

"I used to get kicked out of my bedroom so my Uncle Perry, a folksinger and aspiring banjo player, could cop some banjo licks from Pete."

Michael Friedman

In celebration of legendary folksinger and activist Pete Seeger's 90th birthday, the Winchevsky Centre in Toronto is hosting a gala concert – For Pete's Sake Sing! – featuring Friedman on Saturday, May 30 at 7:30 p.m.

The program includes a sing-along hootenanny by musicians of the Camp Naivelt community. The music program at the labour Zionist Ontario summer camp was instrumental in the development of folk music in Canada and some of the country's best known musicians got their start there.

Seeger, an ambassador for peace and social justice, turned 90 on May 3. Through timeless songs, he engaged people in causes to end the Vietnam War, ban nuclear weapons and promote ecological responsibility and international solidarity.

"Pete was one of my biggest inspirations – aside from rock 'n' roll – in the '60s. He had the amazing capacity to bring multiple generations together in song. Seeger was a bridge builder," said the Vancouver-based musician.

"I don't think there's a single act on the musical stage that I've seen more than Pete – whenever he came to town, we were there."

When Seeger toured countries like Turkey or Nigeria, he would sing in the audience's native language and later perform their songs in North America for audiences to learn.

At the upcoming concert, Friedman will perform Seeger's greatest hits, Where Have All the Flowers Gone?, If I Had a Hammer and We Shall Overcome, a song Seeger co-wrote.

"We're living in interesting times, so Seeger's songs still ring true," Friedman said.

Friedman will also perform some of his own songs using his "new" acoustic guitar approach of altered tuning, picking, strumming, harmonics and tapping – techniques advanced by renowned guitarists Michael Hedges and Leo Codkey.

Currently, Friedman performs both as a solo act and with band members Mark James Fortin and Don Alder, and with British Columbia's Corbin Keep, who is known as the Wild Cellist because of the diversity of his music. When on tour, Friedman plays with German cellist Jens Naumilkat, who arranges Friedman's songs for his performances with philharmonic and chamber orchestras. Friedman's latest CD is Diamond Space (2006), and a new CD is in the works.

In 1992, Friedman became the music director of CBC's Front Page Challenge when the Toronto-based production moved out west. He wrote 120 music compositions for it.

"I had done some film work, but there I wrote instrumental underscore for one-to-two-minute mini-documentaries about surprise guests like Maggie Trudeau, Robert Kennedy Jr. and Sylvie Fréchette. Each week, I had a few days to get the music ready. That did wonders for my song writing – it was an amazing three years," he said.

Tickets for the performance are $15 in advance and $20 at the door, with reduced rates for members. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Visit www.winchevskycentre.org or call 416-789-5502, or go to www.michaelfriedman.ca.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TORONTO JEWISH FOLK CHOIR TO PERFORM 83rd ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT ON MAY 31

The **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir** celebrates two beloved figures in Jewish music in its upcoming 83rd annual spring concert – singer-actor **Theodore Bikel** on his 85th birthday and the late composer **Srul Irving Glick** on the 75th anniversary of his birth.

Alexander Veprinsky conducts the 30-voice choir and soloists **Miriam Eskin** and **Herman Rombouts**. Accompaniment is provided by pianist **Lina Zemelman**. Tenor **Mitch Smolkin**, well-known for his Yiddish repertoire, appears as guest soloist in the Bikel tribute and performs a solo set with **Nina Shapilsky** on piano.

Leah Posluns Theatre, 4588 Bathurst St. $20, $25 at the door; children free. Sunday, May 31, 3 p.m. 416-636-0936, e-mail tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca. www.winchevskycentre.org

* * *

Literary Events

• The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards. Free. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Monday, May 25, 8 p.m. 416-636-1880, ext. 352, www.kofflerarts.org

• Psychiatrist-poet **Ron Charach** reads from his new book, Cowboys & Bleeding Hearts: Essays on Violence, Health and Identity. The book launch is at Nicholas Hoare Books, 45 Front St. E., Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m.

•From Sinai to the Shtetl and Beyond: Where is Home for the Jewish Writer? is the title of Hamilton's Temple Anshe Sholom Second Occasional Celebration of Jewish Writers and Writing, scheduled for the weekend of June 5 to 7. Details at www.anshesholom.ca

* * *

Theatre & Music

• Tuesdays with Morrie, by **Jeffrey Hatcher** and **Mitch Albom** and featuring **Hal Linden**, opened last week and runs until May 31 at the Winter Garden Theatre. Presented by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company. 416-972-5555, Ticketmaster.ca or hgjewishtheatre.com

• Crow's Theatre presents Eternal Hydra, a gripping literary mystery revolving around a discovered manuscript by an Irish Jew living in Paris. Reunites award-winning duo of **Anton Piatigorsky** and **Chris Abraham**. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St. Previews from May 17, runs May 21 to 31. 416-975-8555, crowstheatre.com (Quote "Hercules" to receive 15 per cent discount being offered to Koffler community).

• From Russia With Love is an evening of string orchestra gems from **Arensky**, **Shostakovich**, **Tchaikovsky** and other Russian greats, performed by the Koffler Chamber Orchestra. $20, $10. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. Sunday, May 31, 7 p.m. kofflerarts.org

• Yiddish singer **Mitch Smolkin** performs with **Klezmer en Buenos Aires** and musicians **Paul Brody**, **Boris Sichon** and **Aviva Chernick**. Pianist **Marilyn Lerner** opens the concert, which is being billed as "a spectacular Father's Day event." Smolkin's last two concerts sold out in advance. $30, $25, $18. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Sunday, June 21, 3 p.m. 416-872-4255, www.mitchsmolkin.com

* * *

Film & Television

• A mini-series of Israeli films opens with A Touch Away, a Romeo-and-Juliet story set amid a culture clash with the arrival of a secular family from Russia to an Orthodox neighbourhood of Tel Aviv. Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave. at St. George. Tuesday, May 19, 7 p.m. Other screenings are on May 26, June 2 and 9. $10 each, $35 series pass.

• Steal a Pencil For Me, a documentary by Academy Award-nominee **Michele Ohayon** about love in a Nazi concentration camp, is scheduled for broadcast on the PBS series Independent Lens, Tuesday, May 26, 10 p.m. (Check local listings.)

• Subtext, a documentary by Toronto filmmaker **Eric Weissman**, is an experimental study of urban homelessness that focuses on the residents of Toronto's Tent City over an eight-year period until the present. Weissman joins a panel discussion following the screening. Tickets $10, $8, $6, available at the door. Royal Ontario Museum, Level 1B, Signy and Cleophee Eaton Theatre (enter via south entrance). May 27, 7 p.m. 416-586-5524, e-mail icc@rom.on.ca. www.housepaint.ca

• The Toronto company Makin' Movies Inc. is developing a new film called Edges of Love, an examination of the changing nature of love in committed relationships, for better or for worse. Producer-director **Maureen Judge** seeks to interview couples who have been in committed relationships for seven to 10 years, with interesting stories to relate. 416-516-1833, www.edgesoflove.tv

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Benefit Concerts

• Project Humanity's third annual Shirts Off clothing drive offers an evening of music, theatre, dance and entertainment in exchange for a $10 donation and a bag of gently used clean clothes. All donated clothes go to local shelters. Archeo Trattoria, Distillery District. May 24, 7 to 11:30 p.m. www.projecthumanity.ca

• One Night Live, a benefit concert for the Women & Babies Program at Sunnybrook, features **Sting**, **Sheryl Crow**, the **Canadian Tenors** and host **Chris Noth**. Air Canada Centre, Thursday, May 21. Buy tickets via Ticketmaster.ca, using password DANCAP. www.onenightlive.ca

* * *

At the Galleries

• Dancing With a Camera is an exhibition by Israeli photographer **Gadi Dagon**, official photographer for the Bat Sheva Dance Company and a specialist in photographing dancers. Contemporary Art Gallery, 2719 Yonge St. until May 29. 416-485-2800

• The exhibition Russia – Beyond Utopia features vibrant images of post-Communist Russia by New York-based photographer **Andrew Moore**. Presented as part of the Contact Festival. Koffler Centre of the Arts, Loggia Gallery, until June 30.

• Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC is hosting a visit to the transformed Art Gallery of Ontario. Thursday, May 29. Details and registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Ballet's music director is training musicians at U of T

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

When David Briskin moved to Toronto to become the music director and principal conductor of the National Ballet of Canada in 2006, he thought moving here would allow him to slow down a bit. But that's not the case.

He is currently working on the full-length romantic ballet Giselle, at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts from May 27 to 31.

Following that, he immediately goes to work on a mixed bill of Bizet's Carmen, choreographed by Davide Bombana, and Skin Divers, based on Anne Michaels' book of poetry of the same name and choreographed by Canadian Dominique Dumais. Carmen and Skin Divers will be performed at the Four Seasons Centre from June 6 to 14.

"Working with the National Ballet is everything and more than I expected. The dancers are wonderful and the orchestra is fantastic," Briskin said. "I do a lot of guest conducting with major North American ballet companies, and our orchestra can compete with any of these and, in some cases, is even better."

He said that when he joined the National, he was also interested in working with Karen Kain, the ballet's artistic director.

Briskin said the acoustics in the Four Seasons Centre are very honest and that it raises the level of performance because everything is so clearly heard and seen in the house. He added that the players can hear one another almost better than any other orchestra pit that he's ever worked in.

Briskin, 48, lived in New York City for 23 years, so it was a big change to come to Toronto, but he felt the opportunity to become music director of the National Ballet was too good to pass up. He moved here with wife, Julia, and their daughter, Charlotte, now 3.

"My wife and I were ready for a change of lifestyle and to get out of Manhattan," Briskin said. "We love it, we feel very comfortable living in Cedarvale, a little pocket just south of Eglinton and west of Bathurst."

David Briskin

Briskin was born in Milwaukee, Wis., and raised in Newton, Mass., where the family attended Temple Shalom. His brother, Charles Briskin, is now a Reform rabbi in San Pedro, Calif.

Briskin, who started playing the piano at the age of five, served as conductor with the American Ballet Theatre and has been a regular guest conductor with the San Francisco Ballet and with the New York City Ballet. He's conducted the orchestras of the Houston Ballet, the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. He was also the conductor of the Juilliard School's dance division.

In July 2008, he was appointed director of orchestral studies at the University of Toronto faculty of music and conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

"It has been wonderful deepening our roots in Toronto and to have some influence on the training of young Canadian musicians is fantastic, because they will ultimately fill the seats of our orchestras," Briskin said.

For tickets, call 416-345-9595 or visit www.national.ballet.ca.

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Tel Aviv U students produced 'staggering' films, says Atom Egoyan

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Critically acclaimed Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan lent his name to the 2009 Toronto Jewish Film Festival late last month at a screening of two films associated with Tel Aviv University's world-renowned film program.

The Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University (TAU) and the TJFF, which ended on April 26, hosted a reception and screening at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Grande, with Egoyan as the special guest.

Before the two films – one a short, by TAU alum Elite Zexer titled Take Note, and the other, a full-length film by award-winning filmmaker and TAU film professor Eitan Green titled It All Begins At Sea – were screened before a packed movie theatre, the focus of the evening was decidedly on the Israeli school's film program.

Egoyan, last year's winner of the Dan David Prize (a $1-million prize awarded for outstanding contributions in the fields of science, humanities and the arts) for his film Ararat, about the Armenian genocide, spoke about his experience at TAU.

He said while he was there last year to receive the award, he spent some time with the school's film students.

"This campus, for those of you who haven't been there, is exceptional. It's beautifully designed. It makes you feel like this is the hub of intellectual life in the country, and it was really thrilling to be there," said Egoyan, adding he's visited Israel a number of times since 1988.

"The calibre of the shorts that I saw from the student group was staggering," he said.

Atom Egoyan

Having spent a lot of time in film schools around the world, Egoyan said he noticed that TAU's film school produces filmmakers who have very distinctive styles.

"There was no overall style that the instructors imposed upon their students, and Israel is, of course, an extraordinarily complex country and many of the shorts are dealing with the realities of the country," said Egoyan, who also presented a trailer for his latest film, Adoration, which was inspired by a true story about a Palestinian man who planted a bomb on his pregnant Irish girlfriend before she boarded an El Al flight.

"I would say that this is not only one of the most important schools in the country, but one of the most important schools in the world," Egoyan said.

Green, who teaches script writing, film directing and film analysis at TAU, said he is proud of Zexer, who wrote and directed a 14-minute film about a newly arrived Russian immigrant and Israeli soldier who struggles to assert her authority as a boot camp commander.

He said that not all the film students at TAU will become great writers or directors, but at the very least, the students will be better able to appreciate film.

"We created a better audience for the arts, better audience for the movies and that is as important," said Green, who won the Innovation Award at the 2008 Montreal World Film Festival for It All Begins At Sea.

His 90-minute dark comedy is split into three scenes that focus on the lives of a young Israeli family, the Goldsteins – Yehuda, a furniture salesman; his wife, Dina, and their son, Udi.

It's a semi-autobiographical family drama about the vulnerability of being a parent and a coming-of-age story about love and mortality.

In the first scene, The Sea, Dina and Udi almost drown after they are caught in an undertow off a beach in Ashkelon.

The second scene, The Wall, is set six years later. Udi, is 12 years old and on a school field trip when he falls off a short cliff and cracks his head open.

In the third scene, Home, Udi is two years older and fully recovered, and his parents are expecting another child, a baby girl. They've just moved into a new apartment that has a view of the hospital that his parents are constantly in and out of due to Dina's difficult pregnancy.

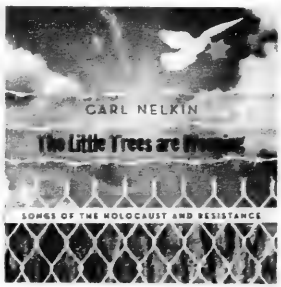
Egoyan, who introduced Green's film, said it is "such an emotional piece of work, it is also adventurous, it's playing with structure, you'll see amazing shifts in tone, which are conducted so masterfully, and it is really a very mature, masterful piece of work."

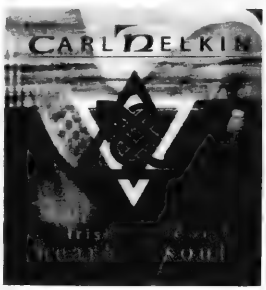
Singer blends Jewish and Irish songs

By MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
Editor

Carl Nelkin is a man of unusual talents and an undauntable personality. He is also an accomplished singer.

Nelkin is a lawyer by professional training, specializing in the rather rare metier of aviation law. He is a Jewish community activist and public affairs spokesperson in Dublin, Ireland, where he and his family have lived for nearly two centuries. He is also a poised professional singer and, more to the purpose of this article, a cantor as well.





He sings, obviously, to give voice to the stirrings of his soul. I suspect as well that he sings to pay homage to the two cultures in which he is deeply rooted: Jewish and Irish.

That is the only conclusion possible after listening to the CD Nelkin recorded some six years ago, Irish Heart-Jewish Soul.

The album is a unique collection of Jewish and Irish tunes. Half of the album's 14 songs are familiar Yiddish melodies; the other half are Irish folk tunes, undoubtedly familiar in the Irish world.

The Jewish-Yiddish tunes are sung to stylized Irish-Celtic musical accompaniment. The Irish-Celtic songs are sung with a discernible nod of the singer's cap to Jewish-Yiddish sensibilities. It is a fortuitous combination. In the main, the music is fun to listen to because the fusion of the two cultures and sounds are a pleasant fit.

Nelkin's voice is gentle. It does not overpower. Nor does he ever rush or attack the phrasing and lyric of the songs. He sings rather, with a tender deference to the poetic and musical intent of the composer. His cantorial training is noticeable in the palpable humility with which he approaches the sway of the music. This is especially evident in Nelkin's second CD, The Little Trees Are Weeping – Songs of the Holocaust and Resistance, which was recorded earlier this year.

Nelkin is not aggressive with the lyrics. There is no need to be because the songs themselves are "aggressive" with our sensibilities.

Only a few of the 14 songs of Little Trees will be familiar to the listener. Many of the songs are original works that were written in the ghettos and concentration camps.

Listening to The Little Trees are Weeping evokes an entirely different emotional response than does listening to Irish Heart-Jewish Soul. The latter is an excursion through the hybrid folkways of Jewish immigrants exploring Ireland. The latter is an excursion through a horribly sorrowful history.

That these CDs do evoke emotions, however, is a tribute to the rare stylings of the Jewish-Irish songster-cantor Carl Nelkin.

Nelkin's CDs are available from his website, www.irishjewishmusic.com.

I.B. Singer's talented sister overshadowed by her brothers

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

"I do not know of a single woman in Yiddish literature who wrote better than she did," Isaac Bashevis Singer once commented about the little-known novelist and story writer Esther Kreitman, whose 1936 book, The Dance of the Demons, has just been reissued by the Feminist Press of New York.

In truth, Singer might have done much more to encourage Kreitman's literary efforts, since she was his older sister by 13 years. Their younger brother, Israel Joshua Singer, also became one of Yiddish literature's bright lights. Like the celebrated Bronte family of English literary fame, the Singer family of Bilgoraj and later Warsaw, Poland, produced three remarkable writers whose shared upbringing by a mystically inclined rabbinical father and a sternly rationalistic and commonsensical mother has come under scrutiny by generations of critics and biographers.

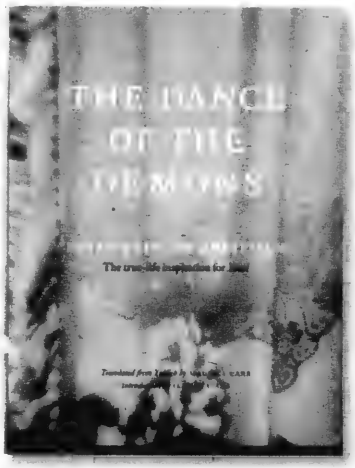
Esther Kreitman

If the Bronte comparison does not acknowledge the special difficulties often faced by women writers – difficulties that, in Kreitman's case, seemed to draw her to the edge of madness – Michigan professor Anita Norich offers a more apt comparison. "Perhaps only in the case of William, Henry and Alice James do we have a comparable set of siblings who enjoyed very different reputations as literati and intellectuals," she writes. The Jameses, like the Singers, produced two towering literary-intellectual brothers (psychologist William and writer Henry) and a long-suffering and neglected sister (the bedridden diarist Alice).

Kreitman's first novel, *Der Sheydims' Tants* (Dance of the Demons), was published in Yiddish in Poland in 1936, and in English translation (titled Deborah) in 1946. A second novel, *Brilyantn* (Diamonds) appeared in 1944 and a book of short stories, *Yikhes* (Lineage) came out in 1949. Unhappy, unstable, and said to be either epileptic or possessed by dybbuks, Kreitman died in London in 1954. Although her works received favourable critical attention, she remained an obscure talent, overshadowed by her famous brothers. So eclipsed was her reputation that literary critic Irving Howe, who must have known better, felt it safe to write in 1980 that "there are two Singers in Yiddish literature, and while both are very good, they sing in different keys."

Born in Bilgoraj in 1891, Kreitman was brought up with little expectation that a woman could or should be anything other than a good wife and homemaker. In Dance of the Demons, which is largely autobiographical, the young daughter Deborah listens as her rabbinical father, Reb Avram Ber, praises her brother as a brilliant Talmudist in the making, then asks him to predict her own future. "What are you going to be one day? Nothing, of course!" he replies. In his heart of hearts, Reb Avram believes that his wife's parents had erred in allowing his wife to become educated, and he is determined not to repeat the mistake with his daughter. (Israel Joshua Singer once recounted a real-life episode in which Esther asked their mother what she could be when she grew up, and was told, "What can a girl be?" He added that he understood why his sister often seemed intensely jealous of him.)

Dance of the Demons follows Reb Avram Ber and family through their years of poverty and devoted religious service in several small towns, exposing the hypocrisies of feeble-minded townsfolk who elevate their undeserving rabbi into a saintlike "*tsadik*" and the cynicism of a younger generation that turns from religion to socialism, all in search of a golden calf. Eventually the provincial family lands in the big degraded metropolis of Warsaw, with its unwashed and unlearned Jews and Jewish criminal gangs. As a sort of precursor to the beit din depicted so vividly in I. B. Singer's In My Father's Court, Reb Avram also maintains a rabbinical court in which he untangles some extraordinary predicaments, such as the dilemma of a Jewish thug whose daughter has two husbands and a baby almost due.



Reb Avram is soon facing a thorny dilemma of his own: his daughter's growing reluctance to go through with an arranged marriage, which becomes the central drama of the novel. Deborah, bitterly unhappy but still dutiful, is convinced that her feelings don't count and the match is merely her family's way of getting rid of her once and for all. "From that day onward she felt like a stranger in the house – a superfluous stranger. Her father, her mother, her brother – she regarded them all as acquaintances who were accommodating her as an unwanted guest and were looking forward to the hour of her departure. She began to look forward to it herself. That sense of resignation, oppressive and bewildering, never took leave of her no matter where she went or what she did."

Again, Kreitman's art mirrored her life; the story is based on her own arranged marriage to a man she had never met, a doomed match that produced a single son, Morris Kreitman (who, as Maurice Carr, became the novel's translator). In real life, as Esther and family journeyed by train to meet her intended husband, she showed her mother some of her writings: her mother ordered her to tear them up and throw them out the window.

In her book Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Life, psychoanalyist Janet Hadda accuses the Nobel laureate writer of cold-hearted neglect of his sister, claiming that he ignored her pleas for funds and refused to help her relocate to America. Bashevis visited her only once in the postwar era. "When I came to London, she was weirdly glad to see me," he later recalled. "She loved me with a great love that often seemed to me exaggerated and frightening… Even those who could not get along with her praised her goodheartedness and refinement. But who can live with a volcano? After a few days of listening to her complaints and blame, I became weary. She could literally drive a person crazy."

Despite the lifetime of neglect she endured from her family and the world at large, there is no question that Kreitman's legend lives on in I. B. Singer's fiction. She was his model for the title character in his story Yentl, about a girl who masquerades as a male yeshiva student in order to get an education (later made into a film starring Barbra Streisand). Kreitman may also have served as the model for other passionate and unstable females in I. B.'s fiction, from Masha in Enemies: A Love Story to Magda in The Magician of Lublin.

As a novel, Dance of the Demons stands up well as a truthful and delicate portrait of memorable characters caught in the grip of dramatically changing times that saw the beginning of the dissolution of shtetl life; the book ends on the cusp of World War I. A worthy and interesting writer, Kreitman holds special significance for being a woman operating in a somewhat closed male shop. Would The Dance of The Demons have been rescued from obscurity even if she had been unrelated to the Singers? One would hope so. But her work and legend are so intricately interwoven with those of her famous brothers that the question seems impossible to answer.

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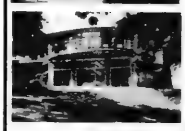

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Coast to Coast

Managing water resources in Mideast

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — There's no question that under any future peace deal, "large volumes of water will be transferred from Israel to the Palestinians," says Canadian water expert David Brooks of Ottawa.

In 2007, Brooks was retained by an Israeli-Palestinian environmental organization, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FEME), to "draft an article for an eventual peace treaty" between Israel and the Palestinians pertaining to water resources.

"The tough question to be answered is whether water will be transferred under an Israeli-managed system or whether there will be joint-management of water [by Israel and a future Palestinian state]?" Brooks said in an interview with The CJN.

Brooks said he favours "joint-management."

Followed the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993, Brooks served on Canadian delegations to the multilateral working groups of the Middle East peace talks on water and the environment.

Brooks, a senior adviser on water to Friends of the Earth Canada, said he was contacted in 2007 by FEME, co-chaired by Israeli Gideon Bromberg and Palestinian Nadis Al Khatib, because the organization wanted "to re-invigorate the Geneva accords" signed by former MK Yossi Beilin and Palestinian leader Yasir Abd Rabbo in October 2003.

Since 2007, Brooks has worked with Canadian Julie Trottier, a lecturer in politics at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, on the water issue.

"Over the course of a year, we came up with a draft agreement that is a design for joint management of water resources by Israel and a future Palestinian state," he said.

Brooks said that his discussions about water resources "have been mediated by the Czechoslovakian government… They brought me together with the Palestinian Water Authority at a conference in Prague [in 2008]."

According to Brooks, about 2/3 of water in the land that comprises Israel and a future Palestinian state is "trans-border water" that would have to be "shareable." This is because the "intake" locations of the water, where the rain falls, and the "out take" locations, where it comes out as natural springs, would be in different states.

Brooks, a co-author of Watershed: The role of Fresh Water in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said that currently, "neither Israel nor the Palestinians are using water sustainably. Both sides are using too much water."

He said "the Palestinian government, not Israel, is at fault" for depleting Gaza's water resources.

"In Gaza, water has been very badly managed… They [both Hamas and the PA before it] have allowed everyone whose wanted to drill a well to do so. This reduces the pressure and has allowed sea water to come in… Today there is not enough water left that is of drinking quality in Gaza. But that's the Palestinians' own doing."

In the West Bank, Brooks said, "water has been highly inequitably controlled" in favour of Israel. "Palestinians are not short of drinking water, but there has been a strangulation of Palestinian agriculture."

One of the "greatest mistakes Israel has made is not ensuring a vigorous Palestinian agriculture," Brooks said.

He added that although Israel is gradually leaving agriculture in favour of developing a high-tech economy, Palestinians "can't go through that process instantaneously… Agriculture is a good way of using the large supply of Palestinian labour."

Brook's proposal for water management in an eventual peace treaty is based on "an ongoing negotiations strategy between Israel and Palestine, meaning every year you work out a process and decide who gets how much water… It's based on an ongoing relationship of good faith and isn't something you do once and forever, but you have to do it on an ongoing basis."

That's because "water isn't like real estate… it can't be divided once and for all… because water moves… it can be used many times and recycled, it changes in quality, so a different management regime must be considered."

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Diminutive London forward plays with pizzazz

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

When your team has a player the likes of John Tavares in the lineup, it can be difficult to grab some attention for yourself.

A highly touted, likely first overall selection in the upcoming National Hockey League entry draft, Tavares is often the guy other teams focus on when the London Knights come to town.

But the past edition of the Knights have another line to contend with, one that features a former player with the Israeli national junior team.

During the playoffs, Daniel Erlich played on a line with Nazem Kadri and Phil Varone, and as far as Erlich is concerned, "both lines are good enough to be first lines on any other team."

Well, most teams, but perhaps not the Windsor Spitfires, who eliminated the Knight four games to one – all decided in overtime – in the Ontario Hockey League's conference finals.

Nevertheless, Erlich is correct in pointing out the Knights didn't rely on a single big line. In 14 playoff games, Erlich lit up the scoreboard for two goals and 11 assists. (In 67 regular season games, he scored 18 goals and added 35 assists.) During the playoffs, Kadri had nine goals and 12 assists, while Varone had 10 goals and nine assists. Tavares had 21 playoff points.

"I'm the playmaker," Erlich told The CJN after his season ended. "The other guys know how to score.

"All of us are pretty hard workers. When we get going, it's pretty hard to contain us."

What makes the line so unique is not just the complementary skills each brings to the ice. The fact that Erlich is a Jew whose parents are Israeli, Kadri a Muslim of Lebanese descent and Varone possesses an Italian heritage hasn't failed to attract attention.

Sun media quoted Knights assistant coach Pat Curcio saying, "Who knew a Muslim, an Israeli and an Italian could work magic together on the ice like that? I don't know if it's going to lead to world peace or anything like that, and the kids certainly don't talk about it, but it's a good story from a world perspective in that three hockey players from these different backgrounds are doing well together."

The players, however, downplay the ethnic angle. "It doesn't matter where you come from," said Erlich. "We're great friends. It doesn't matter what religion you are."

Varone told Sun media something similar, focusing on the line's skill and speed.

Erlich, who is five-foot-six, 155 pounds, acknowledges, "I'm not the biggest guy out there." But he is quick and his speed permits him "to get away from the big guys. It makes it hard to catch me."

Mark Hunter, vice-president and general manager of the Knights, said Erlich "could be one of the most entertaining players in the OHL. He plays with a lot of pizzazz.

"He can skate, pass the puck, handle the puck."

Three years ago at age 15, Erlich joined the Israeli national junior team for an International Ice Hockey Federation tournament in Romania. The diminutive forward, who attended and played for Associated Hebrew Schools, carried the Israelis on his back that year, all the way to a silver medal, scoring 12 goals and 14 assists in five games and being named tournament MVP.

His coach, Jean Perron, former bench boss with the Montreal Canadiens, said at the time, "He's quite a good player. For his age, he's probably the best I've seen play that type of hockey."

Erlich played for the juniors at another tournament in Hungary. "Those were great experiences," he said. "I was proud to play for Israel."

Daniel Erlich, left, and carrying the puck, above. [Photos courtesy London Knights]

That was then. This year, as an 18-year-old, Erlich is eligible for the NHL entry draft. "If I'm drafted, it would be an honour and it would be great."

However, his stature could be a problem. Hunter, who had a long NHL career with Montreal, St. Louis and other teams, said Erlich knows his size works against him. Nevertheless, he does have a good chance at a pro career, even if it isn't in the NHL.

"He competes, he's gritty, he hits people. He can handle the puck well."

Erlich is hoping for a free agent tryout with an NHL club next fall. His goal remains to some day play in the NHL, but if not, European hockey or perhaps the American Hockey League or East Coast Hockey League beckon.

There are some precedents for players of his size and skill level to play in the big league. Brian Gionta and Martin St. Louis are two he points to with relish. "I look up to them as successful players," Erlich said.

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Maccabiah masters squash team has opening

Compiled by CJN Staff

Maccabi Canada is looking for one good man to round out the men's masters squash team.

They are seeking a credible player in the 50-55 age category (or even someone 45-50) who is willing to spend two weeks in Israel this summer competing with Jewish players from around the world.

The team currently consists of Paul Lechtzier and Ed Rosenblat, but for the Canadian masters to record a team score, a third player is required.

The masters division in the Maccabiah Games consists of athletes 35 and older who pay their own way to Israel ($7,500) for the chance to compete in the quadrennial games. This year's Maccabiah Games, the 18th, run from July 12 to 23. Canada will send its largest team ever – 450 athletes.

For more information, contact squash coach Patrick Hartunian at 647-229-0901 or Sharon Lohr Petersil, national office director for Maccabi Canada, at 416-398-0515.

Dinner and drinks?

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

"So what exactly did he say?" I ask my husband, Meir.

"For the 97th time," he said, "'Why won't you come over at, say, seven?'"

I look at him, disappointed.

You see, we were invited to the home of this lovely couple that we met recently at a party. We talked twice over the phone and the chemistry was there, and two days ago, Jay called and invited us over.

The problem is, he didn't say whether it was a dinner invitation or not.

"Couldn't you just ask him?! If he had talked with me, I would've definitely asked," I said to Meir.

Leave these things to men! Sheesh!

He hands me the phone.

"Be my guest," he says.

So we don't know. I mean, if Linda and Jay were Israelis, I wouldn't have hesitated to ask them specifically about dinner, but Canadians? They might take offence.

I don't really understand Canadians yet. You see, I've only been here for 18 months.

"Anyway, let's not eat too much during the day. And I'm gonna buy them a nice present, too," I say.

"They must have invited us to dinner. I'm sure they have!" I add confidently.

"Right?" I ask the insecure creature in front of me.

Meir says nothing

"Right?" Still, he says nothing.

While we're eating a very light lunch at the mall, I'm thinking about Linda and Jay. Such a nice couple. And they look generous, too.

They'll probably prepare us some mighty fine delicacies, I think to myself. I imagine a bevy of salads, nice juicy ribs, grilled chicken, desserts – oh, the desserts. I love this couple so much!

We finish up our meagre sandwiches and run to a posh store, where we throw away an irrational amount of money on a lovely bowl, then rush back home, wrap it in beautiful wrapping paper, then sit and wait until 7 p.m.

We stand excitedly on their threshold promptly at 7, and when the door is opened, I immediately feel the horror coiling in my soul.

There's no happy table, no nice tablecloth, no cutlery or plates, and no food. Only small miserable glasses, and a shameless plate with almonds in it.

And we're hungry.

Linda smiles at us and takes my costly gift.

"Now, what have we got here?" she asks while unwrapping it.

"What a nice bowl!" she exclaims.

I snap out of my hunger-induced stupor and cry: "You can put a whole bunch of food in this dish! Like cold pasta salads, or mashed potatoes with fried onions, or mushrooms with cream, or…"

Meir gives me an angry look, and I clam up.

Jay enters the living room, all smiles. We smile right back at him courageously. I hear Meir's stomach growling.

"Please, have some almonds," Jay offers generously as we sit down. He even pours some liqueur. We polish off the almonds in a heartbeat and start downing the booze.

Linda looks at Jay with a certain look, and he rushes into the kitchen.

"Thank God!" my eyes say to Meir's. "Finally, they'll feed us!"

When Jay enters with more chilled drinks, Meir needs to hold me so I don't collapse.

We keep drinking while Jay talks for hours about the state of the economy.

When he gets to the part about poor hungry people, we tune back in.

"There are so many starving people in Canada," I howl. "Right here, in Toronto. Right here!"

Jay pours me another drink. Meir suggests calling it a night.

Our hosts seem wistful, even shocked. "Leave?" Linda asks. "But we haven't had dinner yet!"

And at that point, she opens the doors to the dining room to reveal a table full of steaming dishes.

"You were enjoying your drinks so much, we didn't want to rush you." Linda says.

By the way, there's a rumor circulating: apparently, we're drinkers.

MANGO RADICCHIO CAPRESE SALAD WITH BASIL VINAIGRETTE

1/3 c chopped fresh basil +8 whole basil leaves
3 tblsp olive oil
2 tblsp white balsamic vinegar
8 radicchio leaves, thick ends trimmed
2 lg mangoes, peeled, halved, thinly sliced
8 1/4" slices fresh mozzarella cheese

Blend chopped basil, oil, and vinegar in mini processor until most of basil is pureed. Season with salt and pepper. Overlap radicchio, mangoes, cheese, and basil leaves on plates. Drizzle with vinaigrette. Serve, passing remaining vinaigrette.

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The new fitness craze

FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

The warm weather has finally arrived and the best way to get fit and enjoy our wonderful but short summer is with aquafitness.

I'm sure you've heard of it. When I did my research for last month's article, I learned that the American Medical Association listed aquafitness as the best exercise to help strengthen and stretch your entire body, no matter what your health condition, age or fitness level.

Aquafitness is basically aerobic training in the water without any impact on or damage to your joints. The water acts like a cushion for the joints in your spine, hips, knees and ankles. It supports your back and forces you to use your core muscles while building strength. It gives you the feeling of weightlessness, but there is great resistance from the water.

This is a great way not only to build muscle strength, but also to improve cardiovascular health – not to mention that it can be lots of fun.

Originally, aquafitness was designed for rehabilitation after injury or surgery, as well as to increase mobility in physically challenged people. It has grown in popularity, and now, classes are offered at every fitness level, in places varying from your local community centre to special aquafit facilities that are popping up everywhere. Private instruction is also available.

You don't have to be a good swimmer to participate, and you can choose whether you want to do the exercises in the deep or the shallow end of the pool. Just walking around in the shallow end or treading water for five to 10 minutes in the deep end is a great way to promote circulation and build muscle and core strength. It's that easy.

Stretching in a pool can help loosen tight and sore muscles and increase circulation, especially in a warm pool. Since you are weightless in water, your muscles open up more easily, giving you a deeper stretch. And exercising in the water minimizes the delayed onset muscle soreness that usually comes after any good workout.

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Want to know more? E-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Ve'ahavta at 13

URBAN WRITER

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

I don't write about it often, but when I do, it's because I'm extra excited about the Jewish world's accomplishments through tikkun olam.

Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian & Relief Committee has turned 13. Over the years, we have worked hard to create an organization that encourages all Jews to play a role in tikkun olam. Through this effort, we have garnered much support from the Toronto Jewish community, as well as from people across Canada and internationally. We have programs and partners in Israel, Zimbabwe, Guyana and Argentina, and have close relationships with Native Canadian, Christian and Muslim groups.

Over the last year, Ve'ahavta has sent close to $1-million worth of pharmaceuticals to organizations such as the Howard Hospital in Zimbabwe. This is amazing, as the country has virtually collapsed. Our work with this medical clinic, together with local philanthropist Bert Amato, has ensured that at least one Zimbabwean medical facility is well stocked, while poverty, government corruption and HIV/AIDS continues to chip away at the rest of the country. The Jewish community should be proud of this success.

Ve'ahavta, together with Congregation Habonim, continues to travel the streets of Toronto in our homeless van and celebrate Pesach's second-night seder with those living on or near the street.

This year, we launched our ninth Creative Writing Contest (CWC) for the Homeless. We have received more than 100 submissions. Some of the pieces are written at a professional level, but all of them open the readers' minds and hearts to the tragic lives of our brothers and sisters living on the streets of this very wealthy city.

Following is an excerpt from a submission: "I dug my hands into the thick of the sheets spread out beneath me, my teeth clenched, my body braced itself for the blow that was about to come. I drew a breath in anticipation: is this all I'm worth? I lay before him a fragile girl, innocent, naive. A child so young should be allowed to wear childhood. I could not."

Last year, writer Michael Ondaatje was a judge for the CWC. This year, former British prime minister Tony Blair and former Canadian politician Belinda Stronach, a philanthropist who is also executive vice-chairman of Magna International, will be judges. Ve'ahavta was able to secure their services because of our involvement with the Tony Blair Foundation and Belinda Stronach Foundation's fight against malaria in Africa.

Ve'ahavta is still Canada's only Jewish humanitarian organization. Thirteen years into our existence, we have worked in Israel, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, El Salvador, Honduras, Cuba and Turkey, as well as other places mentioned in this article. We have trained Canadian troops in crisis response, and activist Elie Wiesel and the wife of slain Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl, Mariane, have been keynote speakers at our annual gala, Starry Knights.

Ve'ahavta's dynamic staff, board and volunteers have raised more than $10 million and an equal amount in goods-in-kind. We have facilitated thousands of volunteer opportunities locally; in orphanages in Honduras; following the tsunami in Sri Lanka and in other locations.

Ve'ahavta staff drove a convoy of school buses to El Salvador, where we delivered humanitarian aid. We gave the buses to five villages. Through all of this, we have made friends with many non-Jewish communities and effectively played a role in countering anti-Semitism.

Our hope is that the people of the world will eventually lay down their guns and elect to create together, so wars and a gross disparity of resources will no longer be the reality. Is that goal achievable? Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said, "If you can destroy then you can create." So, yes, we believe it is very do-able. Thank you for joining us! "If you will it, it is no dream." – Theodore Herzl

Avrum's blog is at http://avrum.net; Darfur?

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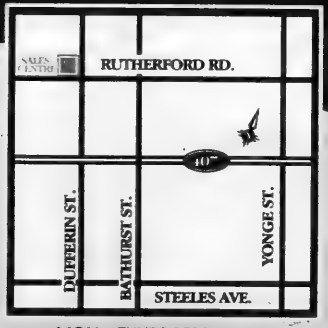

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COMMUNITY WALKS FOR ISRAEL: An estimated 12,000 people, including politicians representing Canada's three major parties, took part in UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's annual Walk with Israel on Sunday. The event raised about $400,000 to help integrate Ethiopian Israelis in Bat Yam and to fund educational and social welfare projects for Ethiopians in the Bat Yam and Eilat/Eilot areas. Please see page 18 for more photos. [*Rachel Singer photos*]

Kenney blasts 'dangerous' anti-Semitism

By RAPHAEL AHREN
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — A "new anti-Semitism" that emanates from an alliance of western leftists and Islamic extremists is more dangerous than the "old European" form of Jew-hatred, Jason Kenney, Canada's minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism said on Sunday as he wound up a four-day trip to Israel.

"The existential threat faced by Israel on a daily basis is ultimately a threat to the broader western civilization," said Kenney, explaining the staunchly pro-Israel positions of the Canadian government.

"It's a threat that comes from profoundly undemocratic forces that don't have the same conception of human dignity or freedom, and which abuse Israel as a kind of representative of the broader West and western liberal-democratic values," Kenney said.

"I also very acutely understand the nature of the new anti-Semitism, and I think it's even more dangerous than the old European anti-Semitism."

Kenney said many anti-Israel attacks come from adherents of a form of anti-Semitism who appear to view a Jewish homeland as illegitimate.

"Israel is not perfect, obviously," Kenney said. "Israelis should be the first to admit that. But we acknowledge that so much of the criticism Israel faces is motivated by a dangerous form of anti-Semitism that tries to hide behind anti-Zionism and is represented by a coalition of the far left in the West with extreme currents of jihadi Islam that seek the destruction of the Jewish nation. They seem to believe that the Jewish people are the only people in the world that don't have a right to a homeland."

The 40-year-old, who earlier this month was elected Canada's "best overall MP" by fellow parliamentarians, prides himself on being responsible for his country's decision to shun the recent United Nations-sponsored Durban II conference on racism, based on fears it would be misused as a platform for unfair criticism of Israel.

Continued on page 36

CJN named best paper

The CJN last week was named the best overall newspaper for 2008 by the Quebec Community Newspaper Association (QCNA). In announcing the award, the association said "The Canadian Jewish News provided insight and new perspective – an excellent read!" The CJN's Weddings Section (February 2008) was considered the best special section.

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Terror plot against Bronx synagogue foiled – please see page 37

The News in Brief

Canada

Gay Event Criticized

TORONTO — B'nai Brith Canada last week urged gays and lesbians to reject an anti-Israel program in Toronto. "Queers Against Israeli Apartheid" was to be held May 23 to "reignite Toronto's queer community in the fight against apartheid," the Ontario Public Interest Research Group said on its website. "Israel has now begun to frame itself as a tolerant, queer-positive democracy. This can never be reality under occupation." The keynote speaker was to be El-Farouk Khaki, co-founder of Salaam: Queer Muslim Community and Toronto's Pride 2009 Grand Marshall. B'nai Brith said it's "the height of irony to single out democratic Israel" while gay rights "in neighbouring Arab countries are routinely trampled on."

World

Medical Ethicist Dies

NEW YORK — Gerald Wolpe, a renowned rabbi and medical ethicist, died May 18 at age 81 after battling pancreatic cancer. As spiritual leader of the 1,500-family Har Zion Temple in Philadelphia for 30 years, until his resignation in 1999, he became a leading voice in medical ethics and caregiving, a field he became interested in during the 1960s, but became personally invested in after his late wife suffered brain aneurysms.

Boycott Battle

EDINBURGH — An Israeli filmmaker said she'll attend a Scottish film festival despite threats of a boycott. Ken Loach, a prominent British film director, called for a boycott of next month's Edinburgh International Film Festival after it accepted an Israeli state grant to fly Tali Shalom-Ezer to the festival to screen her film, Surrogate. The festival returned the money, but offered to fund her flight at its own expense. Loach said he was OK with Israeli filmmakers attending. Shalom-Ezer said she would attend, but reproached Loach as a "racist" and expressed concern the controversy would keep people from going to see her film, which depicts the relationship between a patient and a woman treating him with sexual therapy

Black Female Rabbi

CINCINNATI — The first African-American female rabbi will take up a pulpit in North Carolina in August. Alysa Stanton, who will be ordained June 6 at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, will be spiritual leader of Congregation Bayt Shalom in Greenville, a small Conservative shul that two years ago also affiliated with the Reform movement. Stanton, a convert and mother of a daughter, 14, is a psychotherapist who specializes in grief and trauma. She'll be the first black rabbi to lead a majority white shul.

Yeshiva For Women To Open In Fall

NEW YORK — Rabbi Avi Weiss has launched a yeshiva to train Orthodox women to "function as rabbis."

Known as Yeshiva Maharat, it's expected to open in September and will offer women part-time instruction in all areas of Jewish law, pastoral training and a synagogue internship. Its name is taken from an invented title conferred in March upon Sara Hurwitz, previously "spiritual mentor" at Rabbi Weiss' shul, the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. Maharat is a Hebrew acronym that stands for spiritual, halachic and Torah leader.

"We're training women to be rabbis," Hurwitz told the Forward. "What they will be called is something we're working out."

Rabbi Weiss was said to be considering calling Hurwitz a rabbi, at the urging of several Orthodox feminist leaders. The Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance called her "ordination" and the new school "historic." Hurwitz admitted that graduates of the new program may have trouble getting jobs. Only a handful of Orthodox shuls employ women in positions as more or less as the equal of male rabbis, except for performing public ritual roles in worship services.

"You have to start somewhere," Hurwitz told JTA.

Magazine Pulled

PARIS — A Paris judge last week ordered a French magazine featuring a handcuffed Jewish murder victim on its cover to be removed from sales racks. The judge ruled in favour of Ilan Halimi's family, which filed a complaint against the Choc monthly for "invasion of privacy" over its June issue. The photo of the 23-year-old Halimi was taken by his kidnappers, a gang called the Barbarians, and sent to his family as part of a ransom demand. Soon after, Halimi was found naked, bound, beaten and near death beside subway tracks near Paris in February 2006. He died a short time later. Gang members are now on trial.

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Community body to probe tensions at York U

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish volunteers and students have formed a commission to address the increase in anti-Jewish and anti-Israel incidents during the last academic year at York University.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) and Hillel of Greater Toronto are behind the 10-person commission, called the Quality of Life for Jewish Students at York University, which is being chaired by UJA Federation board member Elyse Lackie.

Other members include federation volunteers Morris Perlis and Tom Lobel; Hillel at York president Daniel Ferman, Hasbara at York co-president Tyler Golden, and York student Miryam Speigel.

The commission is seeking submissions from community members who have experienced hostility at York and have ideas about improving the quality of Jewish life on campus.

In recent months, there have been a number of incidents in which Jewish students have been intimidated, including one on Feb. 11 when Jewish students were barricaded in the Hillel lounge by students yelling anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs. The Jewish students had to be escorted off campus by police.

Last week, Krisna Saravanamuttu, incoming president of the York Federation of Students, was fined, and both he and York student Jesse Zimmerman were ordered to undergo sensitivity training for having violated the York student code of conduct for their roles in the incident.

Groups keep pressure on York
Please see page 23

UJA Federation spokesperson and commission member Howard English said commission members have already had a meeting, during which they discussed their goals and how they will achieve their objectives.

"We obviously want to improve the quality of Jewish life at York, we want to help York ensure a safe environment for all students and we want to provide members of our community with an opportunity to have their say," English said.

"We see this as a unique way of involving the community in the process of creating change at York. We see this is as a really democratic process. We see this as an opportunity for the community to turn their concern into action."

The commission hopes to present recommendations to the York University Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community by June 15. The task force – headed by Osgoode Hall Law School dean Patrick Monahan, York's incoming provost – was struck earlier this year after clashes between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian students. Its mandate is to improve security and relations among students at York.

"We're doing this because we want York to maintain its global reputation as a centre of higher learning, and because we genuinely want to improve the atmosphere at York on behalf of Jewish students and all students," English added. "As long as there is a strong Jewish presence [at York], we want to make sure that the quality of life for Jewish students is better than it has been to date."

English said that the recommendations will outline ways that York can improve the safety and security of all students on campus.

"The recommendations will be very specific about what York can do to amend, perhaps, its codes of conduct, and to initiate regulatory steps that would prevent incidents that have taken place from taking place again."

He said that the commission is not intended to be an alternative to York's task force, but is meant to assist the task force by providing information that could help improve student life on campus.

"The community is concerned about the atmosphere facing Jewish students. We understand that, so rather than just complaining, we felt that we wanted to provide a unique opportunity to the community to do something about their concern."

Submissions should be sent to yorkcommission@ujafed.org. The deadline for submission is June 1.

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in Belovarec (Marmaros)
Friedmann Abraham Izig

The children (names in 1952):

Friedmann Simon born in Antwerp in 1942
Friedmann Jakobus born in Antwerp in 1945
Friedmann Benno born in Antwerp in 1946

Their cousin Jean Quevy, born Isaac Farkas
Mobile: 00 32 (0) 475 24 79 00
00 32 67 77 17 94 (phone number)
Email: thiry-quevy@swing.be
Son: Frédéric Quevy
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Still fighting for Jerusalem

Last week, with great excitement and to coincide with Jerusalem Day, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced two significant archeological discoveries.

The first, a seal made of bone from the First Temple era, was found in the excavations in the walls around the national park in the City of David. The name inscribed on the seal was Sha'ul (Saul). The name is known to us from both the Bible (Genesis 36:37; 1 Samuel 9:2; 1 Chronicles 4:24 and 6:9) and from other Hebrew seals. It is missing a piece from its upper right side. (*See the photo inset.*)

From the editor's desk...

The second discovery was a jar handle, also from the First Temple period, bearing the Hebrew name Menachem. The piece was found in eastern Jerusalem during an excavation prior to the building of a girls' school in the area of Ras el-Amud.

The finds are interesting in their own scientific and archeological right. But of late, ever since Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat informed U.S. president Bill Clinton at Camp David in 2000 that a Jewish Temple never stood in Jerusalem, such archeological finds pack a distinct political significance as well.

The American president was stunned into a disbelieving silence. Perhaps his Palestinian guest was merely being provocative or playful, he thought.

But Arafat, outfitted always in form-fitting battle fatigues, was not teasing his host or being deliberately clownish. He was, rather, stating doctrinal Palestinian dogma: there is no evidence of the Jews' Temple ever having been in Jerusalem.

It remains official Palestinian doctrine. It is the core religious teaching about Jerusalem by Palestinian clerics.

Forty-two years ago on the 28th day of Iyar, during the Six Day War, east and west Jerusalem were reunited. Israelis fought a bloody battle for Jerusalem. Since then, the day has been celebrated as Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day).

Though these events happened in our lifetime, their history is already being ignored, or worse, distorted.

Why, indeed, was the city divided between east and west before June 1967? Why, indeed, do we have to remind the world of the facts of the historical record?

Prior to Israel's War of Independence in 1948, the city of Jerusalem was undivided. The Old City (east Jerusalem) and the New City (west Jerusalem) were part of one large municipality. By the end of the war's fighting, the Jordanian army controlled the Old City, the new Israeli army controlled the New City.

Not content, however, to have full control over the Old City, the Jordanians expelled every Jew from the Jewish Quarter, where they had lived, in many instances, for hundreds of years.

[Vladimir Naykhin photo]

Not content, either, to have expelled every Jew from the Old City of Jerusalem, the Jordanians also destroyed every synagogue in the Old City.

Not content even with having destroyed every synagogue, the Jordanians also desecrated, despoiled and defaced many of the Jews' holy artifacts such as gravestones.

Rolls and rolls of barbed wire, concrete barriers and snipers' nests became the border separating east from west Jerusalem at the end of the war for Israel's Independence. That border remained in place for 19 years. But there was no obligation, morally, historically or legally, for the State of Israel to accept it as the international border. Indeed, no country other than Great Britain considered it to be a viable border. On the 28th day of Iyar, 42 years ago, the barbed wire was cut down, the concrete blocks were removed, and the snipers' nests were dismantled. The city was reunited.

Last week, in commemorating Yom Yerushalayim, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the people of Israel that "united Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem has always been – and always will be – ours. It will never again be divided or cut in half. Jerusalem will remain only under Israel's sovereignty. In united Jerusalem, the freedom of worship and freedom of access for all three religions to the holy sites will be guaranteed, and it is the only way to guarantee that members of all faiths, minorities and denominations can continue living here safely."

It was the very same message that he had imparted to U.S. President Barack Obama the day before in Washington.

Apparently , however, the U.S. State Department was not pleased with the Israeli prime minister's message. This past Sunday, a State Department official said that "Jerusalem is a final status issue." According to the State Department, the future of the city must be determined through peace negotiations.

It is absurd that the existence of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem is not considered a fact of ancient history.

It is absurd that the facts of even recent history in Jerusalem need to be constantly stated and restated.

It is perhaps most absurd, but least surprising and most painfully sad, that the desire to once again divide Jerusalem is still an option for so many.

It may be 42 years after the reunification of Jerusalem, or even some 3,000 after its embrace by King David as the capital of the Jewish state, but in truth, Israelis and Jews around the world are still fighting for Jerusalem today.

–MBD

See]N

SEEING HOW IT'S DONE

Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney last week paid a visit to the Jewish Agency's immigrant absorption centre in Mevasseret Zion just west of Jerusalem. Here he observes a classroom of newly arrived youngsters.

[Brian Hendler photo]

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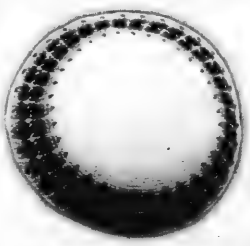
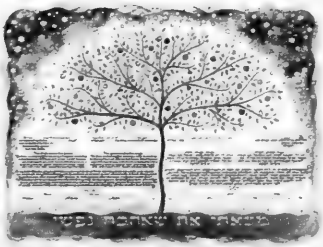

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Ethiopian immigrant spearheads advocacy group

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Danny Admasu, the 34-year-old executive director of the Israel Association for Ethiopian Jewry (IAEJ), wants to raise awareness on the current situation of Ethiopian olim.

He was in Toronto in early May, shortly before the 18th anniversary of Operation Solomon – the May 1991 transport of more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in a 36-hour period – to fundraise as well.

The IAEJ, which is funded privately, has been hit by tough economic times. Its 10-person staff has been reduced to seven people, and those remaining have had their salaries cut 10 per cent, Admasu said.

Under former prime minister Ehud Olmert, the Israeli government put in place a five-year plan that addresses housing, welfare and employment issues that concern the Ethiopian community, Admasu said. "We want to make sure the [current] government follows through on its commitment."

Danny Admasu

Underemployment is a particular concern for the Ethiopian community, said Admasu, who made aliyah at age eight. "A lot of Ethiopian university graduates don't have employment that fits their skills… In Israel, you need a lot of connections. There's also discrimination, and [the issue of] having access to information."

Admasu said his organization is also "very worried about" housing. Ethiopians in Israel commonly live in poor, high-crime neighbourhoods that lack good schools and have little to offer in the way of afternoon activities, he added.

"We have to help the Ethiopian community, [and its young couples], get out of these neighbourhoods by helping with mortgages, so they can start their life without the same circle of poverty. They'll have job opportunities, and their children will grow up in a better society."

Admasu, who was orphaned in his teens and worked with youth at risk as a young adult, was also a counsellor at Camp Ramah Canada in 1998.

"As an organization, it's our duty to see what the problems in the community are, and to point the way for the government to deal with these problems," said Admasu.

On the other hand, he added, "we have to empower the community so that they have their rights, and know where to get information about their rights. We also have to be a voice for the community."

Language barriers, particularly for older immigrants, can make access to information difficult, he noted.

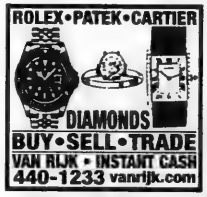
As well, non-Ethiopian immigrants to Israel for the most part are from western countries, Admasu pointed out. An immigrant who is a mechanical engineer will "talk the same language" as his Israeli counterpart.

But in Ethiopia, "the family lived in the village. It was a different life… They don't really understand the culture or what activities they should send their children to, what will be good for their future."

Even for the next generation, it's harder for Ethiopians to assimilate because of their colour. "Even if they're born Israeli, others will point to them and say they're from another place."

While things have improved to some extent for the Ethiopian community, there is still more to be done, Admasu believes.

One positive development in the last two years is the employment of at least 700 Ethiopians in government and public companies as the result of an equal opportunity employment law, Admasu said. "That means that every one of them meets non-Ethiopian Israelis," he noted.



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The CJC at 90

It was God himself who called the Jewish people "stiff-necked." He was speaking to Moses, the paradigmatic Jewish leader and teacher for all time to come. It was a severe scolding, of course, regarding the behaviour of the recently liberated slaves, but also a warning to the octogenarian lawgiver that public service on behalf of the Jewish people was not an easy undertaking. As if Moses (and his brother, Aaron) didn't already know that by then.

But true to the moral weight that has always attached to the pre-eminent imperative of fighting for and ensuring the well-being of the wider community throughout the long millennia of Jewish history, public service on behalf of the Jewish people, indeed, has always been a compulsory undertaking.

Our ancient sages assiduously sought to encourage communal public service. "If someone occupies himself [or herself] with the needs of the community," they said, "it is as if he [or she] were studying Torah itself." In other words, there could be no higher purpose.

This week we celebrate 90 years of committed high purpose, of public service on behalf of the Jews of Canada, by the most widely recognized of this country's Jewish communal public servants: Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC).

Over the past 90 years, the CJC's lay and professional leaders have been among Canada's most accomplished, talented, achieving and caring individuals dedicated to a mission that was and remains advocating on behalf of the well-being of the Jewish community and safeguarding the human rights of the oppressed and the needy throughout the world. (The page opposite provides a small catalogue of snapshots of that advocacy.)

Just as Canada and the community have changed over the past nine decades, so, too, has the CJC. It has had to evolve – and one can argue, is still evolving – to serve, as best it can, the needs of the Jewish and wider community of Canada. The instruments of advocacy are different today than they were in the past, as are the issues.

Today some 75 per cent of the Jews of Canada live in two metropolitan areas, Montreal and Toronto. Some 90 per cent of Canadian Jews live in five cities. Today, approximately half of the Jews on earth live in Israel. Today, very few Jewish communities on earth live in fear for their existential safety – with the notable exceptions of the Jews of Iran and perhaps France, and, ironically, the Jews of Israel.

Even as they encouraged it however, the sages also understood that public service on behalf of the community was difficult, demanding and so often, thankless. Thus, they established a special blessing for Jewish public servants that has been incorporated into the Sabbath service. Typically, however, in their wisdom, our sages prescribed the requisite behaviour at the same time as they described the blessing that such labour would evoke. "And all those who work for the needs of the community *faithfully* [i.e., in good faith, for no ulterior motive or inappropriate purpose), God will ensure their reward…"

To the men and women of the CJC who faithfully work on behalf of the needs of the community, we ask for and invoke God's blessing.

25 years ago in The CJN

In an effort to persuade Israel to remove its troops from Lebanon, the United States agreed to act as a mediator to arrange security guarantees in southern Lebanon for the Jewish state. Negotiations were carried out between the United States, the Soviet Union and France.

Editorials & Letters

Editorial Advisory Board: Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ronson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Telem, Nelson Wiseman.

Don't discount ArtScroll siddur

Rabbi Martin Lockshin is right when he expresses his surprise at the 25-year partnership between ArtScroll and modern Orthodox congregations ("Get ready for duelling prayerbooks," CJN Perspectives, May 7). However, rather than picking a bone with ArtScroll, he should be doing so with the modern Orthodox community for taking so long to produce their own version.

Dry Bones
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CHEESE! HOLIDAY
HAVE A HAPPY SHAVUOT
RICOTTA, PROVOLONE, ROQUEFORT, STILTON, SWISS.

In the interim, Artscroll has served them well, and will continue to do so for many others. Lockshin claims that the "largest and most established Orthodox synagogues in Canada and the United States like to think of themselves as modern Orthodox." A quick look at Wikipedia (admittedly not a scientific survey) lists the largest six synagogues in the world of all denominations. Five of them are in fact Chassidic congregations and one is Syrian. None of them would "like to think of themselves as modern Orthodox." Furthermore, contrary to Rabbi Lockshin's claim that "perhaps in the most right-wing circles, [where] prayerbooks with any English may be dismissed with disdain," one can find ArtScroll English-Hebrew siddurim in every Orthodox synagogue, of all descriptions. For these congregations, and hundreds of others across the world, the ArtScroll English (not to mention French, Russian, Spanish) Siddur will continue to be a very appropriate match for years to come.

I am glad that Rabbi Lockshin has found a siddur to his liking. The KorenSacks siddur may very well may be the siddur of the future for modern Orthodox shuls, but don't discount ArtScroll and its users just yet.

Rabbi Eli Mandel
Toronto

* * *

Finds ArtScroll siddur helpful

What could have been an exciting article heralding a siddur that includes Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' insights has turned into a divisive "us against them" proposition, serving to undermine attempts at community unity. I welcome KorenSacks' attempt to better capture the eloquence of our traditional texts, as well as the inclusion of a wider group of Orthodox scholars as sources, although I personally respect the opposing position that fails to include an atheist viewpoint in an Orthodox prayerbook.

It is unfortunate that the author chooses to portray in a negative light the Zionist edition of the siddur published by ArtScroll in partnership with the Rabbinical Council of America. The author also implies that the ArtScroll community is less than sensitive to women. Many women, as well as many men, haredi and otherwise, derive much benefit from numerous ArtScroll publications. But to imply that Artscroll values are not sensitive to women can be quite insulting to many of those people the author is supposedly protecting.

The article serves to marginalize ArtScroll and helps to dissuade people from purchasing the ArtScroll siddur in the future and to search for a more meaningful Judaism in its pages, thereby hindering the growth of our entire community. The author also claims that Artscroll attempts to inspire to a "docile, passive faith." I personally find this offensive, as I have always found my faith to be an active, inclusive one, and I have often been helped along this path by ArtScroll.

Zev Goldstein
Toronto

* * *

Shavuot and the environment

Shavuot provides a wonderful opportunity to consider if we are properly applying Torah values.

Since the Torah teaches that we are to be *shomrei adamah* (guardians of the earth), shouldn't we do more in addressing the many current severe environmental threats? Since the Torah stresses that we should very diligently guard our health, shouldn't we consider the many negative health effects of animal-based diets? Since the Torah mandates the avoidance of *tza'ar ba'alei chaim* (causing unnecessary pain to animals), shouldn't there be far greater concern about the horrible treatment of animals (10 billion annually in the United States alone) on factory farms? Since the Torah mandates that we are to share with hungry people, shouldn't we address the fact that 70 per cent of the grain produced in the United States is being fed to farmed animals, while an estimated 20 million people die from malnutrition annually?

Let us make this Shavuot a time to begin truly applying Torah values in order to produce a more humane, healthy, environmentally sustainable, just and compassionate world.

Richard H. Schwartz
Staten Island, N.Y.

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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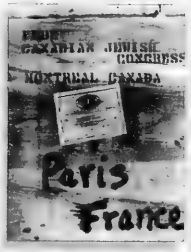
NINE DECADES OF ADVOCACY

On Sunday, May 31, at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress will hold its 29th Plenary Assembly. The photos here are a short trip through 90 years of advocacy by the CJC since its founding in 1919. Clockwise from the top, delegates to the first CJC plenary March 16-19, 1919, in Montreal, pose for a picture; students from Montreal's Hebrew Academy High School demonstrate in Dorchester Square at a vigil for 13 imprisoned Iranian Jews, June 2, 2000; pictured before leaving port in Europe are the first group of war orphans to come to Canada under CJC's refugee youth project, which brought more than 1,000 young Holocaust survivors to Canada between 1947 and 1952; the cover of one of three Jewish War Heroes comics books featuring the stories of real Jewish heroes from Canada and other Allied nations, which CJC issued in 1944, to improve wartime morale; the cover of a relief package sent overseas to help needy Jews in the aftermath of World War II; then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau jokes with then CJC president Sol Kanee and CJC executive director Saul Hayes in 1970; as part of the National Committee for Soviet Jewry, women of the "Group of 35" march in front of Toronto's Massey Hall to show support for oppressed Soviet Jews in the 1970s; CJC president Keith Landy addresses a massive pro-Israel rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in 2001; due to the intervention of the CJC, some 450 Jewish refugees stranded in Iberia came to Canada in 1944 in the middle of World War II; current CJC co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol, along with CEO Bernie Farber, meet Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa in November 2008; and Samuel Bronfman is pictured assuming the presidency of CJC at the 1939 Plenary Assembly, a post he would hold until 1961.



[Photos courtesy of Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives]

Opinions

Killing fields of the Shoah

The Holocaust is primarily defined by the annihilation of millions of Jews in concentration camps across Europe. But while the inhumanity of what occurred in those mechanized extermination centres is well chronicled, another component of the genocide, which claimed the lives of an estimated 1.5 million or more, has been less well recognized.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

So although many will have heard about the two-day slaughter of some 33,000, mostly Jews, at Babi Yar, the stories of Jewish women being forced to swim across a river in the Ukrainian town of Berdichev until they downed, or children being thrown alive into pits containing the corpses of their parents in Telsiai, Lithuania, or Jews being locked into barns until they perished in Liozno, Belarus, have gone mostly unnoticed.

Such examples of barbarism, and countless other massacres (usually by shootings at close range), began after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union during the summer of 1941. Perpetrated by *Einsatzgruppen* (Nazi mobile killing units), together with local collaborators, these actions were the first phase of the "final solution to the Jewish question," which was to be more formally articulated at the infamous Wannsee Conference in January 1942.

Proof of what occurred in the killing fields was kept secret for decades. More recently, a lot of what has come to light has been through the efforts of a rather remarkable Roman Catholic priest named Patrick Desbois.

Father Desbois' voyage of discovery began fortuitously in 2002 after he visited the Ukrainian town of Rawa Ruska, where his grandfather had been imprisoned during the war. While there, he learned about not only the unmarked mass graves just outside that town, but also about countless others on the outskirts of towns and villages across Ukraine.

What followed speaks to a passion, humanity and selflessness that are inspiring. Working with a small team that includes a translator, a researcher, a mapping expert and a videographer, he set about interviewing townspeople who had once witnessed the slaughter, and within the first four years of his project, he had gathered more than 800 accounts of Nazi atrocities and identified some 600 gravesites.

In his book, aptly titled "The Holocaust by Bullets" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), he eloquently describes his research, wherever possible supporting his findings with forensic evidence and archival material.

But more than just focusing attention on so tragic a chapter in Jewish history, Father Desbois' work serves also as a call for more urgent action. As time runs out for the witnesses, the onerous task of identifying the many remaining gravesites and properly consecrating them according to Jewish tradition becomes that much more difficult.

Wanted: a more eclectic mix of western olim

I recently had a great time with my family and some friends at the 32nd annual Jacob's Ladder Music Festival, held at Kibbutz Ginosar, just north of Tiberias, on the shores of the Kinneret. It's advertised as "a unique musical and social event for lovers of all aspects of folk music, from bluegrass to world music, from Irish jigs to country rock, from blues to renaissance." It certainly was.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

It was our first time at the celebration. We camped on the kibbutz lawns along with hundreds of other people. Those preferring more creature comforts stayed at the kibbutz hotel.

During the three-day music fest, several venues ran concurrently, each with its own brand and band. Some acts ran into the wee hours of the night. Impromptu jam sessions took place in every available corner in the guesthouse lobby, at every conceivable hour. Kids ran about freely and safely, enjoying the music, playing at a circus corner, participating in handicraft workshops, or listening intently to storytellers.

Adults could enjoy massages, music workshops, hone their skills at square dancing or the Irish jig, or shop at the many booths set up around the premises. Many enjoyed a dip in the cool, albeit depleted, waters of the Kinneret or at the pool. There was also an uplifting musical Kabbalat Shabbat.

The headliners were the Foggy Hogtown Boys, a group of wonderful bluegrass musicians from Toronto. They gave several great performances, including the festival's closing concert, and seemed to enjoy the spirit, noting the significance for them of performing on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. They played a great piece called Straighten the Curves, which, as they remarked, well described their taxi ride from the airport to Ginosar.

The audience was extraordinary: people from all over the country in a blend of families with kids, teenagers and young adults, and pensioners my parents' age, all enjoying the music and soul of the happening.

Ha'aretz has called Jacob's Ladder Israel's English-speaking mimouna. The lingua franca of the festival is certainly English, although I'm told it was much more so in the past, with a large number of sabras joining the merrymaking, many of them children of anglophone olim.

While there were some Orthodox people in attendance, what struck me most was the number and array of non-Orthodox anglos gathered at this event. This facet of the weekend gave me food for thought on the drive home to Jerusalem, with my exhausted wife and kids all asleep in the car.

Western olim are considered quality immigrants, because they're relatively low maintenance – college educated and financially sound. As a result, MKs have banded together to form a parliamentary lobby aimed at increasing western aliyah.

According to the Central Bureau of Information, roughly 100,000 North American immigrants were living in Israel at the end of 2007. An additional 50,000 people originated from other English-speaking countries, such as Britain, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Ministry of Immigrant Absorption statistics show that since 2000, almost 30,000 anglos have made aliyah, including 2,700 from Canada.

Nefesh B'Nefesh, a wonderful organization whose goal is encouraging aliyah from North America and Britain by removing or minimizing the financial, professional, logistical and social obstacles that potential olim face, and by helping ensure their successful absorption in Israel, has – remarkably – brought 18,000 immigrants to the country since 2002.

The pervading impression is that the majority of this decade's anglo aliyah is Orthodox. I couldn't find figures to support or contradict that feeling, but just looking at pictures of Nefesh B'Nefesh flight arrivals lends credence to this idea.

Orthodox aliyah is terrific, but we need more eclectic immigration from the West, people of spirit to join the youth movement pioneers of the 1940s and '50s, as well as the euphoric post-Six-Day-War settlers and the idealistic souls who came to shore up the ranks after the Yom Kippur War.

Despite the adversities and challenges, there's still plenty of place for such people in Israel – hard-working, productive people who consider it OK to enjoy a weekend of high-spirited frivolity among like-minded folks who, like them, feel good about living and bringing up their kids here.

Help us keep the music playing.

Narrative wars and 'the days'

The seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot are known in Israel as "the days" – a reference to days of the Omer and also the special days marking the catastrophes and triumphs of modern Jewish history. In this period, we move from Holocaust Remembrance Day, to Memorial Day for those killed in the wars against Israel, followed immediately by Independence Day, and ending with Jerusalem Day, marking the miraculous return to the Holy City in the 1967 war. This period is an emotional roller coaster marking the events of the past 70 years.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

The four "days" are also a form of resistance in the narrative wars that are being waged in support of the myths in which Israelis are portrayed as evil occupiers and neo-colonialists, oppressing innocent Arab victims.

Holocaust denial is a central part of this framework. Throughout the Muslim world, the culture of conspiracy, combined with anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiment, have fostered these myths. The president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, wrote his doctoral thesis in Moscow on "The Secret Connection between the Nazis and the Leaders of the Zionist Movement," which included a large measure of Holocaust revisionism. It was published in Amman in 1984.

More recently, in a text prepared for the United Nation's Durban Review Conference in April, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad referred to the "ambiguous and dubious" events of the Holocaust. UN officials persuaded him to change the language, and instead he denounced the "pretext of suffering" used by Israel, but the difference was of little consequence.

Holocaust denial and revisionism are also used to erase the reality behind the establishment of Israel. Since Arab leaders rejected the 1947 UN Partition Plan ("two states for two peoples"), they have continued to press for its reversal. In their fictitious version, which is now widely accepted in Europe, as well as on university campuses in North America (York University, in particular), and among many journalists, the terror campaigns and wars have been edited out. The 22,000 Israeli soldiers and civilians who gave their lives (and the countless more who were injured) to preserve Jewish rights are being recast as invaders and villains.

This narrative is enhanced by the image of the Palestinians as innocent victims – an indigenous people supplanted by colonialists ("the Jews") supported by capitalist European powers. Israel's acts of self-defence have been twisted into "war crimes" and "collective punishment" by supposedly moral organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Oxfam. In Israel, with massive support from European governments and wealthy, misguided Diaspora Jews, an industry of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gives legitimacy to this mythology.

The celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut – Independence Day – is a reassertion of the historic reality, in opposition to campaigns that deny the Jewish people the right to sovereign equality. With more than 50 officially Islamic states (including, of course, Ahmadinejad's Iran), and more than 30 Christian countries, many of which include an official church, the labelling of the world's single Jewish state as "racist" or "discriminatory" reflects discrimination and double standards. Such rhetoric is in itself racist and an expression of the new anti-Semitism, which attacks the Jewish nation as a collective.

And finally, Jerusalem Day is a reminder that the Holy City has been central to the Jewish people for 3,000 years. The 1967 war ended generations of foreign occupation, and rebuilding began. Far from "Judaizing" Jerusalem, which is another myth in the Palestinian/Muslim/NGO assault, Israel has ensured full Muslim and Christian access to their religious sites. This stands in sharp contrast to the systematic desecration of synagogues and cemeteries, particularly during the Jordanian/Palestinian occupation following the 1948 war, and the complicity of the "international community" in the violation of the armistice agreements guaranteeing free access to sacred sites in Jerusalem.

By reminding us and the world of the realities of modern Jewish history, the "days" serve as an antidote to the revisionism designed to replace these events with demonizing mythologies.

As in the Passover seder and the retelling of the Exodus, we need to teach our children about these recent realities, or we will lose our history.

The Kirshner File

What comes after Netanyahu-Obama meeting?

Seasoned observers of Israel's alliance with the United States regarded Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with Barack Obama at the White House on May 18 as a pivotal moment. Speculation had abounded that Israel's new prime minister, given his reluctance to endorse a two-state solution to resolve Israel's conflict with the Palestinians, would clash with the newly elected president of the United States and thereby damage Israel's single most important bilateral relationship.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

On the eve of Netanyahu's much-anticipated visit, Washington made it abundantly clear that a two-state solution – which previous Israeli governments have endorsed and worked for in various degrees of seriousness – was central to Obama's Middle East policy. Obama and his vice-president, Joe Biden, promoted the internationally embraced concept, while urging Israel to stop building or expanding settlements in the West Bank, dismantle unauthorized outposts and allow Palestinians freedom of movement.

As if to underline the point, George Mitchell, Obama's Mideast envoy, declared that a two-state solution was in Israel's national interest and really the only way to defuse its long-running dispute with the Palestinians. "The U.S. is committed to the establishment of a sovereign, independent Palestinian state, where the aspirations of the Palestinian people to control their own destiny are realized," said Mitchell during one of his three trips to the region in recent months.

With Netanyahu's appearance in Washington drawing ever closer, the United States applied none-too-subtle pressure on Israel. Susan Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations, voted for a Security Council resolution calling for "urgent action" to achieve a two-state settlement. In addition, Rice reminded Israel that the Obama administration was not keen on a "lengthy, drawn-out process" to reach that objective. Meanwhile, Jim Jones, Obama's national security adviser, pointedly observed that there was "an expectation" in world capitals that peace in the Middle East should be vigorously pursued.

Yet as it clearly enunciated the need for Palestinian statehood, the United States described its bonds with Israel as "unshakable as ever," expressed support for Israel's security, opposed calls for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their former homes in what is now Israel, condemned Palestinian violence, pledged to boycott Hamas unless it recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, and promised to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge over the Arabs. And in further deference to Israel, Washington boycotted the second UN anti-racism conference, held last month in Geneva. At the same time, the Obama administration voiced its commitment to the 2003 "road map" peace plan, which remains a dead letter to this day.

The Palestinian question, however, was not the only issue on the table. Iran also loomed large.

The Islamic fundamentalist regime in Tehran is a clear and present problem – for Israel, the United States and moderate Arab governments – because of its ardent desire to acquire a nuclear weapons arsenal and to expand its influence in the Middle East, particularly in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

Obama and his advisers believe that a resolution of Palestinian grievances, resulting in full-fledged statehood, will better enable the United States to engage Iran in talks designed to halt its nuclear program once and for all and blunt its clout in the region.

By contrast, Netanyahu is of the view that if the Iranian thorn is removed by diplomacy, economic sanctions or military means, negotiations with the Palestinians will then have a better chance of succeeding.

Since becoming prime minister again, Netanyahu has called for a "fresh approach" to peace with the Palestinians, suggesting that talks should be resumed without delay or preconditions, and that they should be pursued on political, security and economic tracks. And while Netanyahu claims that Israel does not wish to govern the Palestinians, he has adamantly refused to explicitly support a two-state solution, sowing suspicion that his real agenda is to scuttle the peace process and leave Israel with a hefty slice of the West Bank in its hands.

Netanyahu's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, has fanned such fears. He has stated that Israel is not bound by the Annapolis process, which Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, embraced and attempted to flesh out in talks with the Palestinians. And he has derisively compared Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to a cottage industry.

Due to all these factors, Israeli and American commentators feared that a confrontation with the United States was in the offing and that Netanyahu and Obama would not reach an understanding befitting allies.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House on May 18 [Israel Sun photo]

Recalling Netanyahu's sometimes rocky relations with Bill Clinton, a former U.S. president, Aaron David Miller, a senior official in Clinton's Mideast peace team, noted that the United States was deeply frustrated with Netanyahu's "erratic and often obstinate policies, in particular on settlements."

But as he prepared for his momentous encounter with Obama, Netanyahu played down any notion of friction with the United States, noting that Washington and Jerusalem share mutual interests and values, and that ties between them are strong.

In fact, a confrontation did not occur, with both Netanyahu and Lieberman portraying the meeting in rather positive tones. According to Netanyahu, Israel and the United States reached understandings on two vital issues: Israel would soon launch talks with the Palestinians, and Iran's nuclear program had to be stopped.

But despite Netanyahu's spin, substantial differences surfaced.

At their meeting, which lasted an hour longer than planned, Netanyahu reiterated his interest in resuming talks with the Palestinians immediately, but only if they recognize Israel as a Jewish state. In this vein, he said that Israel wants "to live in peace" with the Palestinians, yet he declined to support a two-state solution. After the meeting, one of Netanyahu's advisers said that the focus on a two-state solution was "childish and stupid." This will not be taken lightly in Washington.

For his part, Obama pressed Netanyahu to freeze the construction of settlements in the West Bank. As he put it, "Settlements have to be stopped in order for us to move forward." Prior to Netanyahu's departure for the United States, Israel issued tenders to expand Maskiot, a settlement in the West Bank. But in the wake of Netanyahu's meeting with Obama, Defence Minister Ehud Barak announced that unauthorized outposts, as opposed to regular settlements, would be removed, by force if necessary. And in a further nod to Obama, Israel evacuated Moaz, one of the many unauthorized outposts that Israel has promised, but failed, to dismantle.

As for Iran, Obama said that he had no intention of conducting talks with Iran indefinitely on ending its program of uranium enrichment. Washington is truly concerned by Iran's nuclear program. Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described it as an "extraordinary threat." Israel is probably satisfied with U.S. policy on this score, having said that U.S.-Iranian discussions should be subjected to a strict deadline. Before flying to Washington, Netanyahu promised the Obama administration that Israel would not attack Iran without notifying the United States.

The Netanyahu-Obama meeting notwithstanding, it is still far from clear whether Israel and the United States are heading for a bruising test of wills. The situation will be much clearer in June, when Obama is scheduled to deliver a major speech in Cairo on the Middle East. Until then, Netanyahu will have to hold his breath.

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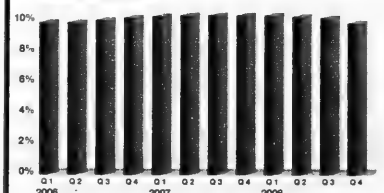

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Time runs out on proposed boycott resolution

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A proposal to boycott Israeli academic institutions never came to a vote at a meeting of CUPE local 3903 last week.

As time ran out, the local, representing teachers and staff at York University, shelved the vote until the next meeting on June 25.

Longtime union member and ethnomusicologist Judith Cohen attended the meeting to try to forestall adoption of the resolution. Cohen has become involved in meetings only in the last year or so as she witnessed the labour organization's increasingly strident criticism of Israel.

Though the boycott vote never got to the members, Cohen said a comment from the floor gave a pretty good indication where the activists who attended the meeting stand. Following presentations in support of the motion by two critics of Israel, the chair was asked why no one presented the other side of the debate.

"'There is no other side,'" someone in the audience said.

No one on the executive running the meeting challenged that view or offered an explanation why a rebuttal wasn't offered, Cohen said.

It shows how ingrained is the union leadership's anti-Israel position, she said in an interview.

The resolution discussed last week was passed by the Ontario University Workers Co-ordinating Committee (OUWCC) in February. The OUWCC is a constituent part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Three years ago, CUPE's Ontario wing, which represents some 200,000 public sector workers, passed Resolution 50 supporting "boycott, divestment and sanctions to end Israel's apartheid practices."

The university workers' resolution would apply the resolution to the academic realm. However, CUPE locals at the University of Toronto and McMaster have refused to endorse the OUWCC resolution, Cohen said.

CUPE 3903 didn't respond to a request for a comment last week.

Whether York workers pass the resolution at the local's next meeting is still up in the air, but the music professor and a few like-minded academics have begun to challenge the orthodoxy of the leadership's views on Israel.

About a month ago, she and a few others launched an online petition that explicitly opposed the boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

The petition states that the OUWCC motion "is one-sided and unethical. Moving ahead with this proposal represents a violation of basic academic freedom."

When she asked the local's executive to include notice of the petition in its newsletter, she was turned down. Eventually she convinced the local's executive to include it in its newsletter, but only after a rider was attached saying the executive didn't agree with it.

The executive later reversed its position and instructed the locals' communications director not to run it, but that direction was ignored and the petition was publicized. So far, about 85 CUPE members have signed on.

Last week, she and about 10 others attended the meeting with the intention of raising objections to the resolution. She's critical of the union leadership's one-sided position and its unwillingness to take a more balanced approach, such as adopting the McMaster Peace Initiative, an administration-led effort at McMaster University that calls for "respectful, meaningful discourse" to "advance diverse viewpoints in the spirit of inclusiveness and academic integrity."

One day after the union meeting, York University president Mamdouh Shoukri released a statement saying, "Universities at their core are free institutions that must be open to the widest range of ideas, argument and debates. Thus the concept of an academic boycott, which would prescribe a form of blacklist, is antithetical to the very purpose of a university. It would undermine the freedom of individual scholars to make their own academic choices and would suggest that the university 'owns' its academics or their opinions."

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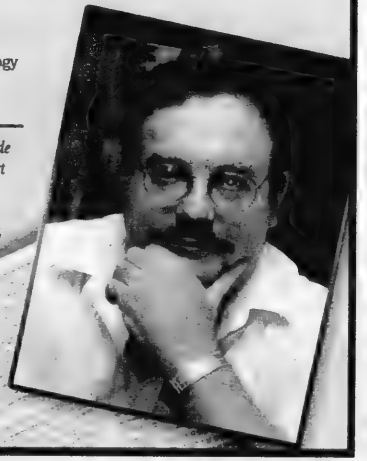

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Greater Toronto Area

Law school was detour for Grade 5 teacher

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Kevin Knopman has a law degree and an honours bachelor of arts in political science. As a 22-year-old undergraduate university student, he ran for mayor of Toronto.

So it's not a big surprise that the Associated Hebrew Schools teacher enjoys helping to supervise the student council at the school's Kamin branch in Thornhill, where he teaches gym and Grade 5 general studies.

"They are our teachers..."

"It's fun," he said of his work with the council.

Knopman realized as a student at Osgoode Hall Law School that law wasn't what he wanted to do as a career.

In fact, his law studies were punctuated by a leave of absence after first year to earn his bachelor of education degree at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

A longtime staff member of Centre Camp who has always enjoyed working with kids, Knopman now supervises the senior campers' division at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre day camp during the summer. He has also taught supplementary school, run after-school programs, and co-ordinated a youth volunteer program at the BJCC.

Knopman, who will turn 31 at the end of next week, began his career in education as a supply teacher, working for both Associated and the York Region District School Board, before he joined the staff at the Jewish day school.

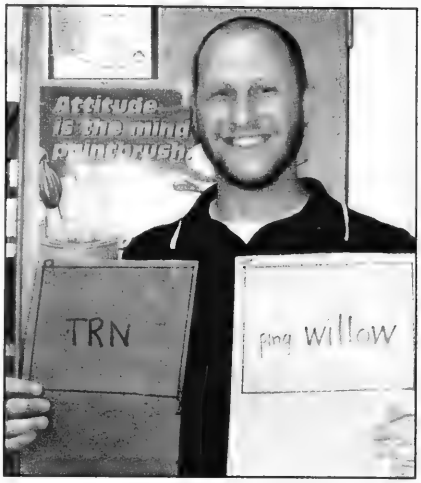
An alumnus of Associated himself, Knopman – now married and the father of an 11-month-old daughter – joined its staff four years ago and found he was comfortable being back there.

And he gets along well with his students, he said, recalling that he did well academically as a student, but "probably wasn't the best" behaviour-wise.

Knopman, who also co-coaches the school's softball team, has continued and expanded at least one routine that was started by the teacher whose class he took over.

Every morning, Knopman puts a "Wacky Word" brainteaser on the board for students to decipher.

The puzzles "make them think outside the box," he said. "It's fun, and it's also a way of managing the class. It keeps them in their seats, thinking."



Kevin Knopman displays two examples of the "Wacky Words" he uses to challenge his Grade 5 students. The one on the right (wee-ping willow) is tougher than the one on the left (no-"u" turn, or "no u-turn").
[Frances Kraft photo]

Knopman also enjoys making use of the SmartBoard at the front of his class, which allows him to use the Internet as a teaching tool.

Keeping up with new technology is part of "staying fresh" as a teacher, he said.

"As new technology comes out, you have to keep on top of what's new and what's cool and what's interesting, and what affects them. Something I read to kids four years ago might not ring a bell with kids today, and something I would have liked 20 or 30 years ago isn't something that would interest them now. You have to keep pace, keep current, and keep relevant."

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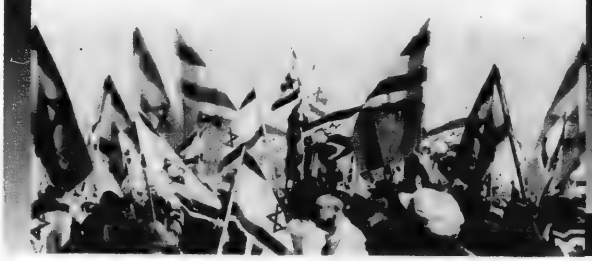

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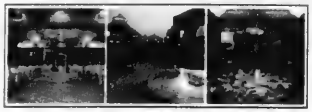

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Jewish Life

By RABBI MORDECAI E. ZEITZ

Taste real blintzes on Shavuot

Think about any Jewish holiday and you will recall some significant Jewish symbol. Symbols are a major part of every Jewish holiday celebration: the shofar on Rosh Hashanah; fasting on Yom Kippur; a sukkah, etrog and lulav on Sukkot, and matzah and all the seder trappings on Pesach. Even the post-biblical holidays of Chanukah and Purim have unique symbols and practices, with each one reflecting the story and special message of the occasion.

Rabbinic Reflections

But what about our upcoming festival of Shavuot? What mitzvah or practice depicts the very essence of Shavuot – the time of our receiving the Torah? The tradition of staying up all night and studying Torah is laudable, but not necessarily unique to Shavuot night. Many people study Torah long into the night on many nights throughout the year. Decorating our homes or shuls with greenery that's symbolic of Mount Sinai is a practice most people are totally unaware of.

There doesn't appear to be anything on Shavuot equal to the shofar or matzah – or is there? We eat dairy foods, notably blintzes and/or cheesecake. That's Shavuot – the essence of the time of the receiving of the Torah. It seems ludicrous and highly non-spiritual, but let's give it some serious consideration: Torah and a blintz and lessons from Sinai.

Allow me to give this blintz a face. Let's use Chaim as the face. He loved blintzes. He and his wife were very poor, but Chaim was rich with dreams. One day, he was walking down the street when he smelled the fresh aroma of something wonderful. He followed his nose and there on the ledge of a window was a tray of amazing blintzes. He was tempted, but he was a righteous man and dared not touch. The woman then reached for the tray and Chaim seized the moment to ask for the recipe. She obliged by listing the necessary ingredients: fine flour, eggs, oil and, of course, fresh cheese.

Chaim ran home and announced that this Shavuot there would be blintzes, because he had the recipe. He could hardly wait for Shavuot and spoke about the blintzes every day for a month.

On Erev Shavuot, he nudged his wife all day as to when she was going to start making them. To make it easier, he volunteered to help. He would read out the instructions and she would just follow through. First, he said: "Pour in the fine flour." "But, we have no flour, fine or otherwise," replied his wife. "So use whatever you have and then blend in the eggs and the oil." Replied his wife: "But we have no eggs nor oil."

A bit anxious, Chaim replied: "Use whatever you can, then stir it and fill it up with cheese and bake them. It's almost yom tov."

She really did try her best. Instead of flour, she used some stale bread crumbs. Instead of eggs and oil, she used water and some leftover tea essence. And having no cheese, fresh or otherwise, she just left out that part.

Chaim sat in the other room salivating just thinking about his blintzes to be. He heard the bustle in the kitchen and finally smelled the aroma. They were ready, and after Kiddush, so was Chaim.

His wife brought these terrible-looking, hollow, empty things to the table, and Chaim took the first bite. They tasted worse than they looked, which was frightful enough.

In disbelief, Chaim turned to his wife and said: "I just don't understand what people see in blintzes. They're just not what they're cracked up to be."

To appreciate the full extent of the "time of the receiving of the Torah," and thus the values of the Torah itself, we need all the ingredients. When and if we must replace or find substitutes for some of the core ingredients, it's hard to find reason to celebrate. It's just not the real thing.

While scholarship and knowledge are crucial, it's the resulting value system and lifestyle flowing from Torah that Shavuot celebrates. The ingredients for a meaningful Matan Torah, a celebration of Torah on Shavuot, requires mutual respect, honesty, integrity and tolerance in our ongoing daily lives – of not only knowing and performing mitzvot, but applying the values of those mitzvot in other aspects of our lives.

Recalling that the most significant ingredient for the Sinai experience was close to three million people feeling and acting as one, can we possibly celebrate Shavuot without that sense of unity?

There is nothing like a real authentic "blintz" on Shavuot, or anytime. You just need all the original ingredients, still available in the form of mitzvot and ma'assim tovim.

Just do it and presto – a taste of Sinai.

Rabbi Mordecai E. Zeitz is spiritual leader of Montreal's Congregation Beth Tikvah Ahavat Shalom Nusach Hoari.

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

Who wrote the Torah? Discuss

Although in the course of their Jewish education, students can potentially be exposed to a variety of topics, schools and teachers often shy away from full-blown examinations of who wrote the Torah – God, human beings or both?– and what the alternate views might be. Some of this hesitation is based in an ideological desire not to lead students into questions that are not in accord with a particular school's Jewish worldview. But part of the reticence is pragmatic: staff may not be trained to explore the wide diversity of views regarding the core issue of revelation and authorship of the text.

But in the interests of accuracy and even tolerance, it's sometimes necessary to at least inform students – obviously at an age-appropriate juncture – that there are different perspectives on what occurred at Sinai and afterward, the better to disabuse them of the notion that "everyone thinks like me" or, if they don't, that the other person's opinion is completely without basis.

Even within modern Judaism, various divergent positions can be outlined regarding this debate. To that end, the Conservative thinker Rabbi Elliot Dorff has noted at least five distinct points of view.

The most literal interpretation is that God gave the Torah, both the oral and written, all at once to Moshe at Sinai, and what we have are the exact words of God without any change. Once removed from this is what Rabbi Dorff terms "Conservative I," or the notion of "continuous revelation," which posits that God dictated His will at Sinai, but it was written down by a number of human beings (thus we have multiple traditions).

"Conservative II," which Rabbi Dorff ascribes to Rabbi Robert Gordis and famed philosopher Emil Fackenheim, argues that humans wrote the Torah, guided by divine inspiration.

"Conservative III," characterized by the outlooks of Rabbi Louis Jacobs and Rabbi Dorff himself, maintains that the Torah is the human record of the encounter between God and the nation of Israel at Sinai. An offshoot of this is nicely encapsulated in the Reform movement's 1937 statement of guiding principles: "Progressive revelation: The Torah is God's will written by human beings. As time goes on, we get to understand his will better and better."

The Reconstructionist view, typified by its founder, Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, would totally remove any trace of divinity from the final product. Human beings wrote the Torah. Period.

There are a number of other shadings in this debate, but any attempt to teach these positions should be organized around meaningful pedagogical principles. What is the teacher trying to achieve by introducing this material? Academic rigour? A wish to counter perceived student biases?

Responsible educational practice would dictate that students should be trained slowly to absorb ideas that they may not have been exposed to previously, and that they be shown how one's understanding of Torah authorship may have lasting implications for all of one's other Jewish attitudes and practices. To cite one example, it makes quite a difference if you believe Israel was promised to you by God in the divinely created Bible, or if you think that such a claim is just a human invention.

As in all other matters of education, clarity is the first, but not the final, goal.

Jewish Life

The educated person

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

Once again, we have reached the time of university graduations and commencement speeches. Beyond the ritual of cap and gown and old-grad sentimentality lurks a paramount question: apart from the accumulation of facts and information, what perceptions and values have students received as they enter a complex and uncertain future?

1. Is there intellectual curiosity?

Truth often disturbs what makes us most comfortable. The tracking down of ideas involves greater risk than pouring facts into a receptacle called the brain. In the words of Lincoln Steffens, "It is dangerous to think – always." But the educated must take the risk."

Our age demands open-mindedness, unrelenting doubt, ceaseless probing of life's problems at every stage, with enough independence and flexibility to confront emerging and unprecedented dilemmas.

There must be a passion for learning that is satisfied only by lifelong analysis and inquiry. Curious minds are able to surmount any kind of inadequate training.

2. Is there concern for the social ills of society?

Contemporary difficulties are explosive, increasingly numerous and perilously urgent.

Some examples? Racial and ethnic and religious prejudice, which sabotage the struggle for peace and undermine the security and moral health of the world; political chauvinism, which in one country after another prefers unrest and disunity to mature compromise; emotional frustrations that often lead to scapegoatism and group hostility; hatred for an "enemy" nation, so violent that some people are more eager to see that enemy expunged than to keep their own children alive.

For the educated person there is nothing harder than the softness of indifference.

3. Is there an appreciation for moral and esthetic values?

Where do we get our persistence to overcome setbacks and disappointments? Whence comes the impulse to aid our fellow men instead of striding over them in the struggle for personal success? Where is the wellspring for the voluntary offering of service to the community, to our neighbour?

The answer lies in non-material values that must be acquired along with knowledge in the educational process. Education's dual objectives must remain clear: education for living as well as education for making a living.

4. Is there proper humility?

An educated person is one whose mind is always watching itself. Shakespeare indicated, "Modest doubt is called the beacon of the wise." Bertrand Russell pointed out that the knowledge required of a scientist before he can do research in one technical area may expand to such proportions as to consume all the best years of his life.

Why then transmit simplistic explanations for the complex problems of society or for the supreme riddles of the universe? Changes in our age are so rapid that political and scientific revolutions occur within the span of a single lifetime. Will Durant observed, "Sixty years ago I knew everything; now I know nothing. Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

5. Is there a critical method of evaluation?

It is obvious that we live in an age of an information explosion. But we are also in the middle of a misinformation explosion. With the proliferation of mass communications, we are surrounded by hawkers, pitch-men, hard and soft sells, persuaders hidden and overt. Bombarded daily with millions of words by print and electronic media, we need some kind of critical apparatus to decide whom and what to believe, and to what degree.

One of humankind's most profitable resources for progress and for peace is in the universities of the free world. To realize their potential, they must mould men and women of intellect and spirit. What a tremendous challenge it is to instil the five ideas indicated above into their hearts and minds.

Shavuot and the Seven Species

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Shavuot is almost here and so are blintzes and cheesecakes. Although it's customary to eat dairy foods on Shavuot, you may want to try a different way to mark the holiday's agricultural roots. Shavuot was the time when farmers would bring the first harvest of seven special grains and fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem. Nowadays, we have no Temple, but you can still enjoy dishes made from the Seven Species: wheat and barley, grapes and figs, pomegranates, olives and honey.

Wheat has always been considered fundamental to Jewish life. "If there is no flour, there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour." (Pirke Avot 3:21) In Foods of the Bible, Phyllis Glazer presents an overview of how our ancestors would mill grains and explains what kinds of breads, cakes and other dishes would be prepared. She also shares recipes for unleavened flatbread, wild wheat salad and earthy unyeasted bread. **[tinyurl.com/spec01]**

Although barley may not have the profile of wheat, it does have a very strong connection to Shavuot. In the Book of Ruth (traditionally read on Shavuot), Boaz first fancied Ruth working in the field under the hot sun and gives her a gift of "six measures of barley." (Ruth 3:15) After you've pondered that, you can try your hand at Barley Bread Cakes and wash them down with some Barley Tea. **[tinyurl.com/spec03]**

There are numerous references to grapes and wine in the Torah, from Noah's indiscretions after the Flood to the huge grape cluster that the spies brought back after they toured Canaan. Later, the Israelites were compared to the fruit of the vine. Food writer and historian Gil Marks presents a few recipes that incorporate wine including Ashkenazic Chicken with Wine, and Israeli Raspberry-Orange Wine Soup. **[tinyurl.com/spec05]**

Figs holds the distinction of being the first fruit mentioned in the Torah, when its leaves allowed Adam and Eve to cover up. (Genesis 3:7) If you prefer to eat figs rather than wear them, consider Fig Apple Compote, Figs Poached in White Wine and Spiced Fig Pickles. **[tinyurl.com/spec07]**

According to the Midrash, the pomegranate has 613 seeds corresponding to the number of mitzvot. The fruit was held in such high esteem that it adorned to the Temple's columns and was used widely on the nation's coins. Nowadays, you can hear silver *rimonim* jangling on the Torah's ornamental finials when the scrolls are carried in synagogue. **[tinyurl.com/spec09]** You can contemplate the fruit's importance as you dine on some Pomegranate Chicken Breasts or Poached Fish with Pomegranate Sauce. **[tinyurl.com/spec08]**

"I am like a green olive tree in the House of God; I trust in the love of God for ever and ever." (Psalms 52:10) "Olives, Judaism and the Land of Israel" looks at the importance of the olive in Judaism from its symbolism of peace in the story of Noah to its importance of that little jug of oil in the story of Chanukah. **[tinyurl.com/spec06]** Olive Tree World has articles about olives' importance in world history and their role in a healthy diet. **[tinyurl.com/spec04]**

When the Torah mentions "honey," it isn't actually referring to bee-honey but to the gooey sweetness you get by boiling dates. **[tinyurl.com/spec02]** Use them in Date Pecan Bread, Rice Krispie Date Roll and Spicy Hot Dates at Just Fruit Recipes. **[tinyurl. com/spec11]**

Since Shavuot's around the corner, you may not have time to whip up seven different dishes. So here are some timesavers – daring recipes using all seven ingredients at once. There's Shavuot Seven Species Salad **[tinyurl.com/ spec15]**; a Sweet-and-Savory Pilaf. **[tinyurl.com/spec14]** Or how about a Seven Species Pie? **[tinyurl. com/spec12]**

Let's close by feeding our souls, too. The Lubavitcher Rebbe suggests that each of the Seven Species has a kabbalistic attribute. "The 'olive' in us is that part of ourselves that thrives on struggle, that revels in it, that would no more escape it than escape life itself. 'Just like an olive,' say our sages, 'which yields its oil only when pressed,' so, too, do we yield what is best in us only when pressed between the millstones of life and the counter forces of a divided self." Also, find out why dates embody "perfection" and pomegranates represent "deeds" at Seasons of the Soul: The Seven Kinds. **[tinyurl.com/spec13]**

And have a very happy Shavuot.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Community walks for Israel

An estimated 12,000 people, including politicians representing Canada's three major parties, took part in UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's annual Walk with Israel on Sunday. The event raised about $400,000 to help integrate Ethiopian Israelis in Bat Yam and to fund educational and social welfare projects for Ethiopians in the Bat Yam and Eilat/Eilot areas. Seen here, clockwise from top left, volunteers hand out prizes to participants; two girls share a cookie at decorating booth; Toronto Argonauts cheerleaders join in the fun; youngster enjoys the camel rides at the Carnival; Jewish Family and Child Services workers at the walk.

[Rachel Singer photos]

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Political system is Israel's Achilles heel, prof says

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

Things are looking up for the State of Israel, but its political system is the one key area that could use improvement, a leading Israeli political scientist says.

Speaking at Holy Blossom Temple May 11, Prof. Gabriel Ben-Dor sounded a mostly positive note about Israel's future.

Gabriel Ben-Dor

"The State of Israel today is in surprisingly good shape," he said. "Things are going very well, indeed, despite what you may have heard to the contrary. There is every reason to be optimistic."

Ben-Dor, who works at the Strategic Dialogue Center at Netanya College in Israel, cited a study of 2,000 people in which the overwhelming majority were very optimistic about Israel's future and their future in Israel. The study, conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, with the results published on Israel's 61st birthday, found that 80 per cent of respondents described their status as "good" or "very good."

Israel's economy is also doing well, especially compared to other countries, Ben-Dor said, mentioning the low unemployment rate (6.1 per cent in 2008) and the strength of the shekel.

Three or four years ago, he said, his son was searching for an apartment in Tel Aviv and everything was priced in U.S. dollars. Today everything is in shekels because while the U.S. dollar keeps fluctuating, the shekel has remained relatively stable.

On another positive note, the Jewish population in Israel is increasing consistently, Ben-Dor said. Of 154,000 babies born in Israel in 2008, 70 per cent were Jewish. The Jewish population in Israel increases by about 120,000 people each year. With 5.6 million Jews currently living in Israel, he expects the Jewish population to reach six million in just a few years.

In spite of all the good news about Israel, Ben-Dor said there is one major area of concern: its political system.

Comparing Israel to a sports team with great players but poor management, he said the current system is no longer working, and it hasn't been for some time.

"Things are changing in Israel in just about every respect, other than the political system," he said. "The system makes the country almost ungovernable."

With the average length of an Israeli government being 22 months, Ben-Dor said, by the time one becomes established and is working on fixing problems, its time in office ends and nothing gets accomplished.

Many major public affairs decisions are made by the courts, legal advisers and the state comptroller, none of whom are elected by the Israeli public.

Another major concern is that most Israelis see politics as a disgraceful profession, Ben-Dor said.

"The best people in Israeli society refuse to enter political life, depriving the state of high-quality politicians."

The result is that recycled people end up running, such as Benjamin Netanyahu, now serving as prime minister for the second time.

Ben-Dor made many suggestions for how the political system can be improved, including taking cues from Germany. In Germany, the minimum percentage of the national vote required to get a seat in parliament is five per cent. In Israel, it's two per cent. Increasing the percentage of the required vote would mean fewer political parties in the Knesset, he said.

Other reforms that Ben-Dor believes would improve the Israeli political system include making it difficult to overthrow a government, decreasing the frequency of elections and the number of parties, and giving more power to elected MKs.

He also supports having no more than five political parties: one in the centre, one on the left, one on the right, one for Arabs and one for religious Jews.

Currently, none of the five leading parties have even 30 seats in the Knesset.

Holding elections every four years would also help to create a more stable government, he said.

"The electoral system in Israel might have been OK 50 years ago, but it is not OK today," he added.

"When electoral systems no longer serve their purpose, you should not bow down to them – you should change them."

On cjnews.com

After two years of work, Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning has launched an interactive educational website — openbook.kolel.org

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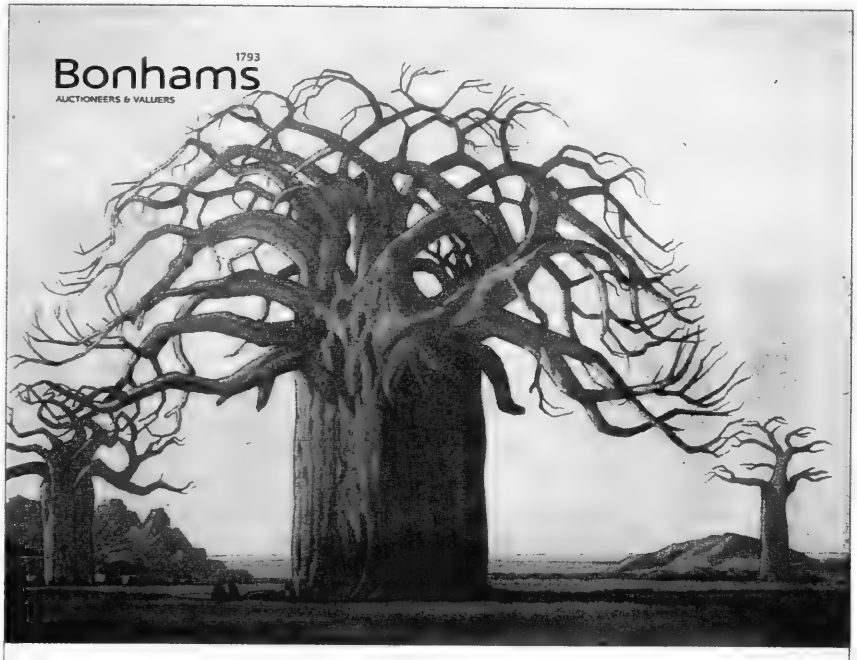
Winnipeg's Jewish community turned out in full force to support the world premiere of Zane Zalis's Holocaust themed Oratorio, I Believe, performed at the Winnipeg Concert Hall on May 21, complete with a full 65 member orchestra and 190 person voice chorus.



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Memoir tells story behind global hotel chain

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A vignette in Isadore Sharp's new book hints at the state of mind that allowed the Toronto-born entrepreneur to create a world-class chain of hotels.

Back in the 1970s, when the Four Seasons was still a relatively small organization, Sharp told his senior managers and executives that he wanted to improve the way the hotel serves its customers. Service, he believed, was the key to burnishing the chain's reputation and ensuring it success.

So for lessons in service, he instructed his senior staff "to come with me to McDonald's and see how they train people for service."

That's McDonald's, as in Big Macs and Happy Meals.

Naturally, his employees were skeptical and taken aback. They sold filet mignon, not burgers, they said, but Sharp prevailed.

Thinking out of the box came naturally for Sharp, who didn't attend business school and got into the hotel business inadvertently as part of a real estate play. A builder by trade, his first hotel was erected on Jarvis Street in the early 1960s. He slowly got into the business of being an innkeeper, all the while continuing in the building trade.

Today, of course, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is an international chain synonymous with quality and luxury. Sharp tells his story in Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy (Penguin).

Isadore Sharp

At the company's Leslie Street headquarters, not far from the former site of Inn on the Park, one of Sharp's early creations, a wall is dedicated to expounding the philosophy of a firm that now includes 78 hotels in 32 countries and 40 properties under development.

Quality, service, culture and brand are the four cornerstones of that corporate philosophy, Sharp explained in an interview with The CJN. They were developed and tested over a 25-year period.

"You get an idea and then see if you can make it work. It's execution that becomes the reason you succeed or not."

Early on, he realized that giving customers what they needed and valued was the key to success. That fundamental value hasn't changed, he said.

But that doesn't make the hotel's operations static. As expectations develop, the hotel must adapt. That could mean providing services today that were inconceivable yesterday, he explained. At one time, no one expected to find an exercise facility in a hotel. Now, it's customary in almost all chains. The same goes for spas and other innovations, such as Internet access and flatscreen TVs.

As business has gone global, executives who travel the world expect to use their rooms as an office and meeting place. Satisfying those needs is necessary for a hotel to succeed, and "if the service is useful to you, it becomes the standard," he said.

Sharp's memoir describes his evolution from a builder, working with his dad, a Polish immigrant, to a hotelier with interests around the world. Along the way, he adapted the golden rule – do unto others as you would wish them to do to you – as the credo of his company.

With roots in the construction industry (he was trained as an architect), Sharp's first hotel in 1961 was a real estate play. "I didn't know what to do, but I approached it from the customer's perspective. What would they need? What would be of value to them?

"That was the original thought. That strategy hasn't changed today."

Like other businesses, the Four Seasons is riding out the current recession as best it can. With almost 50 years in the industry, Sharp brings some perspective to the problem. These downturns come every seven to 10 years, "It's not the first. It won't be the last."

The Four Seasons has survived them in the past – the one after 9/11 was particularly "serious," he said – and is doing so today by negotiating with clients over rates, while not eroding the standards that customers have come to expect.

As for the future, Sharp predicts the chain will better address clients' concerns about the environment with the hotel conserving energy and providing "better air to breathe."

Once systems are put in place to satisfy those desires, they will likely become the new standard and be required everywhere. After all, he said, "expectations must be met."

Return to Auschwitz

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Five years after Michael Englishman recited Kaddish at Birkenau for his parents, his siblings and other family members who perished there, his 16-year-old great-granddaughter completed a sacred task on his behalf when she followed in his footsteps on the recent March of the Living.

Morgan Kaufman, 16, a Grade 11 student at Greenwood College School in Toronto, brought two copies of her late great-grandfather's autobiography, 163256: A Memoir of Resistance (Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), to the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Poland.

"I liked the idea of bringing the book to the place where the events described by my opa actually happened," she said in an interview that also included her mother, Lisa Kaufman, and grandmother, Katy Brass.

Morgan visited the building where the number 163256 was tattooed on her great-grandfather's arm, and she said he was foremost in her thoughts on the silent march from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Yom Hashoah.

"I thought, 'I am marching for my opa.' I kept thinking that he walked this path when he was in Auschwitz."

By coincidence, this meeting with three generations of Englishman's family happened to fall on two poignant anniversaries.

It was exactly two years since his book was published – he died four months later– and a year since his unveiling.

Brass struggled to hold back tears as she recalled the book launch at Israel's, which "sold out completely." Her father did not survive long enough after his cancer was diagnosed that year to attend a scheduled book signing at Chapters and the Jewish Book Fair.

Born in Amsterdam in 1921, Englishman (originally Engelschman) was the sole survivor of his immediate family. He lost his first wife, parents and four sisters in the Holocaust.

Between 1942 and 1945, he was interned in five concentration and labour camps: Vught in Holland; Auschwitz-Birkenau; Janina Grube coal mine; Buna-Monowitz IG Farben Works in Poland, and Dora-Nordhausen in Germany.

Brass said her father was a certified electrician who most likely survived the war because the Nazis valued his professional skills.

People didn't think he was Jewish, Kaufman added. By the end of his incarceration, her grandfather was working on rockets and other secret weapons. "When people did find out he was Jewish, he was too important to the project to be killed."

After the war, Englishman married Hendrika (Rita) Pels, a family friend who had also lost her spouse. She died in 2003. He adopted her two children. Brass and her brother, Philip Englishman, had been hidden in the Dutch countryside during the war.

The family immigrated to Canada in 1952. Englishman was a frequent speaker on the Holocaust, and he actively fought neo-Nazism.

Brass described her father as a pied piper. "People just loved him. He never had a bad word to say about anybody."

And he was funny, Kaufman said. "He used to tell my kids, 'Your camp was a lot more fun than mine.'"

Indeed in his book, Englishman offers a humorous response to a student's question about the food in concentration camp: "We never had to worry about too many calories."

Kaufman said her grandfather's lifelong mission was to educate people about the Holocaust, especially students. He wanted his autobiography to be accessible to younger readers as well as adults.

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God is hidden in Tel Aviv's details: author

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

The creation of Tel Aviv – and Zionism as a whole – was largely an attempt to secularize space, to make what was the imagined biblical Land of Israel dreamed about and written about for thousands of years, into an actual place "with the attributes of home," says the author of a book about Israel's largest city.

Barbara Mann, the author of A Place in History, which chronicles how Tel Aviv became a bridge connecting the Holy Land with the modern western world, spoke at the Schulich School of Business on May 10 about the city, which this year celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Her lecture, "Tel Aviv at 100: From Sand Dunes To Skyscrapers," was part of a series co-ordinated by Sara Horowitz, director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at York University.

"Tel Aviv was founded primarily by immigrants and refugees coming from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. The immigrant who voluntarily settled in a new land out of an ideological belief in Jewish political autonomy and the refugee who [fled] an oppressive regime had radically different attitudes towards the meaning of Tel Aviv as their new home. One of the ways in which these disparities were ostensibly dissolved... was through the idea of Tel Aviv as a Jewish city," Mann said.

Although the city was founded in 1909, the origin of its name actually dates back several years earlier. Tel Aviv derives from the name "Altneuland," which literally means "Old New Land," the title of Theodor Herzl's 1902 book about a thriving utopian city along the Mediterranean seaboard that he believed would one day be realized as a Jewish homeland. Altneuland was later loosely translated by Nachum Sokoloff, president of the Zionist Organization of America, as Tel Aviv, or "Hill of Spring," a reflection of the essence of what the city meant to the immigrant settlers: the start of a new life and the revival of the optimism they once felt.

"The largely secular residents of Ahuzat Bayit, the neighbourhood that would become Tel Aviv, were committed to creating an urban space that would be everything Jewish life in Europe was not," Mann said.

The early buildings of the settlers were examples of the modern neo-classical style imported by architects from eastern Europe, who studied in cities such as Odessa and St. Petersburg, Mann said. Ironically, the settlers had also taken to mining the artistic influence of the German Bauhaus style to design Tel Aviv's architecture, an example of drawing on the past to pave a road for the future.

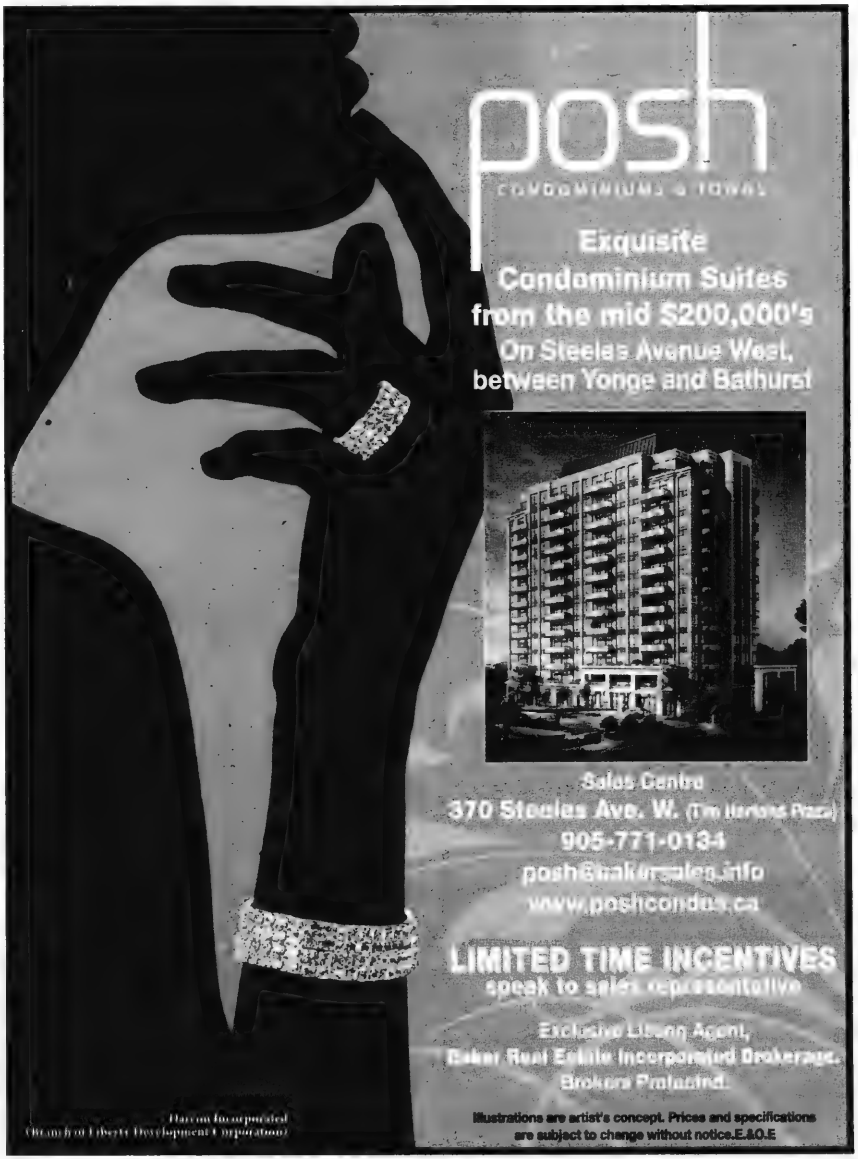
This seeming rejection of what they saw as antiquated notions of Judaism caused conflict between the Orthodox communities of Jerusalem and the more secular residents of Tel Aviv, Mann said.

The clash of interests was primarily due to architecture that was designed in what was considered the Greek spirit, such as artist Y.D. Gordon's monument over the entrance of the Hotel Ben Nahum at 32 Rothschild. The monument is of a rabbi and his two students surrounded by various animal life. To the Orthodox community, this was a desecration of Jewish values, a rebuke to the second commandment of making graven images as a substitute for God, she added.

Eventually, this architectural style was accepted. "In a sense, it was as if Jewish ethics and its aversion to esthetics had finally found in the specifics of the international style, a physical form that would not offend those normative, ingrained attitudes against esthetic representation," Mann said.

Even in a mostly acculturated community such as Tel Aviv's, God remains hidden in the details, she said.

Tel Aviv's boardwalk, above, and its famous Bauhaus architecture, top right. [Israel photos]



Awards night recognizes student leadership

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

The outstanding student leadership in Toronto is a testament to the commitment of the Jewish community here to not only persevere, but triumph in the face of adversity.

"The events this year on campus were not business as usual," Hillel Board president Allan Berdowski said at the 13th annual Hillel Awards Night on May 14. He cited the very public displays of anti-Semitism on college campuses, the anti-Zionist rhetoric used by students and organizations as its springboard. However, he also reminded attendees that this was a special year in which "to celebrate tenacity, pride and leadership" shown by both Jewish and non-Jewish students.

Despite the turmoil, including a three-month long strike of teaching assistants and contract faculty at York University, the 2008-2009 semester saw the launch of many new programs and initiatives that helped keep the Hillel spirit alive across all campuses.

This year marked the creation of the Jewish Life on Campus initiative, which, Berdowski said, "formed a strong partnership between Hillel and the Orthodox Union and attracted close to 200 students on a weekly basis."

Other programs and events launched this past school year included a two-day UN rally retreat in New York City, the formation of Jew.ru to engage students of Russian heritage, the Israel Advocacy Program and a program in partnership with Hillel Israel to help Tibetan refugees in India. The Artzy Festival multimedia art exhibit was held at the Bata Shoe Museum for the second year, and a Yom Ha'atzmaut barbecue celebrating Israel's 61st birthday "once again showed us the power of free food," Berdowski said jokingly.

Hillel staff and students celebrated at the annual awards night. From left: Avihayil Genesove, Arie Frohlich, Tamara Winegust, Dave Cross, Rebecca Woods Baum, Esther Mendelsohn and Joel Silver. **[Shaun Bernstein photo]**

In his keynote speech, Hillel executive director Zac Kaye called this year's events "a wake-up call to all of us involved in campus life."

Kaye also spoke of "expanding Hillel's vision" and praised the "unique entity" that is Hillel in the way it welcomes students and people of all races, ethnicities and religions, an example he hopes all organizations will follow in the future.

MCs Michal Brosh and Jeremy Bluvol provided light banter during the awards ceremony at Adath Israel Congregation and introduced the presenters for each of the 16 award categories, including campus awards for Ryerson University, Universiy of Toronto and York University; city awards; and the Singer-Lieberman Hadracha Award for leadership, which was given to seven students.

Among the students honoured with the leadership award was Ryan Leszner, one of three from the York campus. He was praised for his "mad musical skills, positive nature and passion for Jewish life."

Current Hillel at York president Daniel Ferman received the Gropper Family Award for outstanding leadership as well as the Singer-Lieberman Hadracha Award.

Samahra Zatzman picked up the Prutschi Family Award for tzedek and social justice and the AEPi Award for partnership and outreach for her work on the Bathtub Project, which collects toiletries for shelters for battered women.

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Groups keep pressure on York ahead of conference

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

As the date nears for York University's two-day academic conference called Israel Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace, Jewish groups are continuing to express concern that the event will promote the Israel boycott movement.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) released a joint statement last week condemning the June 22-24 conference, which is being co-sponsored by Queen's University and York, and is an official part of York's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The groups' statement said the conference will focus on a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinians conflict – "a solution that would spell the end of Israel as a Jewish state" – and that the speakers, some of whom are involved in the "boycott, divestment and sanctions" campaign against Israel, will use the forum to promote anti-Israel views.

York's president, Mamdouh Shoukri, released a statement in response to complaints that the conference should not be part of anniversary events.

"This would have involved excluding a conference because of its subject matter, which would in itself have been a fundamental violation of academic freedom," Shoukri said.

He added that the organizers and academics have the freedom to explore such issues, and it would be inappropriate for the university to intervene.

"[T]he choice of topic, of who is to speak, and of what is said at the event lies squarely with the individual academics who organize and/or participate in it and no one else. The university provides a forum for the robust exchange, but does not align itself with a particular set of views or positions."

The Jewish Defence League's (JDL) national director, Meir Weinstein, who promised earlier this month that he would hold weekly demonstrations at York to protest the conference, said he was picketing on campus on May 15 when a York security guard handed him a letter written by Harriet Lewis, York's general counsel.

The letter said that York was aware of the JDL's plans to hold weekly demonstrations on campus, but that the Jewish organization, an "outside group," did not have permission from York "to use our campus lands for protests."

Lewis added that future demonstrations on York property will be considered trespassing and urged the JDL to hold future protests on public property.

Weinstein said when he was handed the letter, he and about 25 others were picketing peacefully on the sidewalk outside York's Vari Hall rotunda.

Despite the letter's request that the JDL not protest on York property in the future, Weinstein said he planned to be back at York the following week. However, he said he was considering splitting the demonstrators into two groups – one at an entrance to the school, which is considered public property, and another in front of Vari Hall.

"Some of the people in the JDL are students at York. Does that mean that they don't have the right [to picket on campus]?" Weinstein said.

He said that he's been in contact with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association about York's letter, and while it had not yet responded, he said "they expressed interest."

Students penalized for anti-Semitic slurs

York University has sanctioned and reprimanded two students for their involvement in a Feb. 11 incident in which Jewish students were barricaded in the Hillel lounge by a group of students yelling anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs.

Last week, associate dean of Osgoode Hall Law School and York adjudicator Janet Mosher found that Krisna Saravanamuttu, the incoming president of York Federation of Students (YFS), and York student Jesse Zimmerman violated York's student code of conduct for their involvement in the incident.

Mosher said that they made Jewish students feel "intimidated, frightened, tense and nervous" and promoted an atmosphere of "hostility, incivility and intimidation."

Saravanamuttu got a formal reprimand on his academic record for two years, a $150 fine, and was ordered to take a training session through York's Centre for Human Rights on equality, free speech and respect. He also must write a 15-page essay about fostering a campus free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

Zimmerman received a formal reprimand on his academic record for one year and must write a formal apology to the complainants. He'll also be required to take training sessions at the Centre for Human Rights and write a 15-page essay.

Hillel at York, Hasbara at York and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto released a joint statement commending York for its findings.

Hillel at York President Daniel Ferman said that he hopes the ruling will pressure Saravanamuttu to step down as incoming YFS president.

"I think he needs to respond to these things and see what he's willing to do to make sure students feel safe on campus. Obviously, we need a campus free of racism, and we can't have the president involved in these types of incidents," Ferman said. – *S.S.*

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Bike ride raises funds for terror victims

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

June 1, 2001, started out as a typical Saturday night in Tel Aviv. The city was bustling with people milling about on the streets or hanging out at their favourite haunts.

The Dolphinarium, a seaside discotheque, was a popular hot spot for teenage immigrants from the former Soviet Union. On this Saturday night, dozens of high schoolers crowded outside the entrance.

Irina Lipkin-Mejberg

Irina Lipkin-Mejberg, who was 17 at the time, was among them. She says she doesn't remember seeing the 17-year-old suicide attacker who infiltrated the crowd, but she'll never forget the moment he blew himself up. Her best friend was one of the 21 people who died that night.

Most of the victims were high school students like herself.

"Nobody thinks about a terrorist attack on a discotheque for teenagers," says the recent immigrant to Canada. "These were 15- and 16-year-olds."

On May 31, a day before the eighth anniversary of the bombing, Lipkin-Mejberg will be on hand for the fifth annual One Family Fund Bike Ride, which this year is in memory of the victims of the Dolphinarium bombing. It's sponsored by the One Family Fund of Canada, which is affiliated with the Israeli organization that helps Israeli victims of violence.

It will be the first time that Lipkin-Mejberg will be observing the anniversary of the June 1 attack in Canada, which means she'll be without her usual group of Israeli supporters.

She says the survivors and family and friends of the victims visit the site annually and re-enact the scene.

"We all stand in the places we were in at the exact hour of the explosion, but every year, fewer and fewer people come out. I feel badly about not being there this year."

When she realized she would not be at the site for the upcoming anniversary, Lipkin-Mejberg, contacted Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, which put her in touch with Pam Albert, executive director of the One Family Fund.

Lipkin-Mejberg approached Albert about doing a memorial event for the Dolphinarium victims.

"I said, 'Let's make the ride in honour of the victims,'" Albert recalls.

There are two routes, one 20 kilometres, the other 50 kilometres. Both begin at 9:30 a.m. at Toogood Pond Park in Unionville near Main and Carlton streets.

The event, which is being organized by Marsha Gallinger, begins with registration and breakfast at 8:30 a.m.

Albert notes that last year's event brought in $80,000, so she encourages participants to raise the $500 registration fee for the ride, which is geared to people of all ages and ability.

"We would love the community to come and show their support and solidarity for the victims of the Dolphinarium bombing and other victims of violence."

She also invites people to participate in the second annual Cross Israel Hike. This year's route runs through the canyons near Eilat to the southern tip of Israel, a distance of 60 kilometres, will be covered over five days from Oct. 25 to 29.

Lipkin-Mejberg, a makeup artist by training, says life in Canada is giving her a fresh start. She's looking forward to studying fine arts at York University this fall.

She says the emotional impact of the Dolphinarium attack led to her suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She experienced severe mood changes, becoming highly anxious and more sensitive. "My husband [Vladimir Mejberg], he was my boyfriend at the time of the bombing, had to be very patient with me."

She describes the bombing as "the end of her innocence," explaining that it changed her perspective on life. "I suddenly grew up."

While time has helped ease the emotional wounds, Lipkin-Mejberg says she is still haunted by the memory of the bombing. "It can come from nowhere, and when it comes, it hits hard."

For more information about the One Family Fund Bike Ride, One Family's Cross Israel hike or to register for either event, visit www.onefamilyfund.ca or call 416-644-4955.

If you have something to say about York University... we're listening

Our new Commission on the Quality of Life for Jewish Students at York University would like to hear from you in order to assist York in ensuring a safe, welcoming environment for all students.

Here are the questions we would like you to answer:

- What direct personal experiences concerning the quality of Jewish life can you tell us about related to safety, the atmosphere inside or outside the classroom or the overall campus environment?
- What practical suggestions do you have to improve the quality of life for Jewish students on campus? Please focus your suggestions on what steps the university should take to encourage a safe, positive environment, free from intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

Your responses will be part of a report that our commission is submitting to a York University task force. Please send your submissions to **yorkcommission@ujafed.org** by the end of the day, Monday, June 1.

Hillel of Greater Toronto CIJA UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO Across the street. Across the globe.

Shelter planned for women, kids

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Board members of the ETA Vaughan (Empowerment Through Achievement) women's shelter are trying to build on their past achievements.

Funds from its second annual gala, held May 14 at Liberty Grand and featuring a performance by Tony Bennett, are going toward expanding its emergency shelter for women and children, located in Vaughan.

Arlene Margolese, ETA Vaughan co-chair along with Sunder Singh and Marie Fiorellino-DiPoce, said the current shelter opened about six months ago. It operates as emergency housing for 10 to 12 people, as well as an outreach, therapy and counselling centre.

"It welcomes all religious and cultural groups, and provides vegetarian, halal and kosher foods when necessary. It is important that all groups feel welcome."

Their next project is to expand the building to include at least 32 bedrooms plus a living area and a kosher kitchen, and a meditation room without religious artifacts so everyone can use it comfortably, Margolese said.

"While at the shelter, residents will be provided with counselling and vocational training so they can build their skills and employment opportunities. Transportation will be arranged for the children's schooling and doctor appointments, and for the women to get to employment interviews."

Margolese, manager of volunteer services and faith and cultural services at Reena, said the seeds for the shelter were planted when Michael Di Biase, former mayor of Vaughan, put together a task force to determine the need for a women's shelter in that city.

"As members of the task force, we found that there was a need for a shelter that could protect women and children living in abusive situations. At that time, however, there was no money for the project, so the three of us began looking into how we could move forward."

They lobbied the community, "and we were lucky enough to find a benefactor in John dePoce who leased us a parcel of land including a house that had good 'bones' but needed a lot of renovations to pass inspection. He spent about $220,000 of his own money on renovations and furnishings."

The board feels so strongly about the project, she said, "because abuse is rampant, and shelters are full."

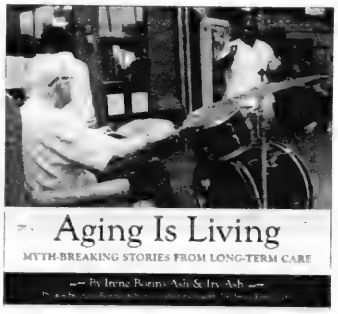
For services, call ETA Vaughan at 877-ETA (1888), or to donate call 905-893-8830.

Seniors Scene

Seniors in long-term care focus of new book

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

A Toronto social worker and photographer has compiled a book about seniors living in long-term care facilities that focuses on the positive aspects of the lives of some residents.



For Aging Is Living: Myth-Breaking Stories from Long-Term Care (Dundurn Press), published in 2009, Irene Borins Ash gathered the stories of 25 long-term care residents from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The book is illustrated with her photographs of the residents.

Borins Ash makes a strong case for changing attitudes about long-term care living. She has worked in long-term care homes, a retirement home and a home support agency, and she dispels the widely held negative perception of life in these facilities and debunks the attitude that people go there to die.

"Staying at home when care needs are round the clock and a person is housebound creates social isolation, which is bad for your physical and mental health," she said.

Irene Borins Ash

Her book shows that people in nursing homes can thrive because their care needs are provided for and because they are offered a variety of social programs.

"The family of the resident can also be released from survival mode to mend relationships and enjoy each other's company. I found that many of these people were forgotten and had become invisible in society," Borins Ash said.

"Many residents continue to pursue personal interests, activities and relationships that give meaning and quality to their lives."

Borins Ash has had three photo exhibits and authored a 2003 book titled Treasured Legacies: Older and Still Great" (Second Story Press), which features photographic portraits of seniors accompanied by biographical sketches.

Dr. William Reichman, president and CEO of Baycrest, said that Aging Is Living is a "reminder to those of us in leadership roles that institutionalized care environments must be creatively driven to enable people, including those with dementia and extreme physical frailty, to reach their full potential in remaining actively engaged in life."

In the foreword of Aging Is Living, David Onley, the lieutenant-governor of Ontario, who is disabled, wrote: "As a lifelong champion of disability issues, I am delighted that Irene Borins Ash has turned her discerning eye and camera lens to the positive aspects of living in long-term care.

"She has done a great service, not just to her subjects, whose lives and achievements deserve public recognition, but also to those who, whether considering or forced by circumstances to choose long-term care, wish to address the negative images of aging in a nursing home."

Dr. Irvin Rubincam helped Borins Ash with the photography and her husband, Irv, co-authored Aging Is Living.

In Part 1 of the book, various long-term care residents look back on their lives and speak candidly about what is important to them.

Part 2 of the book includes Debby Vigoda's story. Vigoda, who served as executive director of the Ontario Gerontology Association for 18 years, writes of the challenges of having her husband, Morris, move to a long-term care facility after an accident, and the anguish and trauma of the decision making.

Vigoda said her husband and their children agreed that it was an appropriate decision. Vigoda caregiver's checklist, titled "If I don't take care of me, I can't take care of him," accompanies her story.

The book's information section also includes 21 key points about people who have aged with a healthy attitude; lists of long-term care facilities with levels of care; a long-term care home checklist, and tips for planning as a person ages.

"The people profiled in the book will leave a legacy, a gift to others. They had the courage and sense of adventure to enter into this project and to allow me to share some of their innermost thoughts." Borins-Ash said.

A portion of the author's proceeds from the book will be donated to Pat's Place, a program operated out of Family Service Toronto that helps abused seniors.

Aging Is Living: Myth-Breaking Stories from Long-Term Care is available at major bookstores. For more information about Aging Is Living, visit www.ireneborinsash.com.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov Shelley & Joe Havas on their 30th anniversary. Love Michael, Stefanie and Tommy; Gertie & Eddie Strulovitch and Agi Havas.

Mazel tov Grandma (Clare Berman) on your 104th birthday, May 6. Love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the Carrs, Goulds, Soils, Turks and Youngs.

Mazel tov to Sara Sherkey & Matthew Fox on your recent engagement! Parents are Sheldon & Evelyn Sherkey, Helen Fox, Howard & Marilyn Fox.

Mazel tov Anna & Matya Schachter, the daughter of Joan Mandel Boonin & Rob Boonin and the son of Marcia Gilbert and Shalom Schachter.

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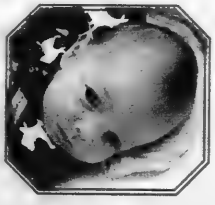
Mazel tov on the recent engagement Stephanie Zar & Michael (Michi) Roubini.

Mazel tov on the recent wedding of Nechama Atias & Shuki Sharbani.



Mazel tov to Yocheved & Eli Guterman on the brit milah of their son.

Mazel tov on the birth of Elite Miriam Bensoussan.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New Deadlines: Monday, June 1, is the deadline for the June 11 issue, and Monday, June 8, is the deadline for June 18. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 235, fax 416-391-0829, or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

Thursday, May 28

SHAVUOT PROGRAM

Beth Tzedec Congregation, Congregation Beth Haminyan and Beth Sholom Synagogue hold all-night Tikkun Leil Shavuot program with lasagna dinner, teen presentation on March of the Living and keynote speaker **Rabbi Michael Brown** on "Israel Revealed." Midnight Torah service outside, 6 a.m. pancake breakfast. Seminars all night, cheesecake breaks. Beth Tzedec, 8:30 p.m. Call 416-781-3511.

Sunday, May 31

JEWISH HEALING SERVICE

JF&C presents a healing service. Adath Israel, 3-4 p.m. Facilitated by **Rabbi David Seed** and **Yehudit Judy Shier Weisberg**. No charge. Call 416-638-7800. ext. 287.

FOLK CONCERT

Toronto Jewish Folk Choir 83rd annual spring concert is a salute **Theodore Bikel** and **Srul Irving Glick**. Leah Posluns Theatre, 3 p.m. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at the door, children free. Call 416-636-0936 or e-mail tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Beth Tzedec and Beth Emeth youth departments kick off night for young professionals, ages 22-30. Jim Galloway Band at The REX Jazz & Blues Bar, 194 Queen St. W. Doors open 9:30 p.m. Free. RSVP to **Lauren Cohn**. 416-633-3838, ext. 229, e-mail youth@beby.org.

JUST A SECOND SHOP

Twenty-fifth anniversary of Just a Second Shop, a program supported by Jewish Family & Child. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 4117 Bathurst St. Festivities for the whole family. Proceeds for children to attend a Jewish day or overnight camp.

FAMILY FUND BIKE RIDE

Fifth annual One Family Fund Bike Ride to show solidarity with Israel's victims of terror: 50- and 20-km routes. Unionville, 9:30 a.m. Visit www.onefamilyfund.ca/bike.

Monday, June 1

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

Retired **Col. Shaul Arieli** speaks on "Israel's New Government and Prospects for Peace." 7:30 p.m. at Temple Sinai. Canadian Friends of Peace Now sponsors event. Call 905-707-53008, or e-mail info@peacenowcanada.org.

ALZHEIMER CAREGIVERS

Alzheimer Society of Toronto gives interactive workshop on "Time Management for Caregivers." Guest speaker is **Lynne Gallagher** of Family Service Toronto. 3:30-5 p.m., 20 Eglinton Ave. W., 16th floor. Call 416-322-6560, e-mail alzheimertoronto. org.

Wednesday, June 3

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Archeologist **Dan Bahat** speaks on "The Dead Sea Scrolls: their history, their content and the Qumran caves that protected them." Arnold and Leona Finkler Memorial Lecture. Sponsors are Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University and Beth Tikvah Synagogue. At Beth Tikvah , 8 p.m. Reception follows.

Other News

DYSTONIA AWARENESS

June 1-7 is Dystonia Awareness Week. Dystonia is a genetic disease in which involuntary muscle contractions cause twisting and repetitive movements or abnormal postures and/or painful jerking and spasms. For more information, e-mail **Wendy Paul**, dmrftoronto@sympatico.ca.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Beit Halochem Canada presents Celebration of Life, a concert with **Nikki Yanofsky** and a group of visiting disabled Israeli veterans. Thursday, June 4, 7:30

Continued on page 27

What are you doing this summer?
Experience Israel with
Eilat P2K
Last spots available for June-July summer program working with children, marine research in the Dead Sea and more!
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Israel Volunteer
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Continued from page 26

p.m., George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts. General admission $60. For information or tickets, 905-695-0611 or toll free 1-800-355-1648.

CHESS TOURNAMENT

Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin branch is hosting a chess tournament for Jewish students (kindergarten to Grade 12, day and supplementary schools). Sunday, June 7, 300 Atkinson Ave., lunch room. Registration 10-10:45 a.m. RSVP brian@geodesic.ca.

MINDSCAPES

Toronto Alzheimer Society presents a travelling art exhibit, together with the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care. May 29-Aug. 31, Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 32 works produced by seniors with dementia from Canada, Australia, Israel and the United States. Alzheimer Resource Centre, 20 Eglinton Ave. W., 16th floor. Call 416-322-6560.

TEMPLE HAR ZION

Daytime programming: June 4, 1 p.m. **Iain Scott**, opera expert, lectures with slides and music. June 18, **Frank Dimant**, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada, speaks at closing event. Refreshments. Non-Temple members $5.

INTERFAITH EVENING

Beth Emeth Synagogue and Initiatives of Change present a film, The Imam and the Pastor. Keynote speakers from Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other fajith communities. June 14, 8 p.m. at Beth Emeth. No charge.

PLAY BALL

B'nai Brith Modified D Division baseball team needs a few more players, 20-50 years. About 18 games, half on Wednesday evenings. E-mail lippyzippy9@hotmail.com.

PLAYDATE NURSERY

New this fall, Playdate Nursery, Beth Emeth Synagogue has casually structured programs for toddlers, Me & My Bubbie, Me & My Mommy, Me & My Nanny, Me & Shabbat. Playgroups 1-2 years, 2-3 years. Limited registration for 2009-2010 season. Call shul office, 416-633-3838.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women's International Canada needs knitters.They have wool and patterns for hats and mittens for children in inner city schools. Call 416-630-9313 or info@jwicanada.com.

CHUG HATANACH

Carl Ehrlich leads a discussion of Zecharia, Chapter 4, June 2, 8 p.m. Beth David Synagogue. Final program of this season is June 16. Zecharia, Chapter 8, led by **Rabbi Pinchas Brumer.** Beth David, 8 p.m.

PETER KENT

Temple Kol Ami adult education committee presents **Peter Kent**, minister of state of foreign affairs (Americas) speaking on "Canada and Israel: the View From the Cabinet." June 5, 7:45 p.m., after Friday evening service. Leo Baeck Day School, Thornhill. Contact **Brenda**, 905-709-2620, or info@templekolami.ca.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Tenth annual Max Guttmann Memorial Golf Tournament, July 14, Pheasant Run Golf Club. Prizes, contests, silent auction. Register online www.maxguttmannmemorial.org.

RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Rabbi Aharon Lechtenstein, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion, discusses "Teaching Religious Zionism in North America." June 7, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Hosted by Canadian Friends of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Ulpanat Orot, Yeshivat Or Chaim and Shaarei Shomayim. Free. Call 416-789-3213.

PAUL PENNA GALA

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School 2009 tribute gala honours **Dr. Zane Cohen**, chair, University of Toronto division of general surgery. June 8, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Dessert reception. Tickets $250. Contact **Judy Machtinger**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or e-mail 2009tributegala@gmail.com.

ISRAEL DAY

Na'amat Israel Day celebration at Mel Lastman Square, June 7, all day, with entertainment, crafts. Vendors invited to participate. Call **Lisa**, 416-636-5425.

FOR SENIORS

Bernard Betel Centre. June 4, Wellness lecture – Boosting our Memory, **Judy Weiss**. 1:30 p.m. June 9, Jewish Actors in Film, **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, 10 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members. June 9, diabetes education and counselling, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.. Call 416-787-1676, ext. 301.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m. Borochov Centre. Call 416-630-9444.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

What's New

Earl Bales in the Park: Sunday dance, June 7. Casino Rama, June 10. Casino Niagara, June 23. Lunch and Laughter Group, June 18. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. Bingo, Tuesdays, noon-3 p.m. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Mah Jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Baycrest Summer Youth Program 2009 recruiting youth ages 13 to 24 with mature, strong interpersonal and communication skills, energy and intiative. Volunteers will engage with Baycrest clients and staff, assisting in programs and sharing their own skills and interests. Especially seeking those with musical ability and/or who speak a second language. Call Volunteer Services Department, 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, or e-mail alefkovitz@baycrest.org.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Program on using the Internet, websites and e-mail. Covers surfing the web, using search engines and e-mail, and computer and Internet basics such as address bar, menus and other tools. Begins June 2, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. Fees $55 members, $70, non-members. Call **Eran Barlev**, 416-636-1880, ext. 464, or ebarlev @bjcc.ca.

KOFFLER CENTRE

Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-636-1880, ext.228, www.kofflerarts.org.

Russia: Beyond Utopia at Loggia Gallery, until June 30. Images of post-Communist Russia by photographer **Andrew Moore**.

Koffler Chamber Orchestra 3rd concert of season. From Russia With Love, directed by violinist **Jacques Israelievitch**. May 31, 7 p.m. Toronto Centre for the Arts. $20, $10 students. www.ticketmaster.ca, 416-872-1111.

Artful Dish, Koffler Gala 2009. June 4, 7 p.m. Join one of 8 private homes, for an evening of world class cultural luminaries and food from leading chefs under direction of **Michael Stadlander**. Tickets $1,800 per person or $3,600 per couple. Contact **Tobi Liederman**, 416-636-1880, ext. 271, tliederman@kofflerarts.org.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot, all night Jewish Learning Festival. Come for an hour or two, or stay the whole night. Special programs for kids and teens. May 28, 9 p.m.-5:30 a.m. Free. Call ext. 154, or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Thirteenth annual spring concert, June 3, 8 p.m. Al Green theatre. Miles Nadal JCC Community Choir with conductor **Harriet Wichin**, MNJCC Women's Chorus with conductor **Gillian Stecyk**. $10 adults, $5 children.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Mirele Efros, film adaptation of **Jacob Gordin**'s 1898 play. Al Green Theatre, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. $15 general admission, $10 ages 18-29, 7:30 showing. Contact **Esther Arbeid**, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org.

Irving Layton and **A.M. Klein**: Two Masters of Canadian Poetry, with **Adam Fuerstenberg**. Call for cost/registration, ext. 155.

Mircea Popescu: Foreign &Familiar, until June 15. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. visualarts@mnjcc.org or ext. 133.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL: National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section brunch, My Israel – Your Israel, raised funds for the Israel Family Counselling Association (IFCA/Aluma). From left are Bari Feld, Marcie Weinman, Debbie Wasserman, guest speaker Ralph Benmergui, Roz Fine, Gita Arnold, IFCA/Aluma chair Hazel Wayne and Emmy Gershon

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

David Grosh	May 8/09	21 Grand Oak Drive
Mark Freedman	May 9/09	9 Alexandra Wood
Archie Levkoe	May 9/09	410 John Street
Lynne Kagan	May 10/09	2 Chase Road
Sam Grotsky	May 12/09	40 Baif Blvd.
Miriam Friedman	May 11/09	5935 Bathurst Street
Shelly Talik	May 10/09	350 Lonsdale Road
Henry Pasuk	May 4/09	6030 Bathurst Street
Charles Diament	May 13/09	3705 Bathurst Street
Lillian Liebesman	May 14/09	61 Bestview Drive
Mannie Baker	May 17/09	2121 Bathurst Street

HEBREW DASIC BURIAL

Margaret Fine	May 12/09	105 West 41st Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Cohen, Sonia	May 12/09	4300 Highway 7
Oks, Itsek	May 12/09	3036 Bathurst St
Ginsburg, Marc	May 13/09	290 Sandringham Rd
Perlstein, Rose	May 13/09	68 German Mills Rd
Assor, Moshe	May 14/09	49 Daniel Bram Dr
Smith, Mildred	May 14/09	Private
Tufman, Mieczyslawa	May 14/09	Private
Wardinger, Mary	May 16/09	156 Richard Clark Dr
Margolin, Dina	May 16/09	Private
Nahon, Moses	May 18/09	120 Dollery Court
Rich, Erwin	May 18/09	Private
Berkovich, Ida	May 18/09	Private
Katsova, Anna	May 19/09	Private
Rockmaker, Allan William	May 19/09	44 Charles St. W.
Kochberg, Ida	May 17/09	2 Covington Rd
Preiss, Ernest	May 20/09	5935 Bathurst St
Goldberg, Shirley-Lynn	May 20/09	70 Thimble Berryway

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HASKELL ZABITSKY ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st at 11:00 a.m.
Beth Tzedec Memorial Park
5822 Bathurst St., north of Finch
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
GOLDENE GERSTL ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st at 2:00 p.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst S. of Steeles
Linitzer Society Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
PAULA MINTZ (MITZMACHER) ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st 12:30 p.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Apter Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
EUGENE TOZMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st 10:30 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Jewish War Veterans
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SAMUEL PIERSON DIME ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 31st 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Linitzer Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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Ray and Mark would like to thank the family and many friends for their cards, donations and messages of condolence at the recent passing of
JACK KAY ז"ל
He will be sadly missed

The family of the late
MAX WOLNERMAN ז"ל
Wish to thank family and friends for their kind support, sympathy cards, shiva meals and generous donations to Beit Halochem.
Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered.
A special thank you to Dr. David Kendal, nurse Bonnie Cole and personal caregiver Xenia Caballero for their care and dedication.

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Watch this space each week for obituaries and related notices. When placing unveiling notices, please ensure the ad is booked at least 15 days prior to the date of the unveiling. To place any family related notice, please call:
416-391-1836

Nazi-confiscated Stern art goes on display

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Nazi-confiscated painting that was the subject of a three-year legal battle between the estate of Jewish art dealer Max Stern and an elderly, German-born baroness was unveiled in a ceremony at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts on May 20.

This may be the first in more than 70 years that Girl from the Sabine Mountains, painted by Franz Xaver Winterhalter in the 1830s, has been on public view, said Clarence Epstein, who heads the Stern restitution and educational project, based at Concordia University.

The picture was displayed at the museum alongside the six other paintings – dating as far back as the 16th century – recovered through the project since 2005, the first time they have been shown altogether, or perhaps, since they hung in the Stern gallery in prewar Düsseldorf.

The Winterhalter was the only one that the estate had to go to court to get back.

Stern – who owned the Dominion Gallery on Sherbrooke Street for more than 40 years and became one of Canada's most prominent art dealers – was forced to sell off his holdings in the 1930s by Nazi authorities, who barred Jews from the art trade. He died in 1987.

The Winterhalter was among the 228 paintings, the last of Stern's prewar inventory, that went on the block at the Lempertz auction house in Cologne in 1937 and sold for a fraction of their worth. It was featured prominently in the catalogue accompanying that sale.

The purchaser was a doctor, Karl Wilhelm, the stepfather of Maria Louise Bissonnette of Providence, R.I., who inherited the painting from her mother many years ago. She refused to hand over the work to the estate after it made a claim.

The estate tried unsuccessfully to reach an out-of-court settlement, but just before it launched legal proceedings, Bissonnette spirited the canvas out of the United States to Germany in an apparent bid to have that country's justice system rule on who its rightful owner is and where it had remained until now.

Late last year, a U.S. appeals court decided the painting belongs to the Stern estate and ruled that the German government's forcing of its sale and that of the 227 other paintings auctioned off in 1937 was "de facto confiscation," making them, in effect, stolen property that should be pursued as such.

That ruling was precedent-setting and marked a "new era" for the Stern project, Epstein said. Two Stern paintings were recovered by U.S. law enforcement officials within the past month. Both had been in the possession of New York art dealers, who had unwittingly bought them, and both had been placed very recently on the market by Lempertz, the same auction house that handled the Nazi-forced sale.

Thomas Kline, the Washington, D.C., lawyer who represented the estate and attended the ceremony, said this was the first U.S. decision equating a Nazi-forced sale with theft, and according to U.S. law and in most English-speaking countries, a person who buys stolen goods does not become the legal owner and the victim, or his heirs, always remains the owner.

He hopes the landmark ruling will persuade others possessing Holocaust-era confiscated art to settle amicably, but, if the legal route is taken, that courts elsewhere will be more open to viewing such art as having been confiscated.

McGill University principal Heather Munroe-Blum, left; Nathan Lindenberg, president of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, and Concordia University president Judith Woodsworth unveiled Girl from the Sabine Mountains last week.

Stern and his wife, Iris, who were childless, left their estate equally to three universities. Concordia president Judith Woodsworth, McGill University principal Heather Munroe-Blum, and Nathan Lindenberg of Toronto, president of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the third beneficiary, had the honour of removing the black cover from the Winterhalter, a bucolic picture of a slumbering young woman.

The paintings are on loan to the museum, and some were immediately afterward put on view with its permanent collection.

Among those in the audience was Richard Feigen, the prominent New York art dealer and collector who returned the most recently recovered painting, the circa-1595 Italian Baroque rendition of St. Jerome in the Wilderness.

Feigen told reporters he contacted the estate right away after reading in the New York Times about the return last month of another Stern painting, a 17th-century Dutch picture of a bagpiper that was traced by U.S. Homeland Security Department investigators to another New York dealer.

What particularly caught his attention was that this dealer had bought the painting from a British dealer, who in turn had purchased it through Lempertz.

Feigen had bought the Italian painting by Ludovico Carracci through Lempertz in 2000, paying a reported 100,000 Deutsche marks – about $685,000 (US) at current rates. He said it had been hanging in his home since then and he had no intention of selling it. But he didn't hesitate to return it to the Stern estate.

Feigen said he thinks Lempertz should compensate him, but he hasn't taken any steps to make a claim, on the advice of Homeland Security to hold off for now.

"They [Lempertz] may not have to abide by American law, but they may have to abide by American publicity… I guess they do not like the adverse publicity that they have been recycling plundered art."

As for U.S. collectors and dealers in possession of confiscated art, Feigen said, "I think they will be less tempted to challenge ownership now."

Lempertz, however, disputes that it bears any responsibility.

In a May 6 letter published in The CJN's Montreal edition, the auction house's legal adviser, Karl-Sax Feddersen, wrote that Stern, "after being forced to liquidate his gallery by the Reich Chamber of Culture, decided to auction the contents of his gallery via Kunsthaus Lempertz… This decision was based on many years of business relations between the Stern Gallery and the auction house.

"Max Stern was involved in compiling the relevant catalogue. The earnings that the auction strived towards were commensurate with the pricing of the time. After the auction, the auction proceeds were remitted to him. If the revenue authorities later confiscated the proceeds, this no longer falls under the jurisdiction of our company."

Feddersen added that, after the war, Stern stayed in touch with Lempertz. "On no occasion did he demand the return of the paintings auctioned off in 1937, nor any compensation. In a lawsuit in the Düsseldorf regional court in 1964, he was compensated for loss of assets suffered."

Race relations tribute wall unveiled

Founding members of the former city of North York's race relations committee gathered May 7 to reminisce about their role in helping address racism in Toronto. Established by then-North York mayor Mel Lastman in 1979 "in response to the emerging needs of [the city's] diverse multicultural population," the committee served as a model for similar initiatives in municipalities across Canada, a statement for the event said. Standing in front of the newly erected wall in the North York Civic Centre are founding members, from left, Bromley Armstrong, former Liberal MP Jean Augustine, Chimbo Poe Mutumba, Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld, Wilma Mercury (wife of founding member Al Mercury), Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber, Rev. Massey Lombardi and Bhausaheb Ubale. "There was an intermingling of people of race in this committee… and none of us could have known this would spark similar [initiatives] in the future," Rabbi Bielfeld recalled at the ceremony.

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School rapped for Hamas lesson

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

RICHMOND, B.C. — A Richmond, B.C., public school has come under fire after a Grade 6 teacher gave a class about violence in the Middle East using teaching material that said Hamas causes "relatively little damage to Israel" and didn't mention that Ottawa considers it a terror group.

Principal Patrick Von Hahn of William Bridge Elementary School said the parents of a Jewish student complained about the depiction of Hamas in What In The World?, a current events newsletter published by Victoria, B.C.-based LesPlan Educational Services.

The material described Hamas as "the Palestinian militant Islamic group that has governed Gaza since 2007. It operates social programs and builds schools, hospitals and religious institutions. Outside Gaza, however, Hamas is known for its violent activities. These include firing rockets and sending suicide bombers into Israel to attack civilians. The aim of Hamas is to set up an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine (much of what is now Israel and home to 7.1 million).

"The organization has tens of thousands of supporters in Gaza. But not all Palestinians support Hamas. Many disagree with the group's violent tactics. They cause relatively little damage to Israel, but result in massive retaliation by the Israeli army. Many countries, including Israel, the United States and the European Union regard Hamas as a terrorist organization."

Eric Wieczorek, president of LesPlan, said there was no intention to downplay the fact that Canada also considers Hamas to be a terrorist organization.

"On further review if we do that article again, I'll take a good, long look at that, and if Canada needs to be included as one of the countries that considers Hamas to be a terrorist organization, we will include it," he said. "Canada's not a major player in the Middle East situation, while the U.S. is. But there was no intent to downplay Hamas' terrorist activities."

Von Hahn said that What In The World? is a supplementary resource that the school subscribes to. He said there has been only one complaint about the material, and he's uncertain how many Jewish students attend the school.

"How [What in the World?] represented Hamas is always a matter of perspective," he said. "Any time you teach a current event, there's political bias that people are going to have, so there's sometimes bias in the classroom. But as educators, we want to make sure we stay away from this and present things as objectively as possible."

Von Hahn said he had not read this particular issue of What In The World? prior to its use in the classroom and wouldn't comment on whether or not it presented the issue it dealt with objectively.

The material's suggested list of classroom questions and issues for discussion included this: "Consider the following quote by a 14-year-old boy in the West Bank: 'What the Israeli forces are doing in Gaza is against the whole Palestinian people, not just against Hamas.' What is your understanding of the above quote? Respond to the quote. For what reasons do you agree with the speaker? For what reasons do you disagree?"

Wieczorek said the newsletter has covered the Middle East at least 20 times since its inception in 1990.

"I have a background in law and history, although I am not a 'Middle East specialist,' and I recognize that this lengthy conflict is very complicated and emotional for many people. I am sorry to hear one parent in Richmond, B.C. objected to the issue," he wrote in a formal response.

"Please be advised that our professional approach is to provide fair and balanced coverage. We do not take sides, and we are very careful to ensure that we live up to these standards. We select stories and provide the most current and accurate information from reputable news sources, such as the BBC, the CBC, and the Globe and Mail."

Wieczorek said he didn't write or research the article in question himself, and he noted that his list of subscribers includes several Jewish day schools in Canada.

"Three and a half months after publishing that newsletter, we get one complaint," he said. "That tells me the vast majority of people out there don't see a problem with what we published."

Hebrew U showcased

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — The Canada-Israel Committee and Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU) recently held a joint event on Parliament Hill to commemorate the 61st year of Canada-Israel relations.

Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney greeted assembled guests in the West Block for a luncheon reception.

In his last official appearance as president of CFHU, Ron Appleby noted that it was appropriate the event was being held on May 14, "which is the actual anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel."

"Hebrew University is an outstanding, world-class institute of higher education. It has nurtured and developed most of the business, academic and professional leaders in Israel. It has been responsible for shaping and forming the liberal democracy that is Israel. Throughout its existence, medical research at the highest level for all mankind has been a priority of Hebrew University," Appleby said as he introduced a video highlighting some of the scientific and medical partnerships between Israel and Canada through the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada.

Israel's ambassador to Canada, Miriam Ziv, congratulated the efforts made to date but urged even further co-operation between Canada and the Jewish state.

"I think that what we have seen today is proof of so many opportunities which should catch on. Let's give a hand to further co-operation between Israel and Canada," she said.

James Lunney, chair of the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Committee, and Carmi Gillon, Hebrew U's vice-president for external relations brought greetings. The luncheon was prepared by Oved Alfia, executive chef at the Dan Tel Aviv Hotel, who showcased a "taste of Israel."

Winnipeg CJA campaign falls short of target

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg's 2008-09 Combined Jewish Appeal campaign may have fallen short of its target for the first time in 10 years, but campaign officials aren't complaining.

"Our campaign was flat last year, but we at least matched the dollar figures [$5.3 million] that we raised in 2007-2008," said CJA Winnipeg executive director Elaine Goldstine. "Many other communities weren't able to reach the totals they hit the year before."

Goldstine said the goal for 2008-09 was $5.5 million. While the local line held its own, she added, contributions to Israel dropped slightly. (Winnipeg is the only Jewish community in North America that still has a two-line system, which gives contributors the option of allocating all or part of their donations to the local community or Israel.)

Rael Ludwig, a Winnipeg lawyer who is in his second year as overall campaign chair, said his committee hasn't set financial targets for the 2009-10 campaign.

"People are assessing their portfolios and may not be able to increase their gifts," he said. "We dodged two bullets last year. The economic collapse happened in mid-campaign, so we were able to break even. Also, we didn't have any money invested with [convicted New York-based pyramid scammer] Bernie Madoff."

Ludwig said that a March 30 campaign meeting generated a lot of enthusiasm among younger canvassers about next year's drive.

"We brought in Susan Jackson [from the Toronto UJA campaign] to act as a facilitator to give us some new ideas for the campaign and how to motivate donors," Ludwig said.

He recalled that, years ago, most canvassers were volunteers. Now, half the canvassing is done by paid staff.

"We would like to get back to where more of the canvassing is done by volunteers," he said.

One of the issues that the campaign organizers are debating this year, Ludwig said, is whether or not to continue to operate a two-line campaign. Another change under consideration is whether or not to allow all donors to designate which beneficiaries receive their donations. In the past, only major donors have had that option.

The new chair of the campaign's Women's Division for 2009-10 is Marcia Cosman, a third-generation community leader. Cosman has been a CJA canvasser for 25 years. She joined the CJA management team two years ago.

"We are looking forward to having more programs this year to show women what we do and hopefully inspire them to give more," Cosman said.

"We are optimistic that we can continue to raise the money we require to fund the services that our community needs," Goldstine said.

Luncheon to help at-risk girls in Israel

By ABIGAIL CUKIER
Special to the CJN

HAMILTON — When Sylvia Katz read about a rehabilitation farm for at-risk girls in Israel's Jordan Valley, she knew she had to help. And now she is asking her community to lend a hand, too.

The great-grandmother and longtime volunteer and fundraiser has planned a luncheon for Sunday, June 7, in Hamilton to raise funds for Ginat Eden.

Ginat Eden is home to about 15 young women, aged 12 to 20, who have experienced family turmoil and trauma from terrorism. Some have had problems with substance abuse, as well as having low self-esteem. The farm is a therapeutic environment, where the girls live, work and study. They study and develop their talents at the farm, and their farming responsibilities foster a sense of self-worth.

After Katz read about the farm in The CJN about four years ago, she started sending annual contributions to the farm.

"It just wouldn't leave me," she said. "Learning about this unique school in a country riddled with so many problems tugged at my heart. I felt compelled to make others aware of the important work of Ginat Eden and to enlist their support in this worthy cause."

Sylvia Katz
[Beverley Abramson photo]

She sent letters to her children, grandchildren and friends, and soon they formed a committee.

"I got them all working, and they will be busy that day," Katz said, adding the event will include a homemade lunch and desserts, and entertainment by jazz pianist and vocalist Fern Lindzon, violinist Bianca Lequit and guitarist Ralph Rosal.

Despite her protests, the committee thought that more tickets would be sold if the luncheon also honoured Katz.

Her daughter, Beverley Abramson, said her parents taught their family the importance of mitzvah and of giving their time.

Born in Toronto, Katz moved to Hamilton in 1940, when she married her late husband, Nathan. They became members of Adas Israel Congregation in 1964. The couple volunteered for many projects, especially for Israel and in the local Hamilton community.

"My mother still knocks on doors or telephones in her capacity as a lifelong fundraiser. Admirers of my mother have donated money to various causes, dedicating their gift in her name," Abramson said in an e-mail. "One in particular is an annuity to Shalom Village, a senior citizens' home in Hamilton."

Katz's great-grandchildren are continuing the tradition. Five of them recently sold daffodils to support cancer research, and one donated the proceeds from her jewelry making and her bat mitzvah gifts to charity.

The luncheon takes place in the Dundas area of Hamilton. For location information and tickets, call Howard Katz at 905-527-8901 or Beverley Abramson at 416-960-9044.

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Rex Murphy lays bare play's moral inversion

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Two weeks ago (May 14th issue) this column focused on the controversy over Caryl Churchill's short play Seven Jewish Children, which was staged this month in Toronto and Montreal. That should have been enough said on that subject. This week's column was supposed to address the media's treatment of the May 18 meeting in Washington between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama. However, since more has been written recently about Churchill's play, and further controversy has been stirred up as a result, it's important to take another look.

Yoni Goldstein, a gifted and insightful writer for the National Post, wrote an illogical piece titled "Nuanced, not anti-Semitic" (May 19th). He argued that Churchill's 10-minute play is a "nuanced piece of writing" and not, as many critics have claimed, "a one-sided diatribe against Israel inhumanness."

However, Goldstein then refuted himself when he acknowledged that Churchill draws an analogy between the Holocaust suffered by Jews under the Nazis and "another, newer, genocide of the Palestinians perpetrated by Israel." Perversely, Goldstein wrote that this is "the worst" one can say about the play. What is worse than implying that Israelis are acting like Nazis? There is nothing "nuanced" about this absurd allegation, which means any claim that the play is a "nuanced piece of writing" shouldn't be taken seriously.

While some defenders of Churchill have argued that she is simply criticizing – strongly, but fairly – the actions of the Israeli government in Gaza, at least Goldstein recognized the linkage she made between Israelis and Nazis, even if he failed to denounce the linkage for the outrageous, hideous slander that it is.

For this very reason, many liberals, such as British novelist Howard Jacobson, have accused Churchill of perpetrating the big lie. How did Goldstein miss this?

Unfortunately, Goldstein only compounded his misjudgment the following day when he wrote, in response to a letter writer taking exception to the Nazi analogy, the following: "Seven Jewish Children was written by Caryl Churchill, not me. To argue, as I have, that the play links the Holocaust to the genocide of the Palestinians by the Israelis is much, much different than arguing that the latter genocide in fact exists."

This defence is, frankly, incoherent. Had Goldstein put the word "genocide" in ironic quotes where it belongs, or had he written a satire (a parody) of what defenders of Churchill are saying, he might have made sense. Unfortunately, simply repeating what Churchill's play asserts, without pointing out its factual baselessness and its absurdity, only lends it an air of plausibility.

What's especially disturbing is that the most hideous things said about Jews and Israelis – which used to be confined to the margins of the extreme right and extreme left – are now making their way into mainstream discourse as "fair comment." Objections to such calumnies are often parried with the accusation, "How dare you try to silence me with the charge of anti-Semitism!" Entirely missed in this sordid affair is that words and facts matter, and that with words comes responsibility – the responsibility to be fair and accurate.

In "A distasteful display of agitprop" (Globe and Mail, May 16), commentator and CBC Radio host Rex Murphy, who knows a thing or two about the meaning of words and their power, brilliantly dissected what Churchill's words amount to.

On the key point in question above, Murphy wrote: "It is the deepest, most radical insult to pass on Israel and Israelis to imply that they are now what Hitler and his demonic henchmen were then: that Israelis are the present world's Nazis. To my ear and mind, linking today's Jews of Israel to the Nazis – as is so frequently the case in the demonstrations and rhetoric of the 'anti-Zionists' – passes as something, in a curious and painful way, more baleful and morally astonishing than denying the Holocaust.

"About no other set of people could such a drama be written, or find audiences, than the Jews of Israel. Seven Jewish Children is a document of our age – not in the manner that 'progressive' thought would have it be. But as yet one more signal, though more sharply intense and fevered than all the rest, of how utterly inverted, how ferociously off track, the moral intelligence of our time has drifted."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

שישאר פ'נ'ע

גידי קורן וחברים

ליאונארד, הכרתן הגדול

שנת שבעים ושלוש, מדבר סיני, מאית חיילים תשושים שמודדים לאל על שנשארו בחיים, מקשיבים במה פעור לבחור מנהיג גמלוני שמנגן על גיטרה:

"Susan takes you down
To her place near the river...."

ליאונארד כהן, המשורר שעשר בטול עמוק כמעט חסר כשרון מנגינתי נפלאות למלים מרגשות, ואנחנו שרנו איתו מבלי לדבין חצי ממה שאמר. אבל הוא בא למדבר רוביא אלינו את הצלם בימים הכי קשים.

לימים הוא עזב את היהדות למחוזות אחרים, ולפי השמועה גם הסטיר לחזיר הביתה. עכשיו הוא עומד על הבמה, בן שבעים ומשהו, וקהל של עשרת אלפים אנשים לא יודעים את נפשם מרוב התרגשות. איש חכם, מבחיר, עם איכויות של גבור. אני מסתכל מסביבי באצטדיון ההומה של המלשן ורואה את עצמי עשרת אלפים פעמים. כמעט כולם בני גילי, כולם מוצאים כאן משהו שהם כל כך מתגעגעים אליו-יחד, תיכמה שכמה. אין צעקות, אין הגזמות, אין "כוכב נולד" ושאר הספנדים. נעזי כמו שהחיים היו צריכים להיות, ואין מה פרחחים ישאר פטולת מכל סוג שהוא, כולם מתנהגים כמו בני אדם. אימרים סליחה ובבקשה ומודים דמעה. שלוש שעות שר ליאונארד כהן והקהל לא ניתן לו ללכת. הם יודעים שקרוב לודאי הם לא יראו איתו שיר. הוא מלווה על ידי תזמורת חמדות לוזי מדהימים שמביאים לבמה את כל העולם-הזה, אירלאנד, וכמובן הטוסיקה היהודית של מזרח אירופה

שירי המרטמע והמולם ביותר על ידי זמרים אחרים , ואני מקדיש לכם אותו בתרגום שלי:

זוכרים, היה מה מזמור,
דוד ביגן עלי כינור,
האל אהב מאוד לשמוע,
הוא התחיל בדו מז'ור
ועבר למי מינור
והאל הרגיש כל כך נבוה.

זוכר, מתי ראית אותה,
עירומה על גג ביתה,
משתזפת היתה לאור הירח,

וכשהכרכה אותך לביתה,
קשרה אותך למיטתה,
ומשפתיך מילשה א הה

את יודעת, ניסיתי הכל,
כל מה שנעעתי נכשל בגדול,
מה לעשות, הכשלון יתום הוא,
אך אף על פי שהכל נכשל,
כשאסגור את האל מעל,
לא אתלונן, אומר ההללה

ואם התמצתם את כיתוב ההופעות, אין סיבה שתחמיצו את התווית-האלבום הכפול שהוקלט בלונדון, מעביר את התוויה באמנות, ושישאר בינינו.

Spirit of the Community Dinner

בשלישי ביוני יתקיים המפגש השנתי השישי של הקהילה הישראלית בערב הב"ד. האירוע יכבד את עדינה הצעים ניסן על תרומתם לקהילה גם בטורונטו וגם בישראל, גם ליהודים וגם לשלישים ממדינות אחרות. אני עד לכך שרבים מכם אינם בהכרה שומרי מצות כדיקה של הב"ד. אבל הערב הזה הוא לא הבחינה בחב"ד, אלא הבחינה בקהילה שלנו, וחב"ד הוא האירגון הכמעט יחידי שותנמך בקהילה הישראלית בימים של חג ומכאוב, של אבדן ושמחה. חב"ד, ובראשה הרב לנדא, הם מנשימי "אהבת חינם", שכל כך חסרה במקומותינו.

אל תחמיצו, ושישאר בינינו.

YOM SPORT AT BIALIK

Teams of junior and senior kindergarten children at Bialik Hebrew Day School enthusiastically took part in sports activities at Bialik's annual Yom Sport (Sports Day). Grade 8 students acted as team leaders and event supervisors.

Dairy recipes for Shavuot

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Jewish people traditionally eat a dairy meal on Shavuot, the festival that marks the day the Israelites received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Some people say this dietary custom can be traced way back to that milestone in our history. When the Israelites accepted the commandments, they committed themselves to a life of restraint, and forgoing meat symbolizes this restraint.

There is also a theory that when the Israelites accepted the Torah and agreed to follow the dietary laws, they could not prepare kosher meat properly. Given this limitation, the Israelites therefore kept to a dairy diet as a means of keeping kosher.

A third theory, which also dates back to Sinai, is that Shavuot is linked to the Exodus and the Israelites' goal of reaching the "land of milk and honey." Eating dairy symbolizes this journey.

There are certainly many dairy dishes to choose from, but the foods that seem to be most connected with Shavuot are blintzes and cheesecake. These days, few people take the time to make blintzes, the crepe filled with seasoned or sweetened cottage cheese. On the *patchkeh* scale, they're up there, and they probably also score high on the Weight Watcher's point system, but there's nothing like homemade blintzes with sour cream, especially on Shavuot.

CHEESE BLINTZES

From The Complete American Jewish Cookbook (World Publishing)

Batter
1 cup sifted all purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
4 eggs, well beaten
1 cup milk or water
Filling
1 1/2 lb. dry cottage cheese
1 to 2 egg yolks beaten
1 tbsp. melted butter
salt, sugar and cinnamon to taste

For the batter, sift flour and salt together in a bowl. Mix egg with liquid in another bowl and stir in flour. Mix until smooth to form thin batter. Pour onto a hot greased skillet with enough batter to form a thin cake, tilting the pan from side to side so that the batter spreads evenly. Cook over low heat on one side until the pancake blisters. Turn out on clean towel cooked side up. Allow to cool. Repeat until all the batter is used up.

Make the filling. Mix cheese and egg yolk and butter and add seasoning to taste. Place a tablespoon of the cheese mixture in the centre of each pancake. Fold the edges over to form an envelope.

Fry in the blintz in butter until it is browned on both sides. Serve hot with sour cream or with cinnamon and sugar. Makes 10 blintzes.

LOW-FAT CHEESE BLINTZES

From The Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook (Vegetarian Times magazine)

Crepe Batter
3/4 cup unbleached pastry flour
1 cup skim milk
4 tbsp. cornstarch
1 small banana, peeled and mashed
Filling
1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

Mix the batter ingredients in a bowl. Heat a nonstick pan lightly coated with nonstick cooking spray over medium heat. Pour about 6 or 7 tablespoons of batter into the pan to make a crepe. Lift and tilt pan gently to spread the batter evenly and thinly. Cook until top is slightly dry. Remove with a spatula and place on a napkin. Repeat with remaining batter.

Preheat the oven to 350. Combine the filling ingredients in a bowl. Place a few tablespoons of filling in the centre of each crepe. Roll up and fold the ends under to make rectangular "packages." Place the blintzes in a lightly oiled baking pan. Bake until golden, about 30 minutes. Makes 10 blintzes

SOUR CREAM AND CHEESE PANCAKES

From Second Helpings, Please (Mt. Sinai Montreal B'nai Brith Women)

1/2 lb. dry cottage cheese
1/2 cup sour cream
3 eggs, beaten
3/4 cup flour
1/8 tsp. baking powder
salt, pepper and sugar to taste
butter for frying

Blend cheese and sour cream. Add eggs and seasoning. Sift dry ingredients together and add to batter. If the batter is too thick, add a little water. Drop by spoonfuls onto a preheated skillet, which has been well-greased with butter. Brown on both sides. Makes one dozen.

MONTREAL KOSHER KITCHEN

Ariel Librati, left, Moche Levy, centre, and Ronel Buzaglo, Grade 5 students at United Talmud Torahs' Beutel campus, volunteer at MADA, a kosher soup kitchen, as teacher Galia Philip watches. The students and their classmates recently served lunch to the cafeteria's patrons, learning a lesson about the reality of poverty in the Jewish community.

Twice Blessed: The Joys Not the Oys of Being Jewish and LGBT

Celebrate the joys of being both Jewish and Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT). A diverse panel will speak about their lived experiences and share the stage with musician Cori Sandler. If you're Jewish and LGBT, if you're not, if you're related to someone who is, or if you think you've never met anyone who is, this promises to be a delightful evening for all.

Sunday June 7, 2009 at 7:00pm

Presented by the *Jewish Diversity Committee*, co-sponsored by *Kulanu TO* and *Jewish Family & Child*

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Fashion

Summer is around the corner. We are thrilled to share with you some of our tips and products for this beautiful season.

Make sure to apply your SPF sunscreens if you spend a lot of time outdoors. Continue to moisturize during the day and evening, and wear a lip balm with SPF to avoid burned lips.

When it comes to makeup coverage, look for a tinted foundation that has an SPF. Most tinted products are hydrating for all skin types. Blush is colourful with shades of pink, orange and rose. Eye makeup is bold! Shades of green, violet and bright colours are hot; gold is the most popular shade. For evening makeup, eyes should be pronounced, with both eyeliner and loads of mascara or false eyelashes.

Lips finish this beautiful look you are trying to create, so pick colours of pink and metallic shades. Glossy lips are still quite a statement.

FIORIO – Maurice Fiorio says spring trends flow into summer nice and easy this season, as the grown-out bobs from fall are now long and ready for shaping.

The looks vary from long, sexy hair to the pixie crop and, of course, the ever-so-classic bob makes its appearance once again. If you keep your hair long, there are quite a few trends you can play with. Flowing movable hair is sexy and feminine – good for any occasion. Straight and sleek hair is classic and elegant for the boardroom or a night on the town. The 1940s mermaid waves make a comeback as an easy way to add a bit of drama to your look.

Braids are a hot trend for summer ,especially milkmaid braids. For a subtle yet sophisticated change to your everyday look, frame one side of your face with a small french braid. Up-dos are chic but effortless and naturally messy, and non-fussy ponytails are also key this summer.

Like skin, hair needs reliable protection and effective care when exposed to the sun. BC Sun Guardian's SolarCare-Technology from **Schwarzkopf Professional** delivers just the right amount of moisture, protection and repair to meet the specific demands of sun-stressed hair. BC Sun Guardian is the first group of products that offers a three-step care program that treats the hair before, during and after sun exposure, and leaves your hair shiny, healthy, manageable and frizz free.

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STACEY'S TIPS

SPA AND SKINCARE: Lise Watier invites you to celebrate summer in advance by setting sail for the sunny beaches of Bora Bora. Two new, complementary products have joined the ranks of the classic Teint Bora Bora Self-Tanning Gel Face and Body: introducing Gommage Bora Bora Exfoliating Gel Face and Body and Lait Bora Bora Hydrating Tan Extender Face and Body. Teint Bora Bora Self-Tanning Gel, a regular **Lise Watier** product, provides an ultra-natural, even tan while hydrating skin and leaving it incredibly silky-soft. The newest additions to the line help prepare skin for application of the self-tanning gel and make the tan last even longer.

Estée Lauder introduces new Advanced Night Repair Synchronized Recovery Complex. Inspired by groundbreaking DNA research, **Estée Lauder** scientists have created a product that revolutionizes skin's youthful look. Advanced Night Repair Synchronized Recovery Complex provides optimal night-time repair to skin's appearance, supporting the natural synchronization of skin's repair processes.

Launched nearly a year ago, L'Expérience by **Lise Watier** is exclusively dedicated to remarkably improving the overall appearance of mature skin. Now, two new products have been added to the L'Expérience line for an even more complete and effective cosmetic solution – the 24 Hour Dual Eye Contour Program, the first and only eye-contour care system in two formulas for continuous 24-hour action. It instantly smoothes by day and works to restructure skin by night. This innovative skin-care duo, sold as a single package, meets the special demands of the fragile skin around the eyes to give a visibly more youthful look.

Because today's woman does not necessarily want to change her body and be thin at all costs, and because many women simply want to maintain their figures or just feel better in their bodies, the **Yves Rocher** laboratories have created a new line of slimming spa products called Spa Végétal Mieux-Être du Corps. With this new spa line, slimming is truly enjoyable! **Yves Rocher** has selected plants derived from traditional Chinese botanicals to help you gracefully tone your body while you relax. Each product provides a different sensory experience. The rich formulas are perfect for massaging, and fragrances surround you with their heady scent. Products include 2 in 1 Hydrating & Slimming, 3D Action Slimming Serum, and Slimming Massage Oil.

FRANCINE'S TIPS

Your morning just got a whole lot easier. **Cargo**'s new 7 in 7 kit gives you the seven tried-and-true must-haves to get you out the door in no time flat. This limited-edition kit includes OneBase (concealer and foundation in one), Essential Palette (four eye shadows), Eye Liner (new), LashActivator, BeachBlush (blush and bronzer together), Reverse Lip Liner (the only lip liner for gloss) and, to finish this amazing kit, (new!) Classic Gloss with Timestrip Technology (non-sticky lip gloss).

Lancôme Paris is proud to introduce Ageless Minérale with White Sapphire Complex, an ultra-fine loose Mineral Powder Foundation that can be used alone or with Setting And Perfecting Mineral Powder. Talc-free and never cakey, the powders wear beautifully for hours without irritating the skin.

7-7 Cargo Kit: Tried-and-true must haves.

Never before have we seen the "wild things" of the world come together in so many bold new combinations as with **M·A·C**'s selection of all-over summer bronzing shades for lips, cheeks, eyes and nails. This beautiful selection is exotically packaged in stylized zebra and leopard prints.

EYE MAKEUP: Lise Watier presents a collection of loose-powder eye shadows formulated with mineral pigments that are gentle on the eyelids. You can apply dry on the eyelid for amazing colour, as well as applying wet to turn it into a fabulous eyeliner. **M·A·C** Colourcraft has now designed New Mineralized Eye Shadows that have a unique design that combines new hues in modern ways. Four shades create a pinwheel design in one compact.

Cargo introduces a safe and effective lash-growing formula that performs. Thirty days is all it takes to give the appearance of longer, thicker lashes. Use LashActivator alone or under your favourite mascara.

Revlon is proud to introduce ColorStay Liquid Eye Pen, a felt-tip liquid eyeliner for controlled application. It creates a precise line from soft to dramatic and wears up to 16 hours. It won't smudge or smear all day.

Orgnx deep treatment.

LIPS: Lise Watier introduces Sun Smart Lips SPF15, a hydrating lip balm that protects against the sun's harmful UV rays. It goes on clear, without leaving any white residue.

For all the brides to be, new **Revlon** ColorStay Ultimate Liquid Lipstick is the first only one-step lip colour that is food-proof, stays comfortable for up to 12 hours and requires no topcoat for comfortable wear. No touch-ups are required even after meals. You can now get intense shine, constant conditioning and fuller lips in one slim lip-gloss stick.

Introducing **Estée Lauder**'s new Pure Color Gloss Stick – a rich formula that melts onto lips, comes in a variety of flattering shades and delivers sheer coverage.

Pamper your pout with **J.R. Watkins** Natural Lip Tints, featuring all the benefits of a beeswax lip balm with the added bonus of a hint of colour. Keep your lips primed with four fabulous shades to fit any mood.

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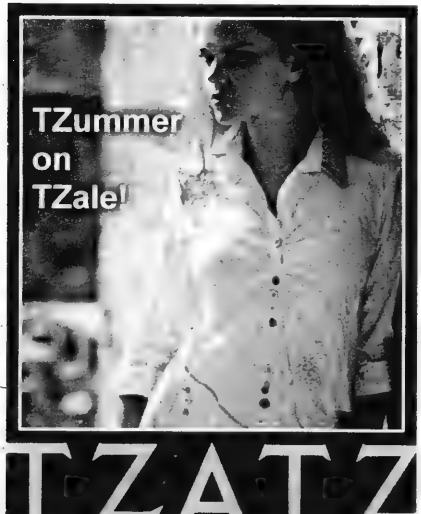

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After Bibi and Barack: depends whom you ask

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

Not even 24 hours had passed and the Obama-Netanyahu summit was assuming Rashomon-type qualities, with partisans reading their own fears and beliefs into the encounter.

The Rashomon phenomenon, by which observers of an event can produce substantially different but equally plausible accounts of it, is especially pronounced among Jewish groups: Americans for Peace Now praised President Barack Obama for saying he would "aggressively" pursue peace and calling for a stop to settlements, and its sister dovish group, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, said it was relieved to see an end to what it called the Bush administration's "ruinous," hands-off approach.

At the other end of the spectrum, StandWithUs, which promotes hard-line, pro-Israel views on U.S. campuses and is behind a campaign urging Obama not to pressure Israel, said its take from the summit was that it was "about terrorism and not territories."

In the establishment centre, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League released statements praising the leaders for reaffirming the "special relationship" between Israel and the United States.

Opinions

The centrist groups, dedicated to bridging both nations, are deeply invested in the notion of smooth sailing, but it might yet prove to be wishful thinking.

Netanyahu secured a significant agreement from Obama to review his Iran outreach policy by the end of the year, but substantial differences emerged over the urgency of advancing talks with the Palestinians.

The Israeli media, which closely monitor the relationship between Israeli prime ministers and U.S. presidents, was blunt. "Agreed not to agree" and "Disagreements and smiles" headlined the mass circulation Yediot Achronot. "Disagreements" and "With mixed feelings" echoed its competitor Ma'ariv.

The negative coverage infuriated Netanyahu and his aides, who fear nothing more than a repeat of the disastrous first months of his 1996-99 prime ministership, when he alienated then-president Bill Clinton by cultivating Clinton's political enemies. That approach helped doom Netanyahu's electoral chances three years later.

Netanyahu convened a last-minute news conference on Capitol Hill last week following his meetings with leaders of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Staffers for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi scrambled to find a room for Netanyahu and watched nervously as Israeli reporters jostled one another.

The Israeli leader sauntered in and said he would take no questions.

"I had important conversations with President Obama," Netanyahu said. "The central understanding with President Obama is important to the State of Israel, and that is that Israel and the United States agree eye to eye that Iran must be not be allowed to develop a military nuclear capability. The president made clear that he would take all steps to ensure this outcome. I think that this is a message that is important to us."

The effect was to suggest that the Israeli media were incorrect to emphasize differences over how to deal with the Palestinians: Iran was the "central understanding," it was "important to the State of Israel" and that was the "message that is important to us." Speaking in Hebrew, he stressed the "us."

Talking with the Palestinians, Netanyahu said, was the "second thing," although he noted that he was prepared to "restart the process with the Palestinians immediately." Again, the prime minister said he was pleased with Obama's insistence that neighbouring Arab states make substantive contributions toward reconciliation – "not at the end of the process, but at the outset."

Israel's military option quashed

By YOSSI MELMAN
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Israel's military option against Iran has died. The death warrant was issued by the new U.S. administration led by President Barack Obama.

The administration's senior officials, from the president to Vice-President Joe Biden, Defence Secretary Robert Gates and others, are sending strong, clear hints that Israel does not have permission to strike Iran. Yet, given their familiarity with the Israeli client, they have not made do with simple hints and intimations. Washington dispatched the new CIA director, Leon Panetta, to Israel earlier this month. Panetta made clear to Netanyahu, in so many words, that an Israeli attack would create "big trouble."

At one point perhaps, Israel had just a small window of opportunity to exercise the military option – the possibility of attacking sites in Iran to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons. This is assuming, of course, that Israel indeed has the military capability to carry out such a mission, an assumption that raises many questions.

This is a mission that requires gathering pinpoint intelligence to identify the precise targets without harming thousands of innocent civilians. One of the targets of such a strike would be the uranium enrichment facility in Isfahan, which lies in the heart of a congested civilian population.

A realistic military option is also contingent on fighter jets finding undetected routes, as well as carrying a sufficient payload of bombs and missiles to inflict heavy damage on the targets.

Assuming that Israel does, indeed, have a military capability that would enable it to strike at the targets, inflict heavy damage and set Iran's nuclear program back a few years, the opportunity to realize this capability arguably presented itself to Israel a few years ago. At the time, Iran was subject to an intense international offensive. Inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency repeatedly exposed its lies and levied sanctions against the Tehran regime.

But all this is now in the past. The sanctions are stuck. Ahmadinejad has, for the time being, softened his bellicose rhetoric. The production of Iranian missiles has doubled.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not ready to recognize the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own, nor does he have any intention of holding serious negotiations with Syria on withdrawal from the Golan Heights. This position reduces international support for Israel.

But most importantly, there is a new president in Washington, one who has outlined a new policy vis-a-vis Iran. Obama has announced the start of negotiations with Iran, and even though he mentioned that the talks will have to be concluded by the end of this year, he did not set a clear deadline.

The supreme tenet of Israeli defence policy states that Jerusalem must not launch any strategic initiative that stands in contradiction to or harms the clear interests of the United States. This stance has underpinned every fateful decision taken by Israel relating to matters of war and peace.

If this tenet remains the cornerstone of defence policy, then again, Israel will not act against the explicit wishes of the United States.

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Impact of Iranian nuke

Some 23 per cent of Israelis would consider leaving the country if Iran obtains a nuclear weapon, according to a poll conducted on behalf of the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University. Some 85 per cent of respondents said they feared the Islamic Republic would obtain an atomic bomb, 57 per cent believed the new U.S. initiative to engage in dialogue with Tehran would fail, and 41 per cent believed Israel should strike Iran's nuclear installations without waiting to see whether or how the talks develop. "The findings are worrying because they reflect an exaggerated and unnecessary fear," David Menashri, the head of the centre, said. "Iran's leadership is religiously extremist but calculated, and it understands an unconventional attack on Israel is an act of madness that will destroy Iran."

Supreme Court questions conversion decisions

Israel's Supreme Court has ordered the High Rabbinic Court to explain why it nullified conversions by the former National Conversion Authority chief. The move to cancel hundreds of conversions overseen by special conversion courts headed by Rabbi Haim Druckman came in February 2008, when a religious court judge in Ashdod retroactively annulled the conversion of a woman whom Druckman had converted 17 years earlier. The annulment also affected the Jewish status of the woman's four children. The Supreme Court ruling came after a petition was filed by several organizations and two women whose conversions were affected. The petition asked the Court to order Israel's rabbinic courts to recognize all conversions registered by the National Conversion Authority. The rabbinic court has 90 days to respond. The woman and other converts in her position remain registered as Jews with the Interior Ministry, but the rabbinic court wields the power to refuse to marry them.

–JTA and Ha'aretz

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Argentine shuls get bomb threats

JTA

BUENOS AIRES — Two Buenos Aires synagogues last week received bomb threats in the wake of violent anti-Semitic attacks at a public street celebration.

The bomb threats on the Amaijai and New Israeli Community synagogues, both located in the highly Jewish neighbourhood of Belgrano, proved to be false alarms.

The threats came after a violent anti-Semitic demonstration erupted in downtown Buenos Aires during a public celebration of Israel's 61st anniversary.

Late in the afternoon on May 17, shortly after Jewish families and their non-Jewish neighbours began Independence Day celebrations at a "Buenos Aires Celebrates" event, a group of some 20 people came out of a subway depot with anti-Semitic banners and signs and fighting broke out.

According to the organizers, a number of Jews were beaten and required medical attention, the news agency AFP reported.

"In the middle of the cultural festival, the group attacked with complete impunity," Aldo Donzis, the DAIA Jewish local political umbrella institution president, told JTA. "Five police officers who were standing in a corner took a long time before acting. Two people from the public were hurt as well as a policeman. Many of the aggressors ran away, but five of them were caught by the policemen and others from the public who chased them."

DAIA officials said the group will take legal action against the five aggressors.

"It was really a very violent act," said Donzis.

The Israeli festival, held a block away from the central Plaza de Mayo, is part of a series of events "celebrating Buenos Aires' diversity and the pluralism that builds our identity," Claudio Avruj, the head of the city's Institutional Relations General Direction office, told JTA. A Greek festival was held in March and a Russian celebration is planned for June.

The demonstration lasted a few minutes and the celebration – which included Israeli music, poetry, crafts and dance – continued as scheduled.

"People stayed and redoubled the will to celebrate," said Avruj

In related developments, Argentine investigators discovered arms, bombs and flags with political insignia at a site where suspects in an anti-Semitic attack held meetings.

Located in Florencio Varela, in the southern outskirts of Buenos Aires, the centre was headquarters for the Front for Revolutionary Action, a group related to the five people arrested after the violent anti-Semitic attacks at the public celebration to mark the 61st anniversary of Israel's founding. The flags also bore the face of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who has been deeply critical of Israel in recent months.

CANADIAN FRIENDS OF PEACE NOW presents

Colonel [RETIRED] Shaul Arieli

Former Commander of the Northern Brigade, IDF in Gaza, Director of the Council for Peace and Security, speaking on:

Israel's New Government and Prospects for Peace

Colonel Arieli has had a distinguished career as a military officer and played an important role as a peace campaigner. In the IDF, he served in commanding posts in the Paratroopers Unit, was the Commander of the Northern Brigade in Gaza (at the level of Colonel), and was responsible for the evacuation of the Gaza Strip in 1994. As part of his military service, he was responsible for the preparation of negotiations with the Palestinians, serving as head of the Interim Agreement Administration under the Rabin government, and head of the Peace Administration under the Barak Government. Since retiring from the IDF in 2001, Colonel Arieli has been dedicated to advancing an Israeli-Palestinian final-status agreement, and was among the lead negotiators of the Geneva Initiative in 2003. He is currently a Fellow and Senior researcher at the Economic Cooperation Foundation, and is a Board member of Israel's Council for Peace and Security.

Toronto
Monday, June 1
at 7:30 pm
Temple Sinai
210 Wilson Avenue

Ottawa
Wednesday, June 3
at 7:30 pm
Temple Israel
1301 Prince of Wales Dr.

Montreal
Thursday, June 4
at 7:30 pm
Congregation Dorshei Emet
The Reconstructionist Synagogue,
18 Cleve Road, Hampstead

ADMISSION IS FREE

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.peacenowcanada.org

Atlantis astronaut carried mezuzah

JTA

JERUSALEM — One of the astronauts on the space shuttle Atlantis carried a mezuzah with him to honour the life of the first Israeli astronaut.

Mission specialist Mike Massimino, who conducted repairs to the Hubble telescope, took a replica of the Barbed Wire Mezuzah by San Francisco artist Aimee Golant with him into space to honour Ilan Ramon, who carried the original mezuzah in the space shuttle Columbia. Ramon and the entire crew were killed in the Columbia disaster in 2003.

Massimino and Ramon trained together in flight school.

The original mezuzah was commissioned by The 1939 Club, a group of Holocaust survivors and their families in Los Angeles. After the Columbia tragedy, the 1939 Club commissioned Golant to make another Barbed Wire Mezuzah to give to Ramon's widow, Rona, as a gift. Rona Ramon asked the artist to make the third mezuzah for Massimino to take into space, according to the artist's blog.

Canada committed to peace process

Continued from page 1

Canada was the first country to announce its boycott of the meeting, even ahead of Israel.

Before coming to Israel, Kenney visited Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, since Canada is home to many immigrants from these countries, he said. After arriving in Israel last Thursday, he visited a Jewish Agency absorption centre in Mevasseret Zion, outside Jerusalem, and met with his Israeli counterpart, Immigration Minister Sofa Landver. (See photo page 4.)

He also spoke to Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman and Information and Diaspora Minister Yuli Edelstein, who is also the former chairman of the interparliamentary Canada-Israel Friendship Group.

In related news, Prime Minister Stephen Harper met Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas this week in Ottawa.

In a statement issued last week, Harper said that he was looking forward to hosting Abbas "and discussing the current peace process and the important security and economic issues that face the Palestinian Authority. We continue to work in good faith with President Abbas, whom the government of Canada recognizes as a legitimate representative of Palestinian interests in the wider Middle East."

He added that "Canada is committed to the peace process" and continues "to support regional leaders who share our commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of the State of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations."

NYC plot shows threat from lone attackers: experts

By ERIC FINGERHUT
JTA

WASHINGTON — The arrest of four men accused of plotting to attack two Bronx synagogues underscores the threat to Jewish targets by individuals or small groups, several experts said.

From the shooting at a Los Angeles Jewish community centre 10 years ago through the attack on the Seattle Jewish federation building in 2006, to the individual targeting Jews at Wesleyan University in Connecticut this month, an individual or small group not formally connected with Al Qaeda or any major international terrorist group was at the centre of the threat.

Steve Pomerantz, former assistant director and director of counterterrorism at the FBI, said that last week's arrests show that "all you need to know about terrorism you can learn from this case." He added that Jews will always top the list of targets for terrorists and that groups unaffiliated with a large international terror group are "at least as dangerous" as well-known groups such as Al Qaeda, because they can "more easily slip through the intelligence net."

Paul Goldenberg, executive director of the Jewish-organized Secure Community Network, stressed "one common denominator" in all those past plots: hostile surveillance by the attackers.

"They were methodical enough and premeditated enough to plan and study the target," said Goldenberg, whose organization was established 3-1/2 years ago by the United Jewish Communities and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to co-ordinate and advise on security in the Jewish community.

For example, the criminal complaint in the New York plot states that last month, one of the defendants "photographed several synagogues and Jewish community centres in the Bronx and elsewhere for consideration as possible targets in a planned terrorist bombing campaign" and said bombing a JCC would be a "piece of cake."

'They stated they wanted to make jihad'

That's why employees and others at Jewish institutions need to be "extremely cognizant" of what's going on around their facilities, Goldenberg said, because people could be watching buildings, studying entry and exit patterns, and times security guards patrol surroundings.

"If people are acting nervous in a location where they shouldn't be, say something," Goldenberg said, adding that while most institutions have video surveillance, personnel must be trained to spot potential dangers.

The four men "wanted to commit jihad," New York Police commissioner Raymond Kelly said. James Cromitie, David Williams, Onta Williams and Laguerre Payen also wanted to shoot down military planes, reports said.

The four men, all of Newburgh 60 miles north of New York, were arrested last Wednesday night. Payen is a native of Haiti. All four are Muslims, and three are reportedly recent converts to Islam.

"More information about their motives I'm sure will be developed as the case progresses, but right now they stated they wanted to make jihad. They were disturbed about what was happening in Afghanistan and Pakistan, that Muslims were being killed," Kelly said. "They were making statements that Jews were killed in this attack and that would be all right – that sort of thing."

Kelly said the men weren't acting on behalf of any terror groups and described them as "petty criminals" with multiple arrests for minor crimes.

According to the U.S. Attorney's statement, an informant working with the FBI this month provided the four men with a disabled anti-aircraft missile launcher and disabled explosives. The men planted the fake explosives, which they believed to be real, in cars parked outside the Riverdale Temple, a Reform synagogue, and the Riverdale Jewish Center, an Orthodox shul.

The first meeting between the informer and Cromitie took place in June 2008 in a mosque in Newburgh.

"While the weapons provided to the defendants by the co-operating witness were fake, the defendants thought they were absolutely real," acting U.S. Attorney Lev Dassin said in the statement. "The defendants planned to strike military planes with surface-to-air guided missiles and to destroy a synagogue and a Jewish community centre with C-4 plastic explosives."

The plotters met in prison, similar to the four men arrested in Los Angeles in 2005 on charges of plotting terror attacks on Jewish and military targets.

The defendants are likely to argue in their defence that they really weren't that involved in the plot and that the government informant, who allegedly acquired the weapons for them, actually directed the operation.

Pomerantz said the fact the plot went as far as planting weapons – although inoperative – made it unlikely such a defence could succeed. "This is as good a case as you can have," he said.

Meanwhile, police said they're looking for a man caught on surveillance cameras trying to burn down a Miami Beach shul last week. The man, wearing a T-shirt and a backward ball cap, lit a pile of wood inside a garage at Temple Moses.

Also last week, two Buenos Aires synagogues received bomb threats in the wake of violent anti-Semitic attacks at a public street celebration, while Brazilian police said they thwarted a plan by neo-Nazis to bomb two shuls.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MUSICAL EVENING HONOURS MEDIC AND RAISES FUNDS FOR JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

An "all-Canadian musical extravaganza" salutes **Dr. Zane Cohen** with performances by So You Think You Can Dance Canada finalists **Miles Faber** and **Natalli Reznik**, actor-director **Ted Dykstra**, singer-songwriter **Melanie Doane** and the vocal trio **Zari**, featuring traditional music and instruments from the republic of Georgia. Co-hosts of the evening are **Diane Flacks** and **Richard Greenblatt**. Also appearing are actor-playwright **Kristen Thomson**, circus performer **Jen Georgopoulos** and the **Jazzabelles**.

Cohen is chairman of General Surgery at the University of Toronto and former surgeon-in-chief at Mount Sinai Hospital. The tribute gala includes a dessert reception and is a fundraiser for the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School. Tickets are $250. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave. at Bloor. Monday, June 8, 8 p.m. E-mail Judy Machtinger at 2009tributegala@gmail.com or call 416-928-3537, ext. 135.

* * *

Choir Concert: One hundred and ten high-energy singers perform a wide assortment of music as **Harriet Wichin** conducts the **Miles Nadal JCC Community Choir** and **Gillian Stecyk** conducts the **MNJCC Women's Chorus**. Hear these choirs at their 13th annual spring concert, MNJCC, Al Green Theatre. $10 adults, $5 children. Wednesday, June 3, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. www.mnjcc.org

* * *

Yiddish Film Classic: The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Mirele Efros (U.S.A., 1939), directed by **Joseph Berne** and considered one of the best Yiddish movies to come out of America. This film adaptation of **Jacob Gordin**'s masterful 1898 play Mirele Efros or the "Jewish Queen Lear," as it has come to be known, features **Beta Gershen** as Mirele, a wealthy matriarch whose control of her children includes picking their mates. Yiddish scholar **Shirley Kumove** introduces and discusses the film. Al Green Theatre, MNJCC. $15, $10. Two screenings, Sunday, June 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Rush tickets on sale at the door 15 minutes before each screening. film@mnjcc.org

* * *

Casting Calls

• Steppin' Out Theatrical Productions plans to stage The Pajama Game at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts in November. Cast auditions are scheduled for May 28, 7 to 10 p.m. and May 30, 12 to 4 p.m. 905-731-9593, info@steppinout.ca

• Encore Entertainment is holding auditions for its fall show, the wickedly funny Ruthless: the Musical, to be directed by **Merle Garbe**. Eight female roles are required, and possibly one male as well. Audition dates are June 9, 10 and 13, with performances scheduled for Oct. 29 to Nov. 8. For details, e-mail dwolstat@hotmail.com or phone Danielle at 416-781-3214. Encore is a non-paying company.

* * *

Theatre & Opera Notes

• Tuesdays With Morrie, the two-person play starring **Hal Linden** based on the book by **Mitch Albom**, continues at the Winter Garden Theatre until May 31. A Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presentation. Ticketmaster.ca, 416-872-5555.

• There's still a few days left to see Doubt: A Parable, the play by **John Patrick Shanley**, directed by **Marti Maraden**, starring **Sean McKenna** and **David Storch**. The Canadian Stage Company production is at the St. Lawrence Centre's Bluma Appel Theatre until May 30. 416-368-3110, www.canstage.com

• 4th Line Theatre of Millbrook, Ont., has announced the cast for its upcoming production of The Right Road to Pontypool, the new play by **Alex Poch-Goldin** set to première on July 2. The 40-person cast is headlined by **Ellen-Ray Hennessy** as present-day Doris, **Dov Mickelson** as Moishe Yukle Bernstein, **Allan Price** as Harold, **Caitlin Driscoll** as young Doris, and **Matt Gilbert** as Bernie the Shochet. The director is **Kim Blackwell**. Pontypool begins previews on June 30 and runs through Aug. 1.

• Canadian Children's Opera Company presents the world première of The Children's Crusade, an opera by Canadian composer **R. Murray Schafer**, as part of the Luminato Toronto Festival of Arts + Creativity. With more than 100 performers, the opera is based on an extraordinary episode in 13th-century France, when thousands of children and young people embarked on an ill-fated expedition to the Holy Land. Commissioned from Schafer in honour of his 75th birthday, it is being performed in an industrial warehouse in Parkdale (153 Dufferin St.) from June 5 to 11. $40. www.luminato.com

Arts in Brief

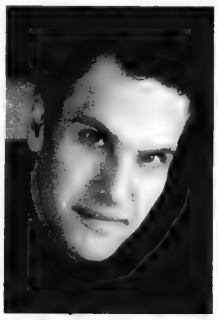
• Active Seniors presents **Adam Fuerstenberg** on "Irving Layton and A.M Klein: Two Masters of Canadian Poetry." MNJCC, Thursday, June 4, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• The **Sisters of Sheynville** perform at Hugh's Room as the opener for the band **Bohemian Swing**. 2261 Dundas St. W., Wednesday, June 3, 8:30 p.m. $15, $20. 416-531-6604

Concert honours Theodore Bikel and Srul Irving Glick

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Tenor Mitch Smolkin is thrilled to be featured at the upcoming Toronto Jewish Folk Choir's concert honouring Theodore Bikel's 85th birthday and commemorating the late composer Srul Irving Glick.



Mitch Smolkin

Smolkin has met and been influenced by both men.

"Bikel is a very powerful yet intimate performer. I saw him in Montreal and in Krakow. One of his most memorable performances was part of a project that brings together musicians from the former Yugoslavia. He has a huge social conscience, and that makes me proud to be a part of this," said Smolkin who recently returned from performing in Jerusalem.

At the concert to be held Sunday, May 31, at 3 p.m. at the Leah Posluns Theatre, Smolkin will be the guest soloist in the tribute to Bikel, performing four songs with the choir: *Bobbes Kholem*, Mordechai Gebirtig's *Reyzele* and two arrangements by maestro Alexander Veprinsky – the humorous Purim song *Hop mayne homentashn* and Abraham Ellstein's *Tif vi di nacht* (Deep as the Night). Smolkin's solo set includes songs from his eclectic repertoire accompanied by pianist Nina Shapilsky.

Smolkin remembers meeting Glick at an awards dinner honouring the composer. "Something in his speech never left my memory. When he was asked to define what an artist is, Glick replied, 'Through their art, artists provide a perspective on the world that helps us understand our place in life.' I always found that powerful and inspiring."

Continued on page 40

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Sisters of Sheynville keep American Yiddish swing alive

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

When you think of folk music, Joan Baez or The Travellers are more likely to come to mind than a six-piece swing Yiddish band.

But, surpisingly, Toronto's Sisters of Sheynville won the vocal group of the year award at last summer's Canadian Folk Music Awards.

"It was a complete shock," said Lenka Lichtenberg, bandleader of Sisters of Sheynville, who are playing Hugh's Room in Toronto on June 3.

"I wasn't expecting to win at all, and I didn't see us being 'folk.' I did have a tingling in my stomach, but I never expected to win. It was a beautiful surprise."

The Sisters are Canada's only all-female swing/klezmer sextet. They formed four years ago, inspired by the Barry Sisters, an American Yiddish swing duo that was popular in the 1940s and '50s.

Lenka Lichtenberg

Recently, the group's sound has evolved to include more jazz and improvisation. "Fern Lindzon [the pianist and one of three singers] with her jazz background takes that sound to a totally different place and makes it our own," Lichtenberg says.

"We have a three-piece harmony, as opposed to the two-piece of the Barry Sisters," she adds.

The group sings in Yiddish and English and does traditional as well as original songs. "We have about five original songs, some in the style of early swing and others have more of a modern Jewish sound."

The sextet is made up of Lichtenberg, on vocals and tambourine; Lindzon; Isabel Fryszberg, on vocals; Kinneret Sagee, on clarinet; Rachel Melas, on double bass; and drummer Lorie Wolf.

"The group was Isabel's idea. She contacted me to create a band and do the music of the Barry Sisters," Lichtenberg says. "She felt it would be good to preserve the music and keep it alive. It was all new to me, as I grew up in Prague and American swing didn't mean anything to me. All six of us have grown musically through being in the band."

Over the past four years, the band has played major festivals in Canada and the U.S. and has received much critical praise. They released their debut CD, Sheynville Express, in 2007 and are planning on releasing another.

"We have about six or seven new songs since our last album, so when we have four or five more, we can go back to the studio."

The Sisters are performing at Hugh's Room as part of a double bill with Prague-born guitarist George Grosman and his band Bohemian Swing, known for its mixture of swing standards and Gypsy jazz.

Hugh's Room is located at 2261 Dundas St. W. Call 416-531-6604 for tickets.

The Sisters of Sheynville also play a monthly gig at Chalker's Pub on Marlee Avenue, and are booked at the Mariposa Folk Festival on July 5.

Lichtenberg is looking forward to appearing at the Festival of Jewish Culture's "Singer's Warsaw" (a tribute to writer I.B. Singer) in Poland this September.

The Sisters of Sheynville are, from left, Kinneret Sagee, Fern Lindzon, Isabel Fryszberg, Lenka Lichtenberg, Rachel Melas and Lorie Wolf.

You can check out the Sisters' unique musical stylings at www.myspace.com/sistersofsheynville.

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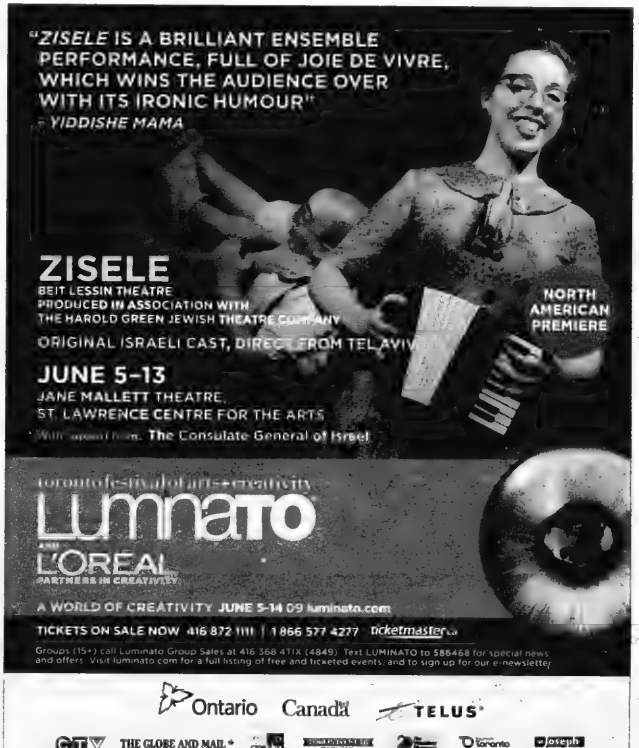
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Otto Preminger retrospective at Cinematheque Ontario

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Otto Preminger (1905-1986) was a larger-than-life, stereotypical Hollywood producer and director whose movies ranged from film noir mysteries and flamboyant melodramas to sweeping historical sagas and thoughtful courtroom dramas.

A cosmopolitan Jew who left Vienna three years before the German army marched into Austria in 1938, Preminger was an infamously volatile figure whose charming Viennese wit could turn to towering rage at a moment's notice.

Preminger, whose credits include Exodus, Advise and Consent, Anatomy of a Murder, Bunny Lake is Missing and The Cardinal, will be the subject of a Cinematheque Ontario retrospective. Fallen Angels: The Films of Otto Preminger will run from May 29 to July 2.

The films are to be screened at the Jackman Hall in the Art Gallery of Ontario. For more information, visit www.cinemathequeontario.ca.

He was born in Wiznitz, near Czernowitz, in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire and is now Ukraine. Preminger's father, Markus, the son of a talmudic scholar, was a public prosecutor, a position to which few Jews could aspire unless they converted to Christianity.

The prewar anti-Semitism in Austria influenced him, and as a filmmaker, he later explored this topic in The Cardinal (1963), which was set in Rome, Vienna and Boston, and starred Romy Schneider and Carol Lynley. In Daisy Kenyon (1947), starring Joan Crawford and Henry Fonda, he examined racial intolerance.

Thanks to his father, he witnessed court cases and trials, and these experiences had a lasting influence on him, too. Anatomy of a Murder (1959), an accomplished and ambiguous courtroom drama, features James Stewart as a small-town lawyer hired to defend a U.S. army lieutenant (Ben Gazzara) charged with the murder of a bar owner who allegedly raped his wife (Lee Remick).

To satisfy his father, Preminger studied law at the University of Vienna while employed as an apprentice to legendary theatre director Max Reinhardt. The German expressionism that generally informed Reinhardt's style appeared, to some degree, in at least two Preminger films.

In The Man with the Golden Arm (1955), celebrated for Elmer Bernstein's jazz score, Frank Sinatra portrays a drug addict who seeks a fresh start as as drummer. And in Where the Sidewalk Ends (1950), boasting Ben Hecht's hardboiled dialogue and Joseph LaShelle's moody cinematography, Dana Andrews plays a hard-as-nails New York cop consumed by shame.

Under Reinhardt's tutelage, Preminger established himself as a theatre director. Among the performers he hired was Louise Rainer, an actress who won back-to-back Academy Awards in 1936 and 1937 for the Great Zeigfeld and The Good Earth.

In 1935, Preminger's life changed irretrievably when Joseph Schenck, the founder of the Twentieth Century Fox studio, offered him a gig in Hollywood. Danger – Love at Work (1937), a B-picture comedy with Ann Sothern, was the first film Preminger directed in the United States.

Schenck's partner, Darryl Zanuck, handed Preminger his second assignment, Kidnapped (1938), based on a Robert Louis Stevenson novel and set in the Scottish highlands. During the shooting, Preminger flew into his first tantrum, a template for his less than civilized behaviour in future films.

He acquired a reputation for verbally abusing and bullying actors and bursting oversize egos, though he could be unusually empathetic and kind in certain instances.

Otto Preminger

Kidnapped also marked a new phase in his career. He and Zanuck clashed over the interpretation of Zanuck's script, with the net result that Preminger was fired. Now unemployed, he returned to his first love, the theatre.

After he had a series of successes on Broadway, Hollywood came knocking again, asking him to reprise a play, Margin for Error, for the screen. Margin for Error (1943) stars Milton Berle as a Jewish policeman in New York City whose task is to protect an imperious German diplomat, depicted by Preminger himself, and to arrest Nazi saboteurs threatening the Big Apple.

Impressed by Preminger's performance, Samuel Goldwyn hired him as a Nazi in a Bob Hope comedy, They Got Me Covered. Years later, he would appear as a Nazi yet again in Billy Wilder's Stalag 17 (1953).

Preminger's pièce de résistance in film noir was probably Laura (1944), which critic Pauline Kael described as "everybody's favourite chic murder mystery." The movie, starring Gene Tierny, Clifton Webb, Dana Andrews and Vincent Price, earned Preminger his first of two Academy Award nominations for best director.

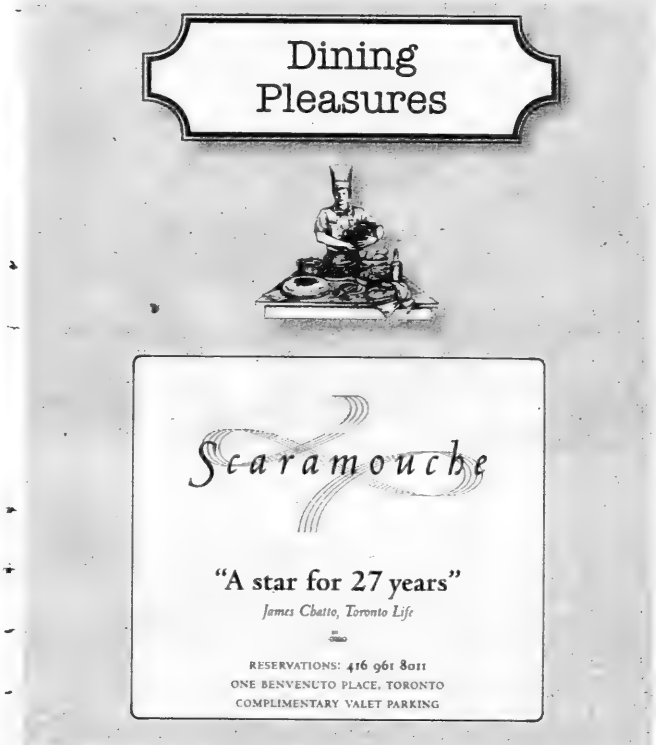
His next film, Fallen Angels (1945), with Dana Andrews and Linda Darnell, was a tale of deceit and murder in which a con man seduces a sultry waitress and an affluent spinster.

Forever Amber (1947), which Preminger complained was his most expensive yet worst film, was a lavishly mounted period piece that unfolds in 17th-century Britain.

The 1950s and 1960s were fruitful years for Preminger. He directed, among other films, Porgy and Bess (1959), adapted from George Gershwin's opera; Exodus (1960), based on Leon Uris' bestselling novel on the founding of Israel; and Advise and Consent (1962), a political thriller set in Washington, D.C. and one of the first mainstream American movies to touch directly on homosexuality.

In line with his unconventional approach, Preminger made Hurry Sundown (1967), a drama in which Michael Caine was cast as a southern patriarch. It was supposed to break racial and sexual taboos, but was panned instead, signalling a decline in Preminger's artistic sensibility. Preminger's final six films, including Skidoo (1968) and The Human Factor (1979), were failures as well.

But by then, he had already left his mark as a master of the American cinema.



Smolkin influenced by both men

Continued from page 38

The choir's performances will include Glick's Time Cycle (Yiddish Suite No. 2), with words by the Toronto Yiddish poet Peretz Miransky (1908-1993), as well as *A Glezele Lechaim* (A Glass of Cheer), *Lo Yisa Goy* (Nation shall not lift up arms against nation) and Sephardi songs *La Rosa Enflorece* (The Rose Blooms) and *Adio Querida* (Farewell, Beloved).

Veprinsky will conduct the 30-member choir with solos by soprano Miriam Eskin and bass Herman Rombouts, accompanied by pianist Lina Zemelman.

Actor and singer Theodore Bikel has appeared in concerts for more than 50 years in the United States, Canada, Israel, New Zealand and Australia. He is best known for his role as Tevya in Fiddler on the Roof, which he's played more often than any other actor – more than 2,000 times since 1967.

Glick was a prominent Canadian composer of chamber, oratorio, orchestral, vocal and choral music. Born in Toronto, he was the classical music producer at the CBC for more than 24 years, choir director and composer in residence with Beth Tikvah Synagogue between 1969 and 2002, and taught at the Royal Conservatory of Music and York University. He was also the recipient of a Governor General's medal for his contribution to Canada's culture and was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada for outstanding achievement. He died in 2002.

Tickets for the Bikel/Glick tribute concert at Leah Posluns Theatre, 4588 Bathurst St. – the choir's 83rd spring concert – are $20 in advance, $25 at the door; children 12 and under free. For ticket reservations, call 416-636-0936 or e-mail tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca. For Visa orders, call 416-398-3405.

Smolkin will also give a special Father's Day concert on June 21 with Klezmer En Buenos Aires at the Glenn Gould Studio. In October, he will tour South America with the klezmer group.

For more information on Smolkin visit his website at www.mitchsmolkin.com.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Pop star Ivri Lider becomes a spokesperson for a 'new liberal movement' in Israel

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Israeli pop star Ivri Lider, who has been referred to as the voice of a new Israeli generation, is coming to Toronto next month as part of a tour to promote his latest album.

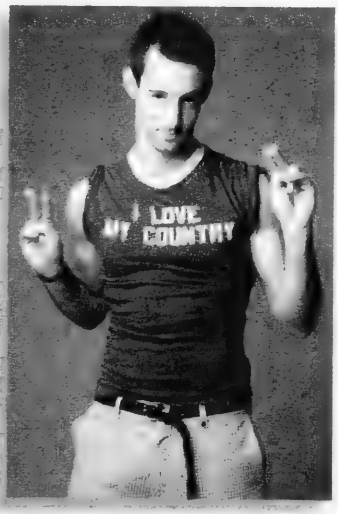
In celebration of Tel Aviv's 100th birthday, Motek Productions is hosting Lider, one of the bestselling Israeli contemporary artists at The Guvernment on June 4.

Tel Aviv DJ Assaf Amdursky is also set to hit the stage following Lider's performance.

Lider, who travelled to Spain to kick off his tour to promote his fifth album *Be'ketzev Ahid Be'tnuot Shel Ha'goof*, or The Steady Rhythm of Body Movements, spoke to The CJN about his upcoming show in Toronto, his music, and his personal life.

In his 12-year music career, since he released his first album *Melatef V'meshaker* (Caressing and Lying), Lider said he is always looking to evolve and reinvent himself.

"I think my music has definitely evolved. I'm trying to always look for new things and new sounds, and new things to do and I'm sure my lyrics changed with me. I like to write about personal stuff and stuff that happens to me, my views on the world," he said.



Ivri Lider will be in Toronto next week to perform at The Guvernment.

In 2002, when Lider released *Ha'anashim Ha'chadashim*, The New People, the album focused on an electronic sound.

"It had a lot of samples and sound design and stuff like that," he said.

"*Ze Lo Oto Davar* [It's Not the Same Thing] was very, very acoustic. It was mainly piano and string orchestra. No computers were involved except during recording."

But his latest album, with tracks both in English and Hebrew, combines both distinct sounds.

"I think this last album, it's kind of like a mixture of those two types of music I like doing and the band is very involved."

Lider, 35, has performed in Toronto twice before – most recently when he sang The Man I Love from the soundtrack of Eytan Fox's film, The Bubble, at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival in 2007.

Although he's achieved international success throughout his career, Lider has also inadvertently taken on a role as a spokesperson for a liberal-minded Israeli public.

Lider said he didn't seek out that role, but when he would write and speak about what was interesting and important to him, people seemed to relate to him.

"People started referring to me this way when I did The New People because it was very much about the new generation, the cities, the western world... It was even political in a way," Lider said.

"I think my coming out was part of it because I was the only one and then it made me a bit of a spokesperson for a new liberal movement or idea."

He said his decision to be openly gay was based a combination of factors.

"On a personal note, it's just me wanting to be true and up front and not have any secrets. As an artist, I think it's important to be able to write about everything I want to in a very free way," he said.

With tracks off his latest album, such as Jesse, Lider doesn't shy away from exploring the insecurities and confusion that some experience when coming to terms with their sexuality.

"I loved a boy named Jesse/ But Jesse doesn't love me back/ He says he's straight and all that stuff is only in my mind," he sings.

Lider said that having a profession that puts him in the public eye and grants him a world stage makes him feel like he has an obligation to speak for the voiceless.

"It's kind of maybe my duty in a way, because as an artist I have the privilege to get a lot of love from people and respect and it's my way of giving back something to the world and society," he said.

"If I can do something to help other people who are in a bad place or if I can help move some ideas forward, and I can do that because [of my status], then it is kind of my obligation to do that."

He said that in Israel, the acceptance of homosexuality is progressing.

"It's funny because of on one hand Israel is liberal and, on the other, it's not. For example, in Israel, in the army, it is not something that would ever be an excuse not to be in the army, whereas in America, it's like, 'Don't ask, don't tell,'" Lider said.

"So ih some ways, Israel is very liberal and you can be out and be successful, but sometimes, on the other hand of course, you can have some religious guy or a government official saying some horrible stuff."

But, he added, a country like Canada, where homosexuals are free to marry one another, is far more progressive.

"A lot of Israelis go to marry in Canada. Actually, two of my best friends, two girls, were married in Toronto two years ago and last year they moved there."

When asked if he would ever consider getting married in Toronto, he said, "Well, if I can find someone to marry, yeah."

For tickets, call 647-899-0071.

Lider said that with his fame comes an obligation to use his influence to speak out and "move some ideas forward."

Amos Oz's new novel of story-making and its discontents

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

When Amos Oz's recent novel appeared in English translation, his homeland was in the midst of celebrating his 70th birthday with a three-day festival in his hometown of Arad and a conference at Ben-Gurion University.

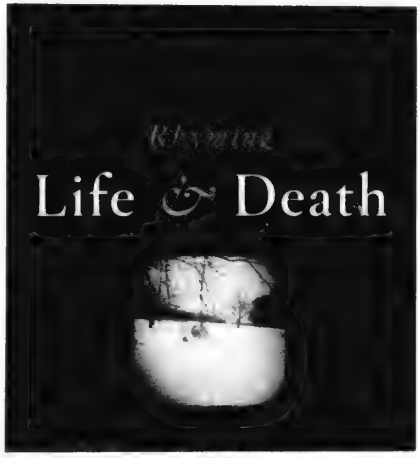
Oz's political views have often placed him on the fringes of the Israeli mainstream, but he shares this position with other major Israeli novelists such as David Grossman and A.B. Yehoshua. Rhyming Life & Death (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), which appeared in Hebrew two years ago, is a slim book, easily read in a sitting or two. Its focus is the imaginings, during an eight-hour period, of a writer said to be in his early 40s. But for such a young narrator, the story told has an inescapable tone of gloom, of end times, of a writerly voice with grave doubts about its relevance and motivations.

Norman Ravin

Set in the early 1980s, the book turns on the kind of event that writers love to hate – the all-too-necessary question-and-answer event meant to introduce a new book, which often leads to the kind of questions with which Oz begins his narrative: "Why do you write? Why do you write the way you do? Are you trying to influence your readers, and, if so, how?" Oz's protagonist, known simply as "the Author," has "no idea how he will answer the audience's questions."

The ingenious feature that drives the front half of Rhyming Life & Death is the Author's spontaneous ability to develop full-fledged characters – complete with flaws, personal entanglements and a deeply textured daily life – from fleeting encounters. On his way to an event in his honour at the Shunia Shor and the Seven Victims of the Quarry Attack Cultural Center in Tel Aviv, he stops at a coffee shop. There, out of an overheard conversation, he conjures Ovadya Hazzam, a lottery winner who "spent money left and right, both on good causes and just having a good time, he cruised around town all day in a blue Buick with Russian blondes…" Later, as the Author listens to a literary critic summarize his contribution to Israeli literature, he spots a face to which he attaches the name Arnold Bartok: "He lives with his mother, Ophelia, whose legs are paralyzed. The two of them sleep under the same sheet on a worn-out mattress in their room, which is no more than a windowless cubicle that was once his father's little laundry."

This process of conjuration, which the Author calls his "usual tricks," gives Rhyming Life & Death its energy, and it allows Oz to supply glancing, sharply etched portraits of Israeli types and daily life. Political complaints, youthful artistic yearnings, embarrassed romantic urges and a wanton lust for life arise out of a bare motif: Hazzam's blue Buick and his blondes; a young waitress' "high" breasts; the way a "heavily built woman" listens attentively to the Author's words, "her lips… parted with the sweetness of the cultural experience she is undergoing."



There is great readerly pleasure in Oz's employment of these tricks, which offer a study in how a writerly imagination builds a fictional world out of the events of daily life. In this, Rhyming Life & Death is a book about writing, its pleasures and eccentricities, which answers some of the questions posed at the outset of the novel. In a recent interview in Ha'aretz, Oz outlined some of the basic habits that underwrite his creative work: "I get up at 5 in the morning, every day. This habit from the kibbutz has stayed with me. I go out to walk a little in the desert near the house in Arad, not long, 20 minutes. By 6, I'm already sitting at my desk and I write until noon. I always write with a pen . . . for sensual reasons, the arc between the pen and fingers…"

Further on the theme of a writer's motivations, Rhyming Life & Death takes its title from the book of the early Israeli poet Tsefania Beit-Halachmi. A touchstone in the Author's youth, Halachmi's poetry was sung to "melancholy Russian-style" tunes "around campfires and on kibbutz lawns." His subjects were "absorption of immigrants, transit camps, austerity measures, the conquest of the desert… border incidents and raids by infiltrators, the corruption and bureaucracy that overshadowed the public life of the young State. He represented the younger generation, the muscular, suntanned native-born sabras." These experiences encapsulate Oz's own youthful years, born as he was before the declaration of the State, to become, in the early 1960s, an emblematic figure from this "younger generation." At the novel's end, Oz's musings about Halachmi's fate seem to suggest his own doubts and indifference regarding his literary legacy.

Rhyming Life & Death takes an odd turn in its middle pages, as the Author describes (or imagines) a long, awkward scene of lovemaking with one of his admirers. Beyond this, it is a shrewd and unsettling portrait of an author's life and times.

Norman Ravvin is chair of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. His books include A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory and Hidden Canada: An Intimate Travelogue.

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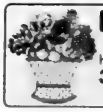

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35 CONDOMINIUM FOR RENT
40 CONDOMINIUM FOR SALE/RENT
45 CONDOMINIUM WANTED
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55 ACCOMMODATION WANTED
60 SHARED ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE
62 SHARED ACCOMMODATION WANTED
65 ACCOMMODATION/SWAP/EXCHANGE
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Shermers bring brother act to Maccabiah volleyball

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

None of them actually mention winning a medal, but for three volleyball-playing brothers, at the end of the day, the upcoming Maccabiah Games promise to be an experience to cherish.

Elie, Daniel and Joshua Shermer will all suit up for the Canadian team in a competition that is usually dominated by the host Israelis, along with the United States and Brazil.

But as the Shermers describe it, just being in Israel, at the Maccabiah Games, walking into a stadium filled with 40,000 fans, meeting Jewish athletes from more than 50 countries, and doing that with your brothers at your side promises to be a great experience.

Elie, at 29 the oldest brother and the senior player on the Canadian team, believes they are the first brother trio to participate in the same games on the same team. Even if not, he's happy he was able to stick around until his youngest brother, Joshua, 19, got old enough and good enough to make the team.

"It's pretty amazing," he said last week. "It's probably the biggest motivating factor for going again."

For Elie, the upcoming 18th Maccabiah Games, which run from July 12 to 23, will be his third "Jewish Olympics." Both he and middle brother, Daniel, 26, competed at the 2005 and 2001 Games.

"I told [Joshua] to be prepared for the experience of a lifetime," Elie said. "We're a sports family that watched the Olympics. I say, 'Imagine walking in front of 40,000 people, representing your country. That experience will be amazing and we'll be doing it together.'"

What happens on the court seems almost secondary, but coach Brenda Willis is hoping to keep the players on a medal track. She'll be looking to the two older Shermer brothers to add stability and experience to the mostly young roster, since it's easy for a young team to be overwhelmed by the international experience.

The Shermers have been through it, she said, adding that "I don't expect anything at the Games will fase them."

A few months ago, "I had very high expectations, before the elite [Canadian] programs invaded our roster," Willis said.

She was referring to four players who made the Maccabiah team, but who will be unavailable because of other commitments.

Josh Binstock, who played at the last Maccabiah Games, is now on the Canadian national beach team and will be playing internationally this summer. Sam Schacter, who was an all-Canadian rookie playing for Wilfred Laurier, has been named to the Canadian national junior beach team and is committed to participating in the national development program.

Elie, Joshua and Daniel Shermer, left to right, will play together at the Maccabiah Games.

Daniel Rosenbaum, a native of Hamilton, is trying out for the Ontario team that will play at the Canada Games this summer.

Jesse Mighton, who played for Queen's and Dalhousie, is out due to a back injury.

A fifth potential player, Josh Boruck, from Revelstoke, B.C., is attending a tryout for the national junior team and his availability won't be known until late June.

The Maccabiah team is holding a roster spot open for him, but even if he comes, Canada will have a smaller roster than other competitors, both in numbers and in stature.

Willis, a Toronto native who is the head coach of the men's volleyball team at Queen's University, said because the Maccabiah team is small, "we need to be good at ball control."

In addition to the Shermers, she's relying on Daniel Levy, who played at York University, and Ron Appel, a former University of Toronto player, for stability. Kyle Done, who will play for British Columbia in the upcoming Canada Games, is going to be the team's libero, a defensive specialist.

Willis said Jewish volleyball talent in Canada is pretty deep. As to the absence of top players, "One person's struggle is another's opportunity," she said.

For Daniel Shermer, his passion for the game got him at age 18 to a provincial title playing with Loyalist College in 2001-02 and a third-place finish nationally. Three years later, at Humber College, he won another provincial title but settled for fourth place nationally.

His position is "setter, like the quarterback or point guard, the guy who runs the offense and controls what happens on the court," he said.

It's something his volleyball-playing dad, George, taught him and his brothers. George, who played for Maccabi Canada as a young man and who coached the 1997 team, said all three of his sons can play as setters or liberos.

Most important, though, is how "proud I am that they're looking forward to enjoying their Jewish experience. They're talking about how important it is for the three brothers to be playing in Israel and how proud as Jews they are to be experiencing the Games."

Joshua said that "from the pictures I've seen and the stories I've heard, I'm more excited about the Maccabiah experience than the competition itself."

The Games will mark the first time the three brothers play together in a tournament. They do play and practise together at Beach Blast, the volleyball facility operated by their dad, but to play on the same team, "that's very exciting," said Joshua. "That's the whole appeal of it."

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Dubai fined for barring Israeli tennis player

JTA

JERUSALEM — The Dubai Tennis Championships will pay a record fine over the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) refusal to award a visa to an Israeli player.

The heads of the tournament agreed recently to pay a record $300,000 (US) fine after the World Tennis Association (WTA) turned down Dubai's appeal.

The UAE, which consists of Dubai and six other emirates, rejected Israeli tennis champion Shahar Peer's request for a visa just days before the start of the tournament and shortly before she planned to travel to the UAE in February.

The WTA also will require organizers of the Dubai tournament to ensure Israeli players who qualify for the event receive their visas at least eight weeks ahead of the 2010 event.

Partition of Jerusalem guarantees chaos

By NADAV SHRAGAI
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Opinion

A great joy befell us in 1967, when we realized a 2,000-year-old dream and returned to our holiest sites, to historic Jerusalem.

The 200,000 Jews whom the State of Israel has settled in parts of Jerusalem that lie on the other side of its former border are not an obstacle to peace, but an obstacle to partition. And partition is the greatest guarantee of a chaos that would keep peace at bay for several more generations.

Muslims today question our right and our primacy in Jerusalem and rewrite the history of the city. They alter its events, place later events earlier and de-Judaize it. If the efforts to return Jews to the City of David and to parts of the Old City other than the Jewish Quarter succeed, it prevents partition and it will also do historic justice for the Jewish people.

Under Israeli rule, the Temple Mount – the Jewish people's holiest site, but only the third most important to Muslims – has become a place where any Jewish presence is viewed as problematic. This view is not merely anti-Jewish – which is particularly egregious given that there is no place more Jewish in the entire world – but it also violates the spirit of the law, which promises freedom of access to the holy places.

Moshe Dayan, the father of this policy, erred in reading the map in 1967. The former mufti, Sheikh Saad al-Din Alami, related before his death that he and his colleagues in the Muslim religious establishment, whose reaction Dayan so feared, had actually expected an arrangement such as the one instituted at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. They were psychologically prepared to have Jews, too, on a site on the mount for prayer. Now it is hard to change the status quo. But at least the little that was left to Jews on the mount – the right to visit it – ought to be upheld.

Israel makes both a moral and a tactical mistake when it discriminates against the Arab population of east Jerusalem with regard to infrastructure and services, thereby creating intolerable gaps between the city's Jewish and Arab populations. It cannot grasp the stick at both ends by simultaneously claiming sovereignty over all of Jerusalem and treating such a significant portion of its population as excess baggage. Nevertheless, if you talk to east Jerusalem residents, you will discover that a great many of them view the prospect of becoming part of the Palestinian Authority as a nightmare scenario.

The West Bank separation fence, which is the most significant change Jerusalem has undergone in recent years, improves security in the short term, but inflicts a great deal of long-term damage. It raises the wall of hatred and suspicion even higher and also encourages Palestinian migration – some 60,000 thus far – to the Israeli side of the fence, including to the city's Jewish neighbourhoods.

The greatest challenge the State of Israel and the Jerusalem municipality face today is to stem the huge exodus of Jews from the city. Some 17,000 Jews leave every year, because housing prices in Jerusalem are insane and there are no jobs. The solution, therefore, involves multiple elements: building apartments in the city, immediately and in large numbers; giving entrepreneurs grants and dirt-cheap land if they will create jobs in the city; and encouraging the growing trend of haredi Jews entering the city's workforce.

BLACK BEAN & TOMATO QUINOA

1 c quinoa
2 tsp grated lime zest
2 tblsp fresh lime juice
1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
2 medium tomatoes, diced
2 tblsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled
1/4 c chopped fresh cilantro
1 tsp sugar
1 tblsp vegetable oil
4 scallions, chopped

Dressing: Whisk together lime zest & juice, butter, oil, sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4tsp pepper in a large bowl. Set aside.

Prepare quinoa as directed on box. When cooked, drain and let stand, still covered for about 5 min. Add quinoa to dressing and toss until dressing is absorbed, then stir in remaining ingredients and salt and pepper to taste.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

I am facing an extremely embarrassing situation. Noah and I were married in February – it was a fairy tale wedding.

When we got back from our honeymoon, we went through the generous gifts and cheques we had received. A few days after depositing the cheques, we were notified by the bank that one of the cheques had come back NSF, and we were charged a fee. It was from Noah's cousins, whom we are not very close with. We only see them at family functions. Noah was really angry and immediately called his mother who refused to get involved. I was more embarrassed than angry. I'm sure they didn't mean for this to happen. I would rather ignore the whole thing and simply not send them a thank-you card and be done with it. What do you think we should do?

Rubber Wedding Gift
Dear Rubber Wedding Gift

After mentioning this to a few people, I was a little surprised to hear how common it is. I would be inclined to give the cousins the benefit of the doubt. If they didn't want to give you a gift, it would have been much easier to give you nothing rather than a cheque that bounced.

I agree with you – leave it alone. It won't be long before someone in that household has to balance the chequing account and see the fee for an NSF cheque. You can be sure it will be a huge embarrassment for them without your making them feel worse.

My guess is you will get a replacement cheque with a note or phone call of apology. I would definitely hold off on sending the thank-you card until you hear some kind of acknowledgement for this unfortunate mistake. People are human, and not everyone is great at balancing cheque books.

If you never hear from them about this incident, then you have a choice to make. Either you continue to ignore it – but I know it will be eating away at Noah and he won't be able to be in the same place with his cousin without this big elephant in the room – or one of you can make a call and let them know. There is no easy way to approach this call. It is awkward for both you and the cousin, but at least this way, you deal with the incident and you can put it behind you and move on.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

Pursue your dreams now, says Deepak Chopra

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

Many years ago, when I read Deepak Chopra's The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success: A Practical Guide to the Fulfillment of Your Dreams, I was hooked by the author's wisdom.

Chopra has been hailed by Time magazine as "one of the top heroes and icons of this century." He is the author of more than 42 books and is known for his groundbreaking lectures and miraculous work that bridge the gap between the West and the East, and help to bring the body, mind and soul back into balance.

When I heard he was going to be appearing in Toronto at Roy Thomson Hall, I was thrilled to finally have the opportunity to hear him speak.

As he stood before the audience of 2,500 people, he began by asking, "So, how's everyone?" An enthusiastic audience member called out, "How about you?" He answered with a smile, and very little ego, "I'm good." And then he got right into it by saying, "We are the ones we've been waiting for."

The topic was the "Secret of Enlightenment," and Chopra provided many practical tools for people to consider in their leap toward enlightened living. This is a huge theme for Chopra, and indeed he has covered this theme in many of his books, including How To Know God: The Soul's Journey into the Mystery of Mysteries and Why is God Laughing: The Path to Spiritual Optimism, with a foreword by his friend, funnyman Mike Myers.

What was most inspiring throughout the evening is how Chopra was able to take almost 3,000 people in the audience and do a 15-minute meditation with them. He began by inviting everyone to close their eyes and meditate on the word gratitude, and then he asked the audience to think of what they really wanted. Finally, he asked everyone to keep their eyes closed for 15 minutes and say the words, "I am," silently to themselves. You could have heard a pin drop in the room.

It was very powerful, and there is the question that when you "came back to the room" after meditating, did you really feel de-stressed and rejuvenated. I say yes, I felt somewhat enlightened. Meditation will actually change your brain settings, according to Chopra, and he believes strongly in the value of meditation and asking the questions, "Who am I?"; "What's my purpose?"; "What's my contribution?" and "What are my unique talents?"

He talked about how "we are the ones we've been waiting for" and how the world is in you already; how we are all connected to one another; how your success is mine, too, and how all fulfilment really comes from within.

His happiness formula is brilliant. Essentially, it asks if you've been programmed to see opportunities or problems in every situation. When you see opportunities in everything, you will simply be happier. He also talks about how "the only time is now."

And that is what resonated the most. So many of us are waiting for that right moment to pursue our dreams, whether it's cleaning out the clutter for once and for all; losing that 10 pounds and living more healthfully; working out more; taking a step closer toward our purpose; changing the way we react, and living with more calm and peace. Whatever it is, Chopra wants us to know that the time is now to take that step or that leap toward our own enlightenment.

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This Week

National

Poverty hits many Jewish children, panel told. *Page 3*

Butterflies will represent children killed in the Holocaust. *Page 16*

Special Feature

See inside for our special supplement. *Section B*

CJN Profile

Oil prices will dictate the new economy, author says. *Page 34*

On cjnews.com

Jewish students compete in Bible contest.

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CJC gives Harper human rights award

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Stephen Harper has become the first prime minister to be awarded Canadian Jewish Congress' Saul Hayes Human Rights Award.

The award, given to an individual in Canada or abroad who has rendered distinguished service to the cause of human rights, was presented to the prime minister Sunday at the CJC's 29th plenary assembly at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto. The plenary marked the 90th anniversary of the organization's founding.

Mark Freiman

In accepting the award, Harper announced that his government will introduce legislation this week that will give victims of terror the right to seek compensation for their suffering. The government plans to amend the State Immunity Act to allow Canadians to seek redress in Canada against foreign individuals or governments for damages wrought by acts of terrorism.

Also at the event, Toronto lawyer and jurist, former deputy attorney general for Ontario and longtime community activist Mark Freiman, was installed as incoming CJC president.

> ***Former Ontario deputy attorney general chosen new Congress president***

"I am truly honoured to have been asked to take on this important and challenging role," Freiman told the assembly. "There is much to do in advancing CJC's key advocacy initiatives. I hope that with the assistance and support of the officers, the board and the staff, I can make an appropriate contribution to this much-needed work over the next two years."

Explaining his approach to his new role, Freiman said that "advocacy starts with the assembly of information, and that requires effective listening. [Then] when you do speak, your voice is noted and your lesson is heard."

He said he intends to visit communities across the country. "Only then can we be assured that all diverse voices are listened to."

Harper said that although his government is not always of one mind with the government of Israel, he is troubled by those who use their opposition to Israel as a cover for anti-Semitic discourse.

Speaking in French and English, he said it is all too common for politicians to support Israel in forums like this, and then condemn the country and accuse it of war crimes when it defends itself.

Continued on page 28

Modern sandstorm of biblical proportions

An Israeli airplane two weeks ago was able to capture photos of a rare sandstorm blowing across the south of Israel in the Negev. Advancing from west to east at a speed of 60 km/h, the storm blew in from the Sinai Desert. The photo was taken from an altitude of 8,000 feet. The height of the wall of sand was approximately 4,000 feet. Bracing for the howl of sand is the community of Nevatim, southeast of Be'er Sheva. *[Photo by Eliezer Yaffe]*

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Israeli cabinet rejects concept of loyalty oath – see page 31

The News in Brief

CANADA

Leader Arrested

MONTREAL — An ex-Quebec director of B'nai Brith Canada was arrested on child porn charges. Bill Surkis, 69, appeared in court May 29 after police allegedly found 23 suspicious videos on his computer, which he had taken in for a virus check. A repair shop employee alerted police. Surkis faces one count of accessing child pornography and another of possession. Surkis, also a former director of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, spent a night in jail before appearing in court. As a condition of bail, he must stay away from children under 18 without another adult present and is barred from the web unless for work. He is also barred from leaving the province. Surkis, who now works as a consultant, will return to court Sept. 24.

Greenspon Replaced

TORONTO — The Globe and Mail last week named its Report on Business (ROB) editor, John Stackhouse, as editor-in-chief, replacing Edward Greenspon, a Montreal native who had held the job since 2002. Greenspon previously served as the Globe's ROB editor and its politics editor, and as editor-in-chief, he presided over a redesign of the Globe's print and web editions. Publisher Phillip Crawley said Greenspon, 52, was stepping down, but he didn't give any reason for the change.

Dalfen Headed CRTC

OTTAWA — Montreal-born lawyer Charles Dalfen, who championed Canadian content as chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission from 2002 to 2006, died May 26 of a heart attack at age 66. Dalfen headed the CRTC in 2004 when it approved the Arabic news channel Al-Jazeera for broadcast in Canada if cable and satellite carriers censored hate speech on it, but they said the cost would be prohibitive.

WORLD

High-tech Conference

LOS ANGELES — U.S. and Israeli high-tech executives and venture capitalists are attending a conference in Los Angeles this week designed to match Israeli inventiveness with U.S. marketing skills. The theme of the Israel Conference's all-day meeting June 4 is "Cool Business from the Shores of the Mediterranean to the Shores of the Pacific: Expanding Opportunities between Israel and California." Sessions will cover high-technology, clean technology, medical devices, consumer branding and entertainment media technology. Major firms such as Google and Microsoft have increased their presence in Israel in recent years.

Yogurt Mogul Dies

PARIS — The honorary chair and namesake of the Danone yogurt company has died. Daniel Carasso, who turned sweet yogurt into a household food staple, died May 17 at his Paris home at age 103. His father, Issac, created the yogurt in Barcelona in 1919 and reportedly named it after his son, whose nickname in Catalan was Danon.

Flu Shuts Yeshivas

NEW YORK — Four Brooklyn yeshivas closed temporarily due to the swine flu. The Flatbush-area schools remained closed last week and were to reopen after Shavuot. Magen David Yeshiva, Yeshiva Tiferes Yisroel, Masores Bais Yaakov and Yeshiva Shaarei Torah decided to shut down after finding high absentee rates were due to students having probable or confirmed swine flu cases.

Kensington Exhibit 'Postponed Indefinitely'

TORONTO — The exhibit *each hand as they are called* has been "postponed indefinitely" and won't be part of Luminato, the Toronto art festival said last week.

Last month, the Koffler Centre of the Arts said it was disassociating, but not pulling funding, from the interactive exhibit about the history of Toronto's Kensington Market after it said it learned the artist, Reena Katz, supports Israeli Apartheid Week. It gave the exhibit $20,000 and co-sponsored it with Luminato.

Baycrest, whose seniors were integral to the exhibit's interactive component, withdrew its support just before the scheduled opening date of May 20, Katz said.

Luminato and Koffler are no longer promoting it.

Katz, who calls herself an anti-Zionist Jew, has said Koffler officials knew of her political leanings before they agreed to sponsor her project, and were comfortable with it, because it had nothing to do with the Middle East.

It was to have run in Kensington Market until July 26.

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Addiction services have expanded with recession

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Nine years ago, JACS (Jewish Addiction Community Services) started up with a hotline and a weekly meeting.

Today, the organization that deals with the suffering caused by drugs, alcohol and gambling in the Toronto Jewish community offers three meetings an evening, and sees between 400 and 500 people a week in the building that it owns on Sheppard Avenue West.

Zalman Goldman, managing director of JACS, said that since the group opened its doors in 2000 – he has been with the organization since 2001 – more than 6,000 families have turned to JACS for help. "We see an increase of about five to 10 per cent every month, and the number of people always rises when we've given a public talk. We now have two full-time staff members and several part-timers," he added.

He said that JACS holds meetings in Winnipeg, Montreal and Ottawa, too, and is looking at holding meetings in Vancouver. JACS is also in negotiations for centres in Richmond Hill/Thornhill and downtown Toronto.

The organization offer self-help groups and facilitated groups run by clinicians, and also does referrals and assessments, he said. "If someone is in trouble, we can support the entire family through the process. Our new logo is Saving Livings by Solving Addiction Problems, and we have a new website, www.solvingaddictionproblems.com.

"Everybody knows someone who is struggling, and we've opened up groups to friends and co-workers who need clinical advice. The 'concerned persons group' attracts from 20 to 40 people every week. It's bursting at the seams," Goldman said.

JACS has expanded tremendously throughout the recession, he said. "Our budget has doubled in the past two years, and most of the money comes from private donations and our three major fundraisers, a golf tournament, a spin-a-thon and a theatre evening."

Their first-ever retreat, held recently in a local hotel, was a big success, Goldman said.

"In times like these, people turn to drugs, alcohol and gambling. We see people of all ages – teens, young adults and adults."

He said they are always looking for volunteers – most volunteers are highly sensitive or directly affected by addictions – and there are a number of committees in which they can become involved. "We try to create a good fit for each volunteer."

Poverty hits thousands of Jewish kids: panel

Stephen Adler has a message for the community: there are Jewish poor, and we have to do something about it.

"In 2001, [the year of the last census] there were 19,745 Jews living below the poverty line, and that is disgusting. I would like to get people mobilized to help end poverty tomorrow," he said.

Adler, director of public policy and governmental affairs of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, was speaking at a recent panel discussion, "Educate and Advocate: Jewish Poverty in Toronto," sponsored by United Jewish Appeal, Women's Philanthropy.

Also speaking was Laurel Rothman, national co-ordinator of Campaign 2000, a national coalition of more than 85 organizations formed in 1991, committed

Continued on page 22

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Plenary observations

From the editor's desk...

It could be said that, among the many behavioural axioms authored by our wise, ancient rabbis that operate at plenary gatherings of Jewish communal organizations, two are paramount: *hakarat hatov* (acknowledging the good that others do for you) and *hamayveen yaveen* (one who truly understands, will really understand). The latter maxim, alas, loses not only its alliterative force when translated into English but also some of its slightly playful usage.

These two maxims dominated the often emotional proceedings last Sunday at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto during the 29th plenary session of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC).

The plenary gathering celebrated the 90th anniversary of the founding of CJC. This anniversary in and of itself was justification for effusive *hakarat hatov*. For, if it is true – and it is – that the Canadian Jewish community of some 350,000 is known by governments and non-governmental organizations worldwide for punching above its weight, then it is equally true that the CJC, especially after World War II, has been the pre-eminent iron fist in the community's glove, hitting constantly high and hard.

Saying thank you to certain individuals, acknowledging the good they have wrought for and on behalf of CJC was a key theme of the plenary. Thus, CJC thanked, among many others who were mentioned throughout the day, Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol, the outgoing co-presidents of the CJC for their precedent-setting, two-headed work during the past term.

Similarly, there was an undeniable outpouring of love and gratitude that accompanied the awarding of the Samuel Bronfman Medal for outstanding Jewish community service to Julia and Henry Koschitzky.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper received the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award for rendering distinguished service to the cause of human rights. He was the first prime minister to be so honoured. The audience showered him with applause and affection.

The prime minister was one of four federal party leaders who addressed the gathering. And it was in relation to the politicians' participation in the plenary that the axiom *hamayveen yaveen* coursed through the air like occasional flashes of lightning on a damp night: not enough to obscure the landscape but enough to be noticed.

The party leaders spoke to the delegates of the CJC. At another level, of course – as those who truly understood, really understood, that is, mostly everyone in the room – they spoke to each other (though none spoke in the other's presence) and against the background of the stinging, occasionally malevolent cut and thrust of nasty, daily partisan politics.

Elizabeth May, leader of the Green party, was the first to address the assembly. She pointed out that it was the inaugural appearance by a leader of the Green party at a CJC plenary. She was relaxed, folsky, articulate, open and simply, very plainly happy to be part of the program.

"I am enormously honoured to have been asked to be here today," May said at the end of questions and answers.

Jack Layton, leader of the NDP, spoke next. His written remarks were a broad policy survey of his party's stance on a variety of social issues. He knew his party was not the favourite among the delegates in the room. Indeed, in the first question to Layton, the sage chair of the proceedings, Irving Abella, expressed what was on everyone's mind: that the most vocal critics of Israel and most voluble supporters of oppressors of human rights come today from the left.

Layton distanced his party from those leftist critics. Or tried to. But the more questions he answered, the more uncomfortable he seemed to become, especially in reference to issues concerning the labour movement, education and free speech.

Prime Minister Harper was the third to speak. He was lauded for his "principled and heroic" position concerning the treatment of Israel around the world. In accepting the award, he spoke assertively and confidently. Somewhat surprisingly, given the genial atmosphere of the occasion, he took a verbal swipe at unnamed politicians for their "doublespeak," for speaking at occasions such as the CJC plenary, yet attacking and condemning Israel when the Jewish state tries to defend itself.

Former CJC president and current member of Parliament Irwin Cotler introduced Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff in what was the most rousing address of the afternoon. Cotler clearly had the Conservative party's current anti-Ignatieff attack ads in mind, for he repeatedly emphasized Ignatieff's Canadianness.

Ignatieff delivered the keynote address of the afternoon, and he, too, had the prime minister in mind when he said forcefully, very forcefully, "My party will never claim to be the only genuine defenders of Israel in Canadian politics because I don't want my party to be alone in the defence of Israel. I want all parties to be genuine defenders of Israel."

Israel's vice-prime minister, Silvan Shalom, expressed the sigh that everyone in the room felt when he said he "was happy that in Canada there is bipartisan support for Israel."

There was plenty at this CJC plenary. And we all understood.

–*MBD*

SeeJN

IN SUPPORT OF SCHALIT

At a major rally in New York City, 1,070 students joined with others to protest outside the offices of the International Committee for the Red Cross May 27, marking the 1,070 days that Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit has been held in captivity by the terrorist group Hamas, and urging the Red Cross to make an extra effort to meet with Schalit.

[David Karp photo]

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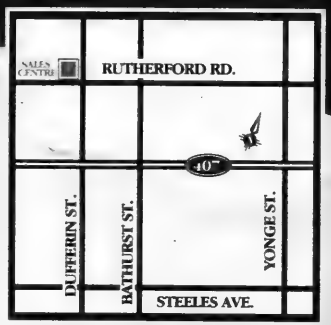

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Court to rule on funding disabilities in religious schools

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

An Ontario court was asked last week to order the provincial government to extend funding to children attending faith-based schools who are blind, deaf or have learning disabilities.

The current practice, in which children attending public or Roman Catholic schools receive such funding, is discriminatory and in violation of Charter guarantees to equal treatment regardless of disability or religion, say advocates for the children.

The case before a three-judge panel of the Divisional Court, pits eight families – seven Jewish, one Muslim – against the government of Ontario. "The thrust of our case is that if a child is blind, deaf or has a learning disability, it should not matter in Ontario what the child's religion is. It should not matter what school he goes to or what ministry the money comes from," said Allan Kaufman, one of the lawyers representing the families.

Kaufman said funding for an extension of health benefits to children in religious schools would not even require the province to allocate additional funds. It currently budgets $14.5 million per year to fund treatment of seven health-related disabilities of children in religious schools. Only about $4.5 million of that is currently being spent. "The money is there," Kaufman said. "[Health Minister David] Caplan can wave his pen and it would flow."

In documents filed with the court, the province rejected any suggestion of discrimination. The province argued the 1994 Adler decision – in which the Supreme Court ruled that there was no Charter violation in funding public and Roman Catholic schools and not those of other religions – also applied to the provision of health services.

Although the Mike Harris government in 2000 extended school health support services to private religious schools, "it cannot seriously be maintained that Ontario discriminated against children attending private religious schools by extending this benefit to them," the province argued.

The province also contended that special education programs, services and staff are provided by regulations under the Education Act, which applies only to public and Catholic schools. The extension of health support services to private religious schools in 2000 was done by regulation under the Long Term Care Act. The Education Act focuses on educational programs and services, while the LTCA is concerned with health-related services.

"This distinction is inherent in the purposes of the two statutes and is not simply a 'bureaucratic distinction…' The fact that Ontario has voluntarily chosen to extend funding for the health-related services set out in [a regulation] under the LTCA to eligible students in private and home schools imposes no obligation on the province to extend funding under the Education Act and its regulations to private schools or to expand the benefits provided by [the regulation]," government documents state.

Ira Walfish, who heads the Multifaith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith Based Schools, said the decision by the Harris government to fund seven areas of disability (including physio, occupational and speech therapy) did not include deafness, blindness and learning disabilities.

However, an anomalous situation arose from application of the law. Under the seven areas now receiving government funding, speech therapy can proceed in Jewish schools "for speech impediments. After a time, the therapy stops" when those providing it deem the therapy to change from something health-related to something that involves education.

Walfish said the government's position is "bizarre," particularly since it is spending $10 million less than it has allocated for the seven permissible areas of health treatment. The money already allocated could fund all the special needs in the religious school system, he said, adding "from a dollar standpoint, this is a joke" relative to the province's $14.2-billion education budget.

Walfish suggested the real reason behind the government's reluctance to fund health benefits in religious schools is "they don't want to fund anything in faith-based schools."

Kaufman said funding for blind, deaf and learning disabled children in the public system has since 1984 been funnelled through the Education Ministry, so religious schools receive no government money. As he sees it, "it's just a question of moving money around… I don't care if it comes from the Ministry of Tourism. It's discriminatory not to flow it to disabled children in Jewish schools."

Kaufman and Raj Anand, former chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, represent parents with children who attended the Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School (which closed after the lawsuit was launched) and currently attend Yeshivas Nefesh Dovid, Associated Hebrew Schools, United Synagogue Day School and Leo Baeck Day School, as well as a blind student at an Islamic school in Richmond Hill.

That girl first attended public school and "was treated like a queen." When her parents enrolled her in the Muslim school, "the government pulled everything for her. She gets nothing," Kaufman said.

Kaufman does not expect a decision in the case for several months.

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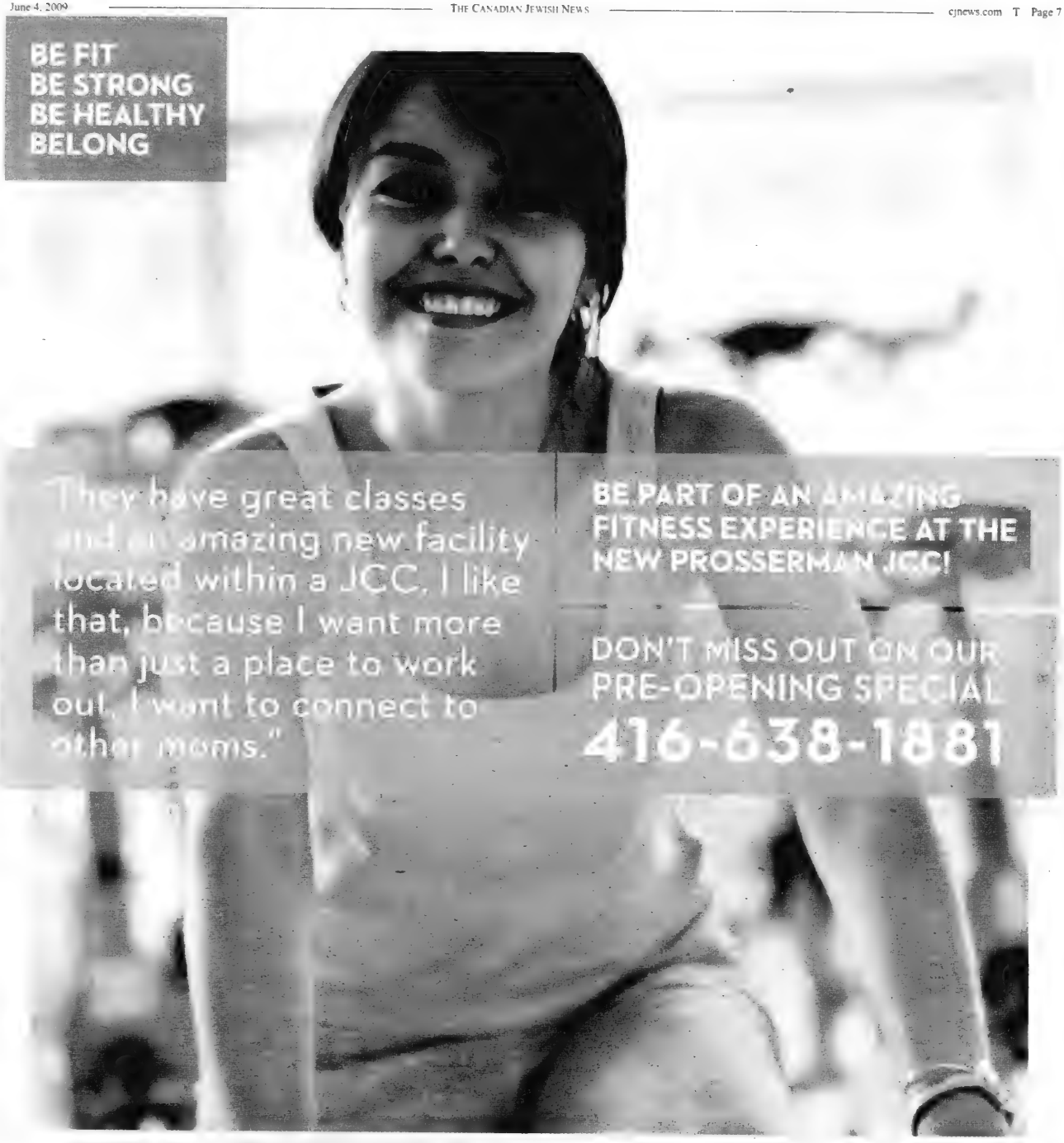
REGIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITIES SHABBATON: A group of seven teenagers, representing the RJCO (Regional Jewish Communities of Ontario), work at the new Kavanah Organic Community Teaching Garden at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan, Ont. The young people had a joint Shabbaton in Toronto last Sunday. From left are Shira Blake, Welland; Evan Mandel, Burlington; Eitan Grinspun, Youth Movement shaliach of RJCO; Alex Orvitz, St. Catharines; Erin Mazor, Barrie; Morgan Macfarlane, Trenton; Jeremy Hennessy, Peterborough; Ronnie Hoffman, Barrie; and Robin Librach, Guelph.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Obama's test, Israel's risk

Some five months after his inauguration, U.S. President Barack Obama is being tested by the imperious, quizzical, perhaps even unstable leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Il. In quick succession last week, North Korea successfully detonated an underground nuclear device and then test-fired a series of short range ground to air missiles. Beyond any doubt, the diminutive dictator is poking Obama in his presidential chest to see if the American pokes back.

Obama immediately condemned North Korea and urged the world to "stand up to Pyongyang and demand that it honour a promise to abandon its nuclear ambitions." So, too, did the Europeans. The Russians and Chinese condemned Kim as well, for they also fear for the peace and security of the region, which is one they share with the mercurial North Korean.

The UN Security Council was called into action, in a manner of speaking. As of this writing, however, the council had not yet adopted any definitive measures against Kim and his regime. Predictably, in response to a statement by South Korea that it might join an international campaign to stop its northern neighbour from endeavouring to traffic in nuclear material, Kim threatened to take up arms against the South. The United States and South Korea have since placed their troops in the area on their highest alert in three years to counter what American officials termed a "grave threat."

Profound unease and queasy nervousness have once again descended upon Southeast Asia, and far beyond as well.

"Israel views the second North Korean nuclear test with extreme gravity," a foreign ministry spokesman said last week. "Israel is concerned with North Korea's nuclear proliferation, which has negative implications in this region. Israel expects the international community to respond decisively to the nuclear detonation by North Korea so as to transmit an unambiguous message *to other countries*" (our emphasis).

The message from Jerusalem is clear.

North Korea's anti-western bellicosity resonates in Tehran and Damascus like harmonic triads.

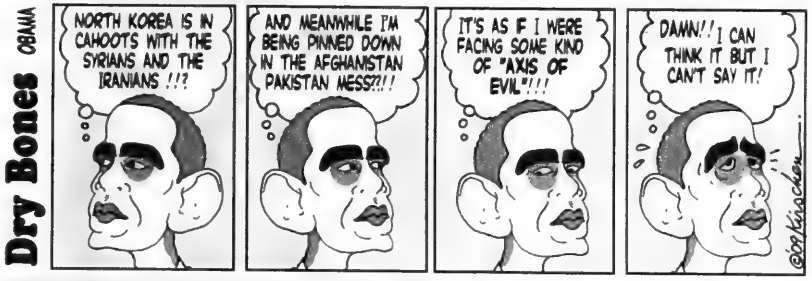
Experienced North Korea watchers such as commentator Gordon Chang point out that among the various other objectives for Kim's provocations, "North Korea appears set to go into high gear and merchandise its nuclear arsenal," Chang observes. "There is no greater threat than the proliferation of nuclear weapons to dangerous and hostile regimes… Another danger is the dissemination of nuclear technology to hostile states and their terrorist allies."

We know only too well, alas, at whom Kim markets his murderous merchandise. Syria has already participated in a now-defunct, nuclear project with North Korea, destroyed by Israel. The Iranians, it would not surprise us to learn, were probably on hand last week as observers of the North Korean detonation.

President Obama, it is true, is being tested by Kim. But if he fails the test, the abiding risk is squarely upon Israel.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israeli defence minister Moshe Arens denied knowing that Israeli soldiers had beaten to death two Palestinian terrorists captured after a bus hijacking in Tel Aviv. In spite of defence ministry claims that the deaths did not occur, a special investigation committee confirmed what had happened.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CJC Quebec name change (1)

Further to the name change of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, to Congrès juif québécois, we should commend the CJC for exposing a wound within the Jewish community. From the comments following the announcement of the new name, we see the divisions between the Sephardi (French-speaking, for) and Ashkenazi (English-speaking, against) groups. Thanks for bringing out this itch for us to scratch. Just what we needed in these very difficult times: internal conflict.

Sheila Mediena
Montreal

* * *

CJC Quebec name change (2)

As the daughter of Joseph Parnass, one of the founding members of the Canadian Jewish Congress (1909), I feel a duty to honour the memory of my father, whose belief it always was that CJC was representative of the strong and proud voice of all Canadian Jews, wherever they might live.

Times may change, but values should not. I was appalled to learn of the name change of Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, to Congrès juif québécois, which I see as patronizing.

Helen Parnass Constantine
Montreal

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AND I'LL DEMO IT FOR YOU AS SOON AS...
HONEY! HAVE YOU SEEN MY KEY?!
©

Judge Seven Jewish Children for yourself

Within the Jewish community, public expressions of disagreement with the actions of the Israeli government strike a sensitive nerve, and indeed the play Seven Jewish Children by Caryl Churchill offers just such a criticism ("Rex Murphy lays bare play's moral inversion," CJN, May 28).

The play is a visceral criticism of the actions of the Israeli government in undertaking an asymmetrical siege of Gaza that resulted in considerable "collateral damage." Those of us who live in the Diaspora and who watched the extent of the devastation on television at very least must have questioned whether the Israeli strategy was worth the loss of life that occurred.

Beyond this legitimate question, the play compels the audience to weigh familial need, the need of Jewish parents to protect the interests of their children against the needs of another family, a Palestinian family. Psychologically, for the audience this "need to weigh" moves the play away from the political into the domain of the personal, and in so doing becomes an expression of the human tragedy, rather than an anti-Semitic polemic.

How often do we as parents use the familiar words "don't tell" and "tell" when we try to deal with our own children? It is the repeated use of these words that establishes the emotional tension as the play moves inexorably towards its unhappy conclusion.

I would encourage people to watch the play or read the text on the Internet and to consider how the kind of thinking it presents regrettably is not far off how any parent might respond to both her child's needs and her own. Use your own best judgment rather than trusting to ill-considered condemnations from community officials.

Gilbert Plaw
Westmount, Que.

* * *

People search (1)

I used to know one Ezra Moses, who immigrated to Canada from India some 30 years ago. The last I heard of him and his family, they were in Ontario, after moving from Montreal. They visited India in 2000, and before that in 1997. Moses worked at Warner Hindustan, a pharmaceutical company in Hyderabad. His wife's name is Betty, and they have two daughters, Roneet and Karen. If you have any information about the family, please contact me.

Bobjee Kurien
3-5-807 Hyderguda
Hyderabad, India 500029
Telephone 040-2323-2170
quavercrochet@yahoo.com

* * *

People search (2)

I am researching my family history and am looking for people who have knowledge of my grandmother's family. My grandmother, Sylvia Mendelson, was born in Toronto in 1911 to Mr. and Mrs. Max Mendelson. She married my grandfather, Saul Gelman, in 1934 in Chicago and lived in the United States until her death. If you have knowledge of my grandmother or her parents, please contact me at Burman3@gmail.com or 647-344-0353.

Peter Burman
Toronto

LET THEM GO…
Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Seeking a new Israel-Diaspora paradigm

The current interdependent, interconnected relationship between Diaspora and Israeli Jews is embodied in these two photos. Canadian youth, left, demonstrate their support of Israel. Israeli youth, right, show their enthusiasm for and sense of peoplehood with the Jewish community in Canada. [Isranet photos]

By ARIEL BEERY

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Among the efforts he made to leave a positive mark on Israel that would remain long after his departure as prime minister, Ehud Olmert set out to transform the conceptual and practical relationship between the state and the Jewish Diaspora.

He began doing this last summer, when, in a speech before the Jewish Agency's board of governors, he said, "We must stop talking in terms of big brother and little brother, and instead speak in terms of two brothers marching hand in hand and supporting each other."

To translate thought to policy, his government tasked the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI) with developing a new strategy for the state to become involved with the Diaspora, both fiscally and programmatically, in order to strengthen Jewish identity, especially insofar as it is connected to Israel.

While the JPPPI's project might seem to be relatively unimportant for the national agenda, the topic of its study – Israel's existence as a state connected to an extra-territorial people – strikes at the heart of the challenges the government will have to tackle in the years to come, including the essence of democracy in this land, citizenship, economic custody and advancing development.

The topic is pivotal because, before one can answer how the state might involve itself with the Diaspora, one needs to consider the more basic question: What is the practical essence of the relationship between the State of Israel and the Jewish nation? Answering this question depends just as much on the philosophy of the state as it does on the larger trends affecting all of humanity.

The challenge put forward by Olmert's government is based on a certain reading of history. Coming into existence as it did in the wake of the Holocaust, Israel has often seen itself and been perceived by others as the protector of, and a safe haven for, the Jewish People.

And a division of responsibility quickly developed: The state would defend, and the Diaspora would fund. Thus, when Jews were in danger – whether in Entebbe, Ethiopia or Argentina – Israeli Jews were called to arms. And when Israel was at war, Diaspora Jews were called upon to open their wallets. This paradigm of Israel as defender and Diaspora as enabler extends Israel's role from defending Jewish bodies to defending Jewish souls through efforts to fight assimilation among Jews abroad.

> ***'Times are changing, and so are our relationships'***

But times are changing, and so are our relationships. As Isaac Herzog, the minister of welfare and social services, said at a recent conference held by the Israel Venture Association, whereas governments were set up under the assumption that "citizens and residents are one and the same," today that is not necessarily the case because of the heightened mobility of the "creative class" and the demand for foreign workers that drives the Israeli economy. This new demographic reality demands a new understanding of the state's role.

The nation-state's founding assumption was that nations could be forged through common myth and culture, from the residents living within a given set of boundaries. If you lived within those boundaries, you were generally granted citizenship in return for acceptance of centrally mandated laws and majority-determined cultural and behavioural norms.

In this way, we speak of the French nation-state, even though there are more than a half-dozen ethnic groups in France that want nothing to do with the French nation, just as there are minorities elsewhere who are claimed as part of the nation writ large only because they inhabit the same territory.

The State of Israel was thus doubly special – first because it claimed to be the state of the Jews even as the majority of the Jewish nation still lived outside its boundaries, and second because it had no desire to integrate into the Jewish nation other, non-Jewish groups among its citizenry. Israel has thus been criticized for not behaving like a classic nation-state. But it might also be wrestling with a challenge a bit ahead of its time: the separation of citizenship and residency, of state and nation.

If Israel is not a nation-state, it might be more useful to think of it as a node-state; that is, as the sovereign element chosen by narrative and collective will at the centre of a global network. Whereas the entire network of the Jewish nation is interdependent, Israel as its centre would not be able to operate as a nation-state. That is to say, the State of Israel might benefit from the global network, but in its functioning, most of its focus would continue to be solely on basic domestic operations, those that affect only a small set of nodes on this network, and to permit only a minority of its network members to elect representatives whose decisions will affect the network as a whole.

For example, even though Israel's financial health depends just as much on foreign investment as it does on domestic production, it is the residents who determine the economic policy that affects the return on those investments, and therefore the network's overall health. As populations shift, this same network effect facing Israel will face other nations as well.

A global era and a globe-spanning people demand a global vision for the Jewish nation's collective governance institutions and a recognition of the state's role as a node-state within a wider community structure. As such, any new vision for the state's relationship with Diaspora Jews that is based on the old paradigm will be obsolete at birth.

Instead, we need a new vision for the state itself, a vision that grapples with our Altneuwelt as opposed to our Altneuland. Or to return to Olmert's speech, we are not two brothers walking together, separate and equal, but rather one body economic and politic living thanks to the blessings of our global interdependence, the many pieces of which make up a whole that we have yet to envision.

Ariel Beery is the founder and co-director of the PresenTense Group, which equips social ventures and communities for the information age.

Opinions

A child's wisdom

Children are often confused by the adult world. But sometimes they see things more directly and openly. Theirs is a simple wisdom, not in the sense of senseless or weak, but rather of innocent, easy, unadorned, direct and often quite luminous.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

Recently, my seven-year-old granddaughter offered her own insight into God's presence in our lives. She was learning the Shema prayers that are recited at night at bed time and the Modeh Ani (gratitude) prayers said upon waking. Her mother was trying to pry out of her what she had learned – what they could possibly mean to her?

We're in strange territory here. The evening Shema is the last prayer one utters as one goes to sleep. A religious child is taught to rely on God at this point: God will watch over you or embrace your soul while you sleep. As you awake, your first thought is to thank God for returning life to you. The concepts are sophisticated, but they could also be frightening and difficult to impart to a small child.

Is sleep like death? And what is death? We don't want to alarm children or scare them. Sleep should be welcomed and easy, but often it's not. So how will a teacher manage these prayers and these teachings? And even with the best of intentions, how will a child receive the lesson?

After much prodding, my granddaughter groped for the right expression. What words does a small child have even to explain her own feelings. Finally, she found refuge in a metaphor. "It's like the dry cleaners. God gives it back to you in the morning all clean!"

After laughing – about God as the Great Dry Cleaner in Heaven – I had to think about the wisdom in her comparison. I know that if this remains a facile or mechanistic model, it will do her no good. But if we understand it as the beginning stage of her appreciation, there's much to learn from such a model.

Firstly, sleep is good, not frightening. Secondly, God is helpful. Importantly, when you make mistakes, they can be cleared up. Sins are stains, but with the correct efforts, they can be "cleaned." Of course, we must make the correct atonements to clean them up. We also should not wait for once a year to clean up. We can do it daily or nightly. Finally, when we "wake up," we should always say thank you.

We must be grateful for life every day.

Pretty impressive lessons.

Shavuot reminds us of our sobering challenge

A midrash: Moses, seeing the Egyptians hard on the Israelites' heels, prays to God to save them.

God replies something like, "Why are you crying out to me? Do something!"

A Sholom Aleichem-like story: murderous riders press hard on the heels of the pintele Yid as he bursts into the study-house. "Listen Jews! The Cossacks are coming! Do something! Say Tehillim!"

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

Study? Pray? Or get out your best weaponry? Shavuot has challenged us all to consider how we approach the study and application of our vocation as Jews, the eternal struggle to balance study with action.

Leaving aside the weapons, on Shavuot in Greater Vancouver, hundreds of Jews took part in Tikkun Leyl Shavuot and continued for the entire weekend to enjoy study and prayer together. Hopefully that study will translate into action.

When we arrived in Vancouver more than 40 years ago, there were three synagogue buildings: a small beit hamidrash, a large Conservative synagogue and a similarly large Orthodox synagogue. Two other congregations, one Reform, also met in various incarnations.

Today our community has grown to offer a wide variety of worship options. We may not seem significant when compared to giant Toronto or venerable Montreal, but we have become a community that serves more than 16 congregations and worship groups: Conservative, chassidic, Orthodox, Renewal and Reform, based both in Vancouver itself and the suburbs.

Best of all, our rabbis meet in a collegial atmosphere at RAV, the Rabbinic Association of Vancouver.

This Shavuot, we had an excess of riches. For example, the eminent Hebrew University professor of the talmudic period, Yeshiyahu Gafni, taught the entire weekend at one synagogue, bringing the history and art of the Talmud and midrash alive.

Rabbi Elana Zaiman, a chaplain in Seattle, taught us how to deepen our life experiences through Torah study and gave a workshop on writing ethical wills. Our cantor led us in spirited song as we rejoiced in the gift of Torah. Other congregations and study groups met throughout the night in similar study.

All over the world, Jews spent the night in prayer and reflection, in song and study. The power of this idea has been attributed to the Kabbalists of Safed during the time of Rabbi Isaac Luria and mentioned in the Zohar, Parshat Emor (which was written in the 13th century in Spain and attributed to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai).

The night of study and prayer to raise the souls of participants to the highest level of spiritual awareness has taken hold and become a tradition all over the Jewish world. Our senses are sharpened, more attuned to insights and, for a few, perhaps visions of something above the mundane. Every year we strive for this.

How fortunate we are to be a part of this thriving community, with its vital leadership and increased learning opportunities – the recital of psalms, as it were.

And how important it is that, armed with this knowledge, we as individuals and as a community can increase our level of mitzvot as a result of what we learn – going forward into the Reed Sea, taking action.

It's a powerful moment.

There's just one other thing.

All the voices raised in study and debate on the evening of Shavuot still constitute a small minority of Jews in our community. To come together in our synagogues and study halls is wonderful. To realize that many Jews will never cross those thresholds is a challenge. Surely this must also be true of other communities.

As I have noted in other columns, a recent survey of our community's attitudes and practices revealed – and no statistic should be taken at face value when the respondents are self-selecting – that the number of people identifying with a denomination is decreasing from generation to generation. That holds across the denominational board.

We need to start looking beyond our doors. Opening them wide for others to enter is fine, but it's just not enough.

How to go beyond our corner of the Jewish world to spread the riches of our heritage – that's the challenge we face.

Anti-Semitism in Buenos Aires

Recently, my wife and I travelled to Buenos Aires, where I lectured at four different universities. Buenos Aires is a modern, cosmopolitan city with a population of about 15 million.

There are many signs of a healthy Jewish community. In one mall, there were two McDonald's restaurants – one with the regular menu and the other designated "McDonald's kosher." Around the corner from where we stayed was a kosher sushi restaurant.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

We attended a Kabalat Shabbat service at Congregacion Israelita de la Republica Argentina, the oldest synagogue in the country. The congregation is affiliated with the Conservative movement, but the service reflected both Conservative and Reform traditions. The service included beautiful vocal and instrumental arrangements of both new and traditional melodies.

Unfortunately, there is an undercurrent of insecurity in the Jewish community. Newcomers to the synagogue must call in advance to advise that they are coming and are required to prove their identity before being admitted. Cars and taxis are prevented from stopping directly in front of the building, and purses and bags are searched before people are allowed inside. This is, of course, not surprising in light of the terrorist attacks that are still in the forefront of people's memories.

First, there was the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in 1992, which killed 32 people. This was followed in 1994 by the bombing of the Buenos Aires Jewish community centre, when more than 85 people were killed and over 100 injured. The subsequent investigations of the community centre attack have been painfully slow, and it was not until recently that they began to yield concrete results, including implications of Iranian complicity in the attack.

These attacks occurred 15 years ago, but during our visit, we found ourselves in the midst of yet another assault on the Jewish community.

Three days after our arrival, we attended Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations, marking the 61st anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, held in a public square outside the Buenos Aires City Hall. There was a large crowd. A marching band performed stirring versions of the Argentine national anthem and Hatikvah, and the Argentine minister of education spoke, followed by warm remarks from Daniel Gazit, the Israeli ambassador to Argentina.

Suddenly, without warning, there was an attack by a group of people who rushed the stage and disrupted the celebrations. Their violence led to the bloodied face of one of the organizers. The police hurried the Israeli ambassador into City Hall and arrested five of the attackers.

Later, another five people were arrested. They were charged with various offences related to the injuries incurred, as well as conspiracy and the possession of firearms.

Day after day, the perpetrators were described in all news accounts as anti-Semitic members of the Revolutionary Action Front, a far-left organization. The Israeli government asked for a full investigation of the incident. A day after the attack, two synagogues in the Belgrano neighbourhood of Buenos Aires received bomb threats and had to evacuated.

While in Buenos Aires, we stayed in an apartment complex near the residence of the Israeli ambassador. Not surprisingly, there is a 24-hour police presence outside his building, and after the attack at City Hall, the police presence was significantly increased.

This clearly was not simply an anti-Israel protest, but rather, like recent events that occurred on Canadian campuses and on Toronto and Montreal streets during "Israeli Apartheid Week," it was a manifestation of anti-Semitism. Often described as the "new anti-Semitism," it clearly knows no boundaries.

The Argentine government was clearly embarrassed by the Yom Ha'atzmaut attack. It should be remembered that this is the same government that was recently highly critical of Bishop Richard Williamson and subsequently expelled him from Argentina for his denial of the Holocaust.

We experienced in Buenos Aires a dynamic and welcoming Jewish community in an exciting world-class city. But wherever one travels and wherever one lives, one has to remain aware that the vicious spectre of anti-Semitism may at any time rear its ugly head.

The Kirshner File

Letter from Konstanz

Konstanz, better known in English as Constance, is situated in a scenic and fertile fold of southwestern Germany. Such is its generally mild climate that palm trees flourish here, at least in pots. Vineyards and orchards are also common in this bucolic region between the fabled Black Forest and Bavaria.

Sheldon Kirshner in Germany

This town of about 85,000 inhabitants, in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg, lies along the shore of Germany's largest lake, the Bodensee, which borders on Switzerland and Austria.

On a clear day, which is quite often, there are tantalizing views of the snow-capped, crystalline Alps.

Settled by the Romans around 50 CE, Konstanz – a seat of the Protestant Reformation – was absorbed by Habsburg Austria in the 16th century.

Subsequently, a redoubt of the Catholic faith and the place where Czech philosopher and religious reformer/martyr Jan Hus was burned at the stake, Konstanz was Austrian until 1806, when it passed into the hands of the Grand Duchy of Baden.

With German unification in 1871, Konstanz became part of Germany.

Ruth Frenk

Esthetically, Konstanz is a marvel, distinguished by a profusion of architectural styles ranging from Renaissance to art nouveau, and by several medieval city gates that escaped destruction in the mad rush toward modernity and conformity.

The Niederburg, the oldest quarter, is a jumble of crooked streets and lanes and half-timbered buildings, some adorned with frescoes and golden Gothic lettering.

Unlike many towns in this country, Konstanz was spared by the ravages of World War II. As a result, its priceless ensemble of antique buildings, from the 15th-century town hall to the 19th- century imperial post office, were preserved.

While German cities like Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Dresden were devastated by Allied air raids, with horrific civilian casualties, Konstanz was never bombed.

Konstanz's attractive city centre was saved by a geographic quirk.

Since it is adjacent the sleepy Swiss town of Kreuzlingen, the Allies did not bomb Konstanz. Allied bombers tried not to violate Switzerland's neutrality and touch off an international incident.

For good measure, Konstanz left all its lights on at night so that Allied pilots would not be able to differentiate Konstanz from Kreuzlingen.

Nonetheless, due to navigation errors, equipment failure and weather conditions, Allied aircraft dropped bombs on Swiss towns and cities, including Zurich, Basel and Geneva, causing fatalities and property damage and forcing the Allies to pay reparations.

In the most serious case of its kind, the U.S. Air Force misidentified Schaffhausen as a German town, bombing it on April 1, 1944. Forty Swiss citizens were killed and numerous buildings were destroyed.

By that point, the Jewish residents of Konstanz had been deported by the Nazis and the synagogue, consecrated in 1883, had been desecrated.

Jews have lived in Konstanz, on and off, since the 13th century, their presence subject to the whims of its rulers and the times.

The Jewish quarter, in what is now an altogether charming and gentrified section of the town, was concentrated between the Munzgasse and the Salmannsweilergasse and along Rosgartenstrasse.

During the Black Death, when they were accused of poisoning wells, more than 300 Jews were killed. Jews were expelled in 1533, permitted to enter Konstanz only with permission.

Allowed back in, Jewish merchants and craftsmen returned in the mid-19th century.

On the eve of the Adolf Hitler's accession to power in 1933, Konstanz was home to slightly less than 500 Jews. As anti-Semitism intensified, they emigrated from Germany.

On Kristallnacht, on Nov. 10,1938, the SS obliterated the ornate synagogue in a fiery foreshadowing of the Holocaust.

In 1966, a Jewish businessman bought the plot of land where the shul had stood undisturbed for 55 years and in its place built a six-storey building on the ground of which is a restaurant bar.

I don't know how many Jews from Konstanz attempted to cross into neighbouring Switzerland after Kristallnacht. An unguarded mesh wire fence separates parts of Konstanz from Kreuzlingen today, and on a lark, I walked into Switzerland one fine morning. No questions asked and no passport necessary. But in the late 1930s, the border was scrupulously patrolled and such incursions would simply have been impossible.

[Sheldon Kirshner photos]

A memorial, hewn from black marble, commemorates the deportation of Jews from Konstanz.

By 1940, when Germany invaded France and the low countries and the lives of German Jews had become intolerable, a small number of Jewish burghers still remained in Konstanz, unable or unwilling to leave.

On Oct. 22, 108 Jews were deported to Gurs, an internment camp in France that originally housed refugees from Spain. Amid appalling conditions, some died. The rest were transported to Auschwitz and Sobibor in 1942, and there they were murdered.

As a memorial to them, a black marble monument stands on Sigismundstrasse, which is close to the commercial district and a short walk from the railway station, where many Jews resided before the Nazi era. Their names – Lina Weil, Anna Weiler, Moses Forszt and Ludwig Bab, to name but four of the victims – are engraved in the stone in four languages, German, English, French and Hebrew.

So-called stumble stones commemorate the tragedy of the Holocaust as well. These unobtrusive brass markers, containing the names and addresses of the victims of National Socialism, are embedded in sidewalks throughout Konstanz and in German towns.

With the war over and Nazi Germany vanquished, Eastern European Jewish survivors who had been liberated from concentration camps settled in Konstanz. The majority departed soon afterward. By the late 1960s, only 30 Jews resided in Konstanz. Three hundred Jews live in Konstanz today, mainly from the former Soviet Union, but also from other European nations and Israel.

In 1974, when Konstanz had about 100 Jews, a 28-year-old Jewish singer and voice teacher from Rotterdam, Holland, named Ruth Frenk arrived to study with her teacher.

Frenk, whose mother was a German Jew and whose father was a Dutch Jew, thought that she was merely passing through. "I somehow stayed on," said Frenk, who initially earned a living singing traditional Jewish songs. "There was a need for it. No one else was doing it. And I liked Konstanz."

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Jewish community was immeasurably bolstered by new arrivals. "We were not prepared for these people," said Frenk, the president of the local German-Israel society. "There was no infrastructure to absorb them properly."

In addition, they knew very little about Judaism and did not speak German, said Frenk, who commutes to Israel regularly to meet her partner in Tel Aviv.

Unable to fit into German society, many of the elderly among them subsist on social welfare payments. "They have a rough time," said Frenk.

Three years ago, the community split into two seemingly irreconcilable factions after the president, a wealthy Polish-born Jew, decreed that it would abide by Orthodox rather than Conservative rites in order to integrate the Russian newcomers. Jews like Frenk rebelled, triggering the schism.

Due to these divisions, paralysis has set in and the community has not taken possession of a piece of land that Konstanz donated for a new synagogue. As of last month, the impasse was as deep and raw as ever.

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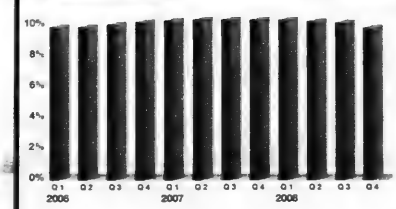

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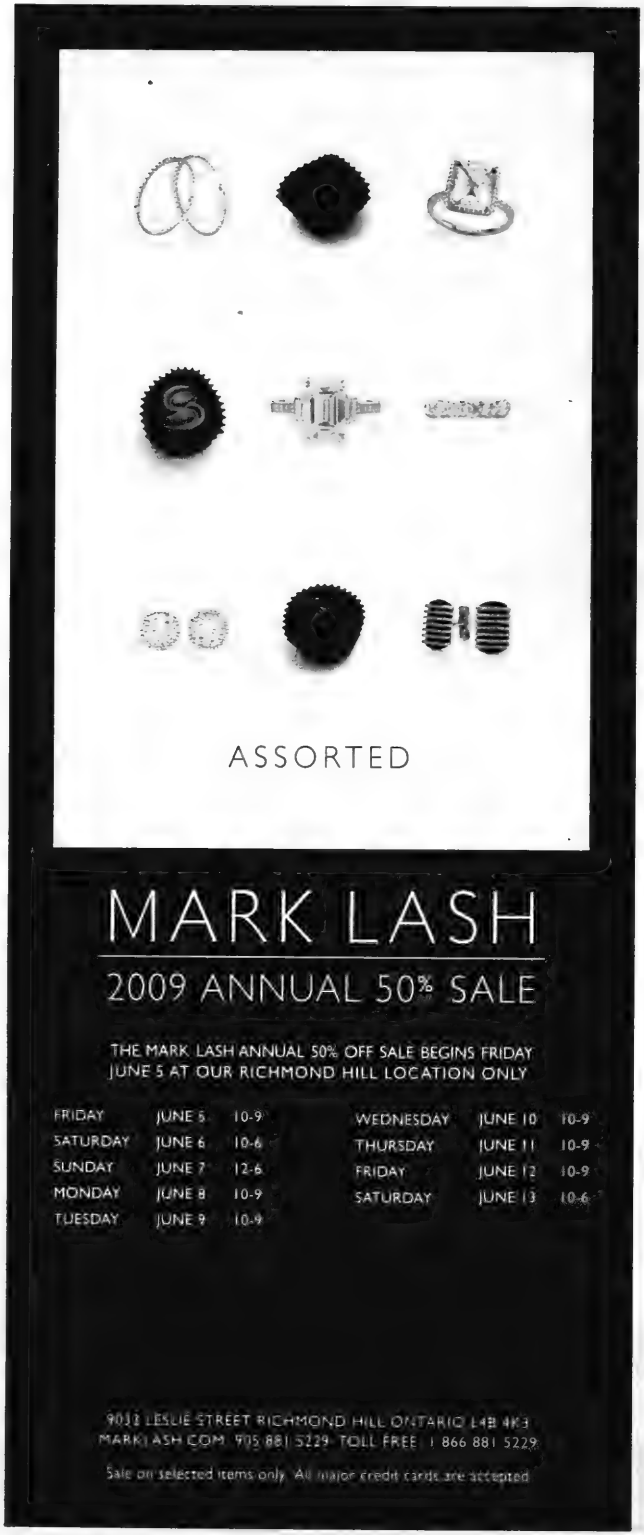
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Iran setting international agenda, expert contends

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Ze'ev Maghen

Ze'ev Maghen is an expert on Iran, but unlike many other observers of the Islamic state, he doesn't believe the country's leaders would risk a nuclear apocalypse just for the chance to destroy Israel.

The Iranian leadership certainly does seek Israel's destruction, but they "care if Israel destroys Tehran. They don't mind martyrdom, but why do that if everything is going so well?" he said.

Maghen, chair of the department of Middle East studies at Bar-Ilan University, was in Toronto last week as scholar-in-residence at Beth Sholom Synagogue. He flew to Toronto from the United States, where he met with intelligence officials eager to broaden their sources of information about the region.

Iranian leaders believe their influence is spreading throughout the Middle East – into Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, he said. They believe they are succeeding in their long-term goals of regional hegemony and international influence. Why mess with a winning formula?

"Iran's goal is not merely to attack Tel Aviv. Their goal is much grander. They want to eradicate Israel as a state, but that's only a first step." Eliminating Israel would remove what the Iranians see as a "western outpost" and create a "beachhead into Europe," he said.

The conflict would continued there based on "demography and *kulturkampf* [culture war]", while a nuclear-armed Iran would possess "another tool in the arsenal of the Islamists to increase their influence in the world." Maghen gave his evaluation just days after Iran test-launched a missile with a 2,500-kilometre range, able to hit European targets.

A senior fellow at the Shalem Center think-tank in Jerusalem, Maghen said the policy-making echelon of the U. S. government requires "people with vision who want to take the country in [a particular] direction." Otherwise, U.S. policy will be reactive and adversarial.

He suggested that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Iran "are the initiative-takers in world politics, and you see the West, the United States, Israel and Europe reacting and trying to adjust policies according to what Ahmadinejad and his cohorts are doing."

As for the United States under President Barack Obama, "I don't think they have a Mideast policy. I think it's clear to everybody that Obama and all his good intentions is feeling his way and making it up as he goes along. Relying on whatever idealistic vision he had is bumping up to the reality of people who don't share his progressive view of the world."

The U.S. president has created a problem for himself by reversing longstanding American policy of not talking to Iran as long as it continues to enrich nuclear material. Maghen, who reads the Persian media, said Iranian newspapers are "laughing" at the United States, believing they have the upper hand. The United States is seen as truckling to Iran and "Obama has elected Ahmadinejad by coming to the table," he said, referring to Iran's June 12 presidential election.

Obama has linked progress in the peace process with mobilization of the region against Iranian ambitions, but Maghen, who consults for the Israeli defence ministry, said "he'll probably end up hitting his head against the Palestinian brick wall like everybody else."

In the meantime, Iran will continue to pursue its goal of a nuclear weapon, which it will use as "another tool in the arsenal of the Islamists to increase their influence in the world."

Referring to instability in nuclear-armed Pakistan, Maghen suggested that country, a Sunni nation, could fall to Islamic forces.

"Some believe Israel has to live with MAD [mutual assured destruction – a Cold War-era doctrine of deterrence]" vis-a-vis its Islamic neighbours.

But if Israel does bomb Iranian nuclear facilities, "you send a warning that we won't tolerate being threatened. That's the likely scenario," he said.

On cjnews.com

'Cultural understanding' links Jewish, gentile students in Ottawa

Rabbi Saltzman honoured for 20 years of service

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Steven Saltzman – a cello player, black belt in karate and former student of subatomic physics – is being honoured for his 20 years of service to Adath Israel Congregation on June 13.

The Denver, Colo. native who grew up in New York, was ordained by New York's Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1977, when the Conservative movement had yet to admit women to rabbinical school, a change that happened the following decade. He also has a doctorate of Hebrew literature from JTS.

Rabbi Steven Saltzman

A staunch and vocal traditionalist, Rabbi Saltzman, who will be 60 in July, said his 1,800-member synagogue offers "an authentic, traditional experience of Judaism within the context of an open-minded approach to philosophical and theological issues."

At Adath Israel – the only Conservative congregation in Toronto that does not allow intermarried Jews to become members – being open-minded "means that there is no question that cannot be asked and no position that cannot be explored, but it isn't license to allow for any and all practice," said the rabbi in an interview in his synagogue study.

Clarifying the shul's policy on interfaith couples, he said, "We welcome [them] to daven with us, to study with us, to explore issues of Judaism with us, but until such time as the family is unified as a Jewish family, we're not prepared to accept the membership of that family."

There was "plenty" of flak after that policy became widely known as the result of a 2002 CJN article, Rabbi Saltzman said.

He recalled the aftermath with apparent equanimity, noting that criticism is standard "any time you stand up for something deemed by popular culture not to be inclusive."

Early in his career – following a two year stint as Hillel director at Tufts University from 1977 to 1979, and a subsequent five years in Rehovot as rabbi of Adat Shalom Congregation – Rabbi Saltzman spent two years as assistant rabbi at Har Zion Temple in Penn Valley, Pa., which was already fully egalitarian.

In contrast, women at Adath Israel do not receive Torah honours, although they are permitted to read from the siddur and offer divrei Torah from the bimah. Bat mitzvah girls can read the Haftarah.

The rabbi's philosophy has not changed, he said. His role at the Pennsylvania synagogue was to teach, assist the senior rabbi, and officiate at some life cycle events, not to set religious policy, he explained.

As well, he was there "to learn how to be a rabbi in the United States." His mentor was Rabbi Gerald Wolpe, who died May 18 of cancer. Rabbi Saltzman recalls him as "a master rabbi" and "a very fine fellow."

Rabbi Saltzman said he would still daven in an egalitarian setting, but "it's just not the sort of davening I want to do on a weekly basis, and not the sort of davening I want to give to my congregants."

He said he thoroughly enjoyed services at Holy Blossom Temple when he exchanged pulpits with Rabbi John Moscowitz. "I respect the passion and the religious sincerity and seriousness of that synagogue and those people, absolutely."

In late 2005, Rabbi Saltzman proposed establishing a Canadian "sovereignty association" within the Conservative movement because of increasing ideological differences between the movement here and in the United States, where non-egalitarian congregations are more prevalent and openly gay students are admitted to Conservative rabbinical schools, a concept that became reality in 2007.

Adath Israel was one of three synagogues in Toronto that left the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism last year, although the reasons given at the time were not necessarily theological.

Rabbi Saltzman believes that in the United States, Conservative Judaism cannot "reasonably" be described as halachic. He said he considers himself Conservative.

His 20 years as senior rabbi of Adath Israel have been less about highlights than "a daily commitment to a congregation and to the people of this congregation, helping them when they have issues of life rituals, counselling, but, for the most part, teaching.

Top-of-the-list Jewish issues for him include increasing Jewish literacy – knowledge of Hebrew language, classical text and Jewish law and philosophy – as well as creating community in the synagogue.

One change he's noted over the years is that about 60 per cent of brides and grooms whose marriages he performs have met on JDate or another online site.

The rabbi and his wife Fran – the first Jewish female officer in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, whom he also met on JDate and married in December 2004 – are offering a session on "Ethical Internet Dating" June 8 at the synagogue.

On June 13, when Rabbi Saltzman is honoured, Rabbi Dow Marmur, rabbi emeritus of Holy Blossom Temple, will deliver a guest sermon. A festive kiddush will also be part of the program.

Town Hall Meeting
Crisis on Canadian Campuses

A Deceptive Campaign of Misinformation is Being Used to Destroy the State of Israel.

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A campaign of hate has permeated our campuses and, one by one, they are being taken over.

The following program will analyze, through the mirror of history, what has transpired on university campuses in the past several years and consider these events in the context of the upcoming conference (to be held a week later at York University) which calls for a "One State Solution" – a euphemism for the destruction of the State of Israel.

Moderator
Guidy Mamann, LL.B
Certified by the Law Society of Upper Canada as a Specialist in Immigration Law

Panel
Ron Banerjee, B.Sc.
Director, Canadian Hindu Advocacy
Political and media affairs, Canadian Hindu

Prof. Sean Egan, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Toronto
Department of Molecular Genetics, Faculty of Medicine
Chapter leader, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East

Meir Weinstein
Director, Jewish Defence League of Canada
Endeavours to counteract anti-Israel campaigns through public activism

Eldad Zacksenhaus, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Toronto
Department of Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology
Chapter leader, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East

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Community makes butterflies for Holocaust exhibit

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Members of the Toronto Jewish community are contributing to an initiative by the Holocaust Museum in Houston to collect 1.5 million handmade butterflies to commemorate the Jewish children who were killed in the Holocaust.

The museum will use the butterflies to create an exhibition scheduled to open in 2012.

When Justine Apple, co-ordinator for Kulanu Toronto – a Hillel-affiliated Jewish social group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transexual, and intersexed people – heard about the project, she wanted to be a part of it.

Late last month, Apple connected with Carson Phillips, an educator with the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, who introduced the project to Apple.

Together, they created a Yom Hashoah event called Poetry and Arts Night.

Apple said about a dozen people gathered at the Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life to learn about the artwork created by children in the Terezin concentration camp and to create their own pieces of art to honour the child Holocaust victims.

"Carson started the whole evening by actually telling us about the children in Theresienstadt and then he gave us all these poetry books he has from the Holocaust centre that contain poems by kids," Apple said.

"He gave us an opportunity to quietly read through some poems in the book. We picked poems that resonated with us that we would read out loud. We shared the poetry with each other and the room was extremely quiet."

She added that the poetry helped inspire the participants.

"When I asked them to tell me about their butterfly, a simplest looking butterfly had so much meaning behind it. They were very beautiful and personal and sometimes sad. The whole evening was very moving."

Apple said she learned from Phillips that the museum chose to collect butterflies because much of the artwork created by children in the concentration camps contained butterflies.

"The symbolism behind the butterflies is that it's a symbol of freedom, a symbol of the future, a symbol of moving into a happier time… a coming out of the hell of the Holocaust."

Apple said that the museum asked that glitter or food, such as macaroni or candy, not be used in making the butterflies, but people were free to use any other material including pipe cleaners, fake flower petals, tissue paper, construction paper, and magazine and newspaper cutouts.

Michelle Delverde, the principal of a Jewish supplementary school for the Danforth Jewish Circle, an egalitarian Jewish community group, said she learned about the project from Apple and was eager to get her students involved.

Andrea Lacroix and Tamar Lewin showcasing their handmade butterflies which will be sent to the Holocaust Museum in Houston, Texas for their butterfly exhibit in 2012.

Delverde said that the biggest challenge was adjusting the project to make it appropriate for all the students from preschool age to bnei mitzvah age.

"The youngest kids were taught about the program from the framework of being free to learn about being Jewish and the freedom to be Jewish," Delverde said.

"They were also taught that we are making butterflies today to make the world remember the importance of being free to be Jewish and how a long time ago, not so long ago when your grandparents were little kids, it was not okay or safe to be Jewish in some parts of the world."

She said that they made 50 butterflies for the museum's exhibit.

As of last summer, the Holocaust Museum in Houston collected more than 400,000 butterflies.

Apple said that while schools and synagogues are likely to become involved in a project such as this, she hopes Kulanu Toronto's involvement will inspire other gay organizations to do their part.

"I thought it would be unique and special for us to spearhead this effort and hopefully inspire other gay groups, not just in Toronto, but Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver, to start the same thing."

Apple added that during the Holocaust, homosexuals were also among those targeted and murdered by the Nazis.

"They had to wear pink triangles [to identify them as being gay]. There is so much documentation about that, so many documentaries that have been filmed about that and every Holocaust Education Week there is always talk about gay people and how they were discriminated against."

Kulanu, which organizes events and programs throughout the year, is hosting a lecture titled "Twice blessed: The joys, not oys, of being Jewish and LBGT," at Congregation Darchei Noam on June 7.

For more information, contact Apple at justaleh@hotmail.com.

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Be sensitive to infertile couples' feelings, panel told

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, spiritual leader of Beth Tzedec congregation, knows that many couples who suffer from infertility often feel deprived, inadequate and shamed.

The rabbi, First Steps Fertility (FSF) clinic founder Dr. Fay Weisberg, FSF clinic manager Shira Benson, and former FSF patient Roslyn Angel Kaman were part of a May 26 discussion panel at Beth Tikvah Synagogue that addressed the emotional, physical and spiritual challenges associated with infertility and its treatments.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Angel Kaman shared her experience of having spent nine years trying to conceive. When she and her husband, Howard, decided to have a child when she was 32, they spent two years trying the "old-fashioned way" before seeking help.

"We felt like we were the only people who couldn't have a baby," Angel Kaman said.

After experimenting with fertility drugs, they moved on to insemination, when sperm is injected directly into the uterus.

Angel Kaman was overcome by tears when she recalled finally becoming pregnant by insemination after five years of trying, only to suffer a miscarriage shortly thereafter. She conceived twice more, but both pregnancies were ectopic, when an embryo implants outside the uterus and eventually miscarries.

They decided to move on to in vitro fertilization (IVF), and within three cycles, they succeeded only in producing a blighted ovum, or an empty sac with no embryo.

"I was almost 40 years old, the age I told myself I would stop trying to have a baby… I did a lot of soul-searching and came to the realization that what I really wanted was to be a parent."

It was then she and her husband began to pursue adoption.

But when she read an article in The CJN about a fertility discovery at Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, she and her husband had new hope.

"While my mind was saying that I was done with fertility treatments, and that I wouldn't go through it again, my heart was saying, 'One more time, just one more time.'"

The article explained that an accidental discovery was made by Weizmann professor Nava Dekel.

Usually, only 20 to 50 per cent of fertilized embryos result in a successful pregnancy after they are transferred to the uterus. But after Dekel and her team gave women a uterine biopsy – scraping a small amount of tissue from the uterus – the success rate increased by 50 per cent.

Dekel explained that the local injury of the uterus doubled the chance of having a viable pregnancy.

Angel Kaman contacted the Israeli doctors, who sent a detailed description of the procedure to her fertility doctor in Toronto, Dr. Fay Weisberg.

Finally, after nine years, the Kamans were expecting a baby.

"For the next nine months, I became cautiously optimistic. This was my fifth pregnancy, and I had a hard time letting myself get excited," Angel Kaman said.

"It wasn't until Oct. 23 [2008], when I held Hannah in my arms for the first time that I really believed that it was true."

The story ends with a beautiful, healthy baby girl, but the Kamans are all too familiar with the pain and helplessness couples feel when they're unable to conceive.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl, who offered a spiritual approach to dealing with the issue, said that Jewish tradition regards a good marriage as one that includes loving companionship and children.

"We recognize that procreation, having children, is a mitzvah. But what happens when you're not able to have children? My experience is that couples often feel deprived, inadequate, unlucky, shamed, as if one has let down the other, as if one is letting down one's family," he said.

"Some people feel that since the Jewish community puts such an emphasis on having children that they may be letting down God, may be letting down the Jewish people."

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said that the Jewish community must be sensitive to the struggle some people have with fertility and help them feel valued as human beings and Jews.

He added that it's important to understand that if a couple can't have children, "the mitzvah of having children is no longer operative."

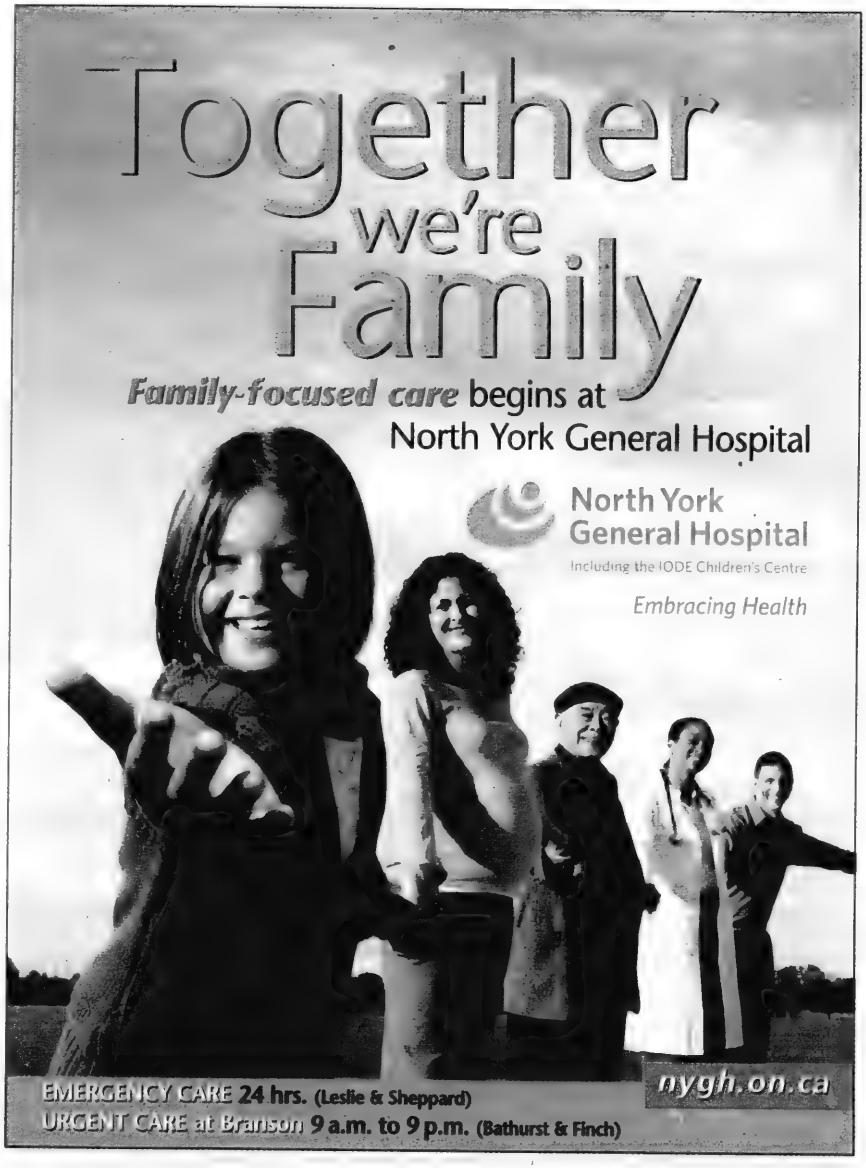
That is, if a couple is unable to naturally conceive, they aren't obligated to seek alternative, often costly, methods.

Weisberg, who offered a more clinical approach to infertility, gave a presentation dispelling myths and misconceptions about infertility and offered advice about how couples can give themselves the best chance to conceive.

The main message was that women have a biological clock that's ticking, and after 35, it ticks quickly.

A woman's eggs age with her, and the number of quality eggs a woman produces decreases with age, she added.

"The older you get, the less eggs you have. Our ovaries have an expiration date."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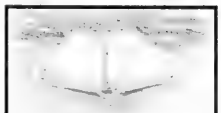
Jewish Life

Samson: unique for being born great

By RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS



Rabbinic Reflections

The Haftorah for this week's Torah reading is the story of the birth of Shimshon, Samson the Judge.

The Torah reading describes the unusual mitzvah of the nazirite. If a person feels so moved, they may take upon themselves restrictions that are above and beyond what the Torah already requires. They may choose to be a nazirite and swear off wine, contact with the dead and cutting their hair.

Being a nazir is not in vogue in our modern world – we like wine, we like cutting our hair, and contact with the dead is an unfortunate, but important, mitzvah. And besides, keeping the restrictions of the Torah is plenty of work without adding more restrictions.

But even in modern times, there was a famous and prominent nazir: Rabbi Dovid Cohen, the Nazir. The Nazir, as he was affectionately known, was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook's right-hand man from the 1920s until Rabbi Kook's death in 1935. The Nazir remained prominent as one of the heads of Rabbi Kook's Yeshiva Mercaz Harav, and his son, Rabbi Shaar Yashuv Cohen, the chief rabbi of Haifa, remains prominent to this day. I once heard Rabbi Shaar Yashuv Cohen describe how his father insisted that all the members of his family take an oath to be a nazir for a month, just to see what it was like.

Samson was a nazir. He didn't drink wine or cut his hair. But he was a nazir from the womb. Now, not cutting your hair while in the womb isn't very hard. But his mother was also restricted from drinking wine while pregnant, hence he was a real nazir from the womb.

And the Haftorah describes that after Samson's birth, the spirit of God again rang throughout the land.

But let me be frank: Samson aside, greatness is not hatched from the womb. And that's what makes him unusual as a leader – he was already so destined from the womb.

Most leaders aren't born leaders. They are born babies, then get older and become more learned. Then they become leaders.

Samson may have been born a nazir and born with a spirit of holiness, but most of us acquire our holiness and our leadership with perseverance and dedication. Sure, many people are endowed with gifts of leadership, qualities that serve them well and, if used properly, help them to attain leadership.

But these gifts are only leadership material unless they are built upon and realized. Gifts from the womb, if left unrealized, remain only gifts. They don't make people leaders.

The sub-theme of the story of Samson is unstated. Samson was a nazir from the womb, thus he was holy from the womb. But for the rest of us, though we may be granted many wonderful, divine gifts, leadership is developed, not bestowed from on high.

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks is spiritual leader at Kehillat Shaarei Torah in Toronto.

Hockey in Hamilton

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Like most children growing up in Canada, hockey was a beloved part of my childhood. Doing my best imitation of Bobby Hull – for some strange reason I was a Chicago Blackhawks fan – I would fire a slapshot and imagine it was the potential Stanley Cup winning goal. Little did I realize that hockey was anything more than a game.

As the ownership saga of the Phoenix Coyotes (Hamilton Blackberries?) plays out in court, we're reminded once again that the game itself, at least in the professional ranks, is little more than a product peddled to generate money for players, owners, advertisers, television networks and a host of other spinoff industries.

From the perspective of Jewish law, the crucial debate on whether Jerry Moyes, the "owner" of the Coyotes, had the right to declare bankruptcy is almost irrelevant. Jewish law, at least in theory, doesn't recognize the concept of bankruptcy, insisting that a debtor is never released from paying amounts due.

The notion that one can declare bankruptcy, start a new and successful business and yet not pay one's prior debts is one that Jewish law could not accept. While a creditor may not demand payment when the debtor is in no position to pay, if and when the situation reverses, payment must be made, and no declarations can alter that. Even if one were to accept that living in Canada, we're allowed to follow the law of the land in declaring bankruptcy, this is acceptable from a legal perspective only, not from a moral one.

With hundreds of millions of dollars owed to creditors, the first and primary obligation of the Phoenix Coyotes is to repay those creditors. Considerations of who owns what and where are secondary to this basic obligation. If Jim Balsillie's offer is the best on the table, that's the one that must be accepted. If the NHL wants to keep the team in Phoenix, it would be obligated to match the bid itself, if no other offers came forward.

Even if no bankruptcy were involved, it's morally questionable whether one can insist that a buyer accept a lower bid for his product, something that happened with Balsillie's attempted purchase of the Nashville Predators franchise a few years ago. Denying a franchisee the right to maximize his investment is something Jewish law would frown on.

One of the complicating factors in bringing the team to Hamilton is the fact that a Hamilton team would be infringing on the exclusive territorial rights given to NHL franchises. Thus both the Toronto Maple Leafs and Buffalo Sabres could effectively block the move or demand compensatory fees in the millions of dollars. Such concerns would be dismissed in a Jewish court of law.

Most authorities maintain that Jewish law offers no protection against competition from rival sources, unless the rules by which they operate are inherently unjust – for instance, one firm is taxed at a higher rate. Even those who maintain that Jewish law offers some protection do so only in a situation in which a market is too small to support a competing firm. A claim for protection of monopoly or near monopoly profits would go unheeded in Jewish law.

Thus even if a seventh Canadian team would lower the profits of the Maple leafs – something that's very far from certain – protection would not even be considered (and even then, it would be rejected by many) until such point as Southern Ontario (and Western New York) could only support one hockey team, a claim no one has suggested.

From the perspective of Jewish law, we can prepare to welcome the Phoenix Coyotes back to Canada. After all, they were once the Winnipeg Jets, the hockey team that was home to Bobby Hull when he was in the WHA, a league established to compete with the NHL that eventually merged with it.

Go Hamilton, go!

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Jewish Life

The Pope confronts the Holocaust: a Jewish appreciation

By JAMES A. DIAMOND

Guest Voice

A few years ago, I defended Pope Benedict XVI in print for comments he made regarding Islam that evoked viscerally negative reactions from Muslims worldwide. I now find myself compelled to defend the Pope once again, this time against the withering criticism of my own Jewish coreligionists in response to his recent speech at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

James A. Diamond

What both controversies share, to my mind, is a problem that is endemic to the current times as a whole. In an age of instant gratification, where information is expected to be received and assimilated within seconds, we have lost the art of patient, conscientious reading and, what is worse, of listening and hearing the message of the words we now are exposed to in curt, digestible excerpts that relieve us of our obligation to read. Now, as then, the Pope's remarks are being judged by a common penchant for an immediate message in a headline or a truncated sentence liberated of any grammatical and syntactical structure.

When I first read the full transcript of the Pope's speech, I was struck by its literary beauty, its theological depth and its profound sensitivity to the deep-seated trauma of the Holocaust for Jews.

Appropriately, the speech focused on the verse in Isaiah from which the name Yad Vashem (memorial and name) derives – "I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name… I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off."

In an exquisite, almost rabbinically textured sermon, the Pope expounded on the significance of a "name," a spiritual and non-tangible essence that can never be destroyed despite the Nazi enterprise in murdering much of the physical body of Israel.

Many biblical names, the Pope commented, capture the unique legacy of their bearers, but those he singled out, Abraham and Jacob, are particularly poignant for the victims of the Holocaust. Abraham's faith was tested in his willingness to slaughter his son, and Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which in Hebrew means "to contend with God," to memorialize a lonely nocturnal battle with an angel, conveying its outcome – "I have struggled with man and God and prevailed."

Though the Pope may not have consciously intended it, his choice of our named ancestors is charged with the central theological crisis that moral evil of the magnitude of the Shoah represents for divine providence in general and for His unique relationship with the nation of Israel in particular.

Both cases sharply contrast with the fate of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust whose children were slaughtered; in their struggle with man and God, they did not prevail. What the names now come to symbolize is one aspect of Jacob's battle identified by the Pope – "Like Jacob, they were immersed in the struggle to discern the designs of the Almighty."

For me, their names do not offer the comfort and certainty of the basic goodness of humanity we all so crave, but rather forever remind us of a reality we would rather deny – the hate, barbarism and cruelty human beings are capable of and that Jews in particular still confront so historically soon after the radical evil they experienced. Jacob, though victorious, did not emerge from his battle unscathed but permanently disabled, a perpetual reminder of the cost of truly struggling with life and its existential challenges. Equally unsettling is the role of the "Almighty" and His "design" in the face of a Holocaust that would seem to indicate divine powerlessness, not might, and randomness rather than design.

The victims' names, then, signify the struggle for goodness, for faith, for decency, but a struggle that is not always victorious as so many Hollywood endings would have us believe. Only an acknowledgment of this fact of life will serve to realize the Pope's prayer: "May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten!"

Platitudes about the triumph of good over evil are in fact tantamount to denying and belittling the victims' unspeakable ordeal. The Pope articulated an unshakeable faith in God that was shared by many of the Holocaust's victims, but in their shadow, He is no longer a Rock of Ages, but rather the God that Job experienced, of whom, as the Pope declared, "we sometimes find it difficult to grasp His mysterious and inscrutable ways."

Our empathy for the Jewish victims' agony was profoundly deepened by the Pope's recalling what must have been their parents' anticipation when they named them at birth ("What name shall we give this child? What is to become of her?"). At that point, their names represented a future, hopes and aspirations, which we now know were never to materialize, but destined to come to a murderous end.

Finally, the Pope recalled, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the God of peace." Shalom, the word for peace in Hebrew, is a common salutation, both a hello and a goodbye, and, in the Jewish tradition, an actual name of God. God allowed his most sacred name to be bandied about in the most mundane way to remind us that the divine in fact resides in the greeting, in the acknowledgment of others, in the space where people meet and encounter each other's humanity.

Again, what better way to remember the names of those murdered in the Holocaust than to emphasize a name that they stood for but that their murderers attempted to erase.

Perhaps this provides a response to the most common criticism I have heard – that the Pope never mentioned the Nazis or Germans in his speech. I believe it was a conscious avoidance. The entire thrust of his sermon was to memorialize the names of the Holocaust's Jewish martyrs whose names would in fact be disgraced by mentioning the name of the Holocaust's perpetrators.

The Pope fittingly ended his address in silence, "a silence to remember, a silence to pray, a silence to hope." There is a silence here for everyone, for believers, agnostics and atheists alike. We should be more attuned to the message of these silences that require the listening and patient effort necessary to open ourselves to the voice of the other as the divine name Shalom so ordinarily and yet so extraordinarily expresses.

It is only then that the utopian future envisioned by Isaiah, which began with "yad vashem" will be realized, one in which all humankind will converge in a common universal sanctuary: "For my House shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

My own reading of this anticipated future is that the last part of the verse is conditional on the first. No structure – temple, mosque or synagogue – can ever be truly God's "house" as long as its walls are barriers rather than open to all peoples.

James A. Diamond is the Joseph & Wolf Lebovic chair of Jewish studies at the University of Waterloo.

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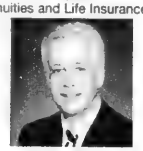

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On Campus

U of T professor receives Killam Prize

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Legal theorist and University of Toronto law professor Ernest Weinrib is one of five Canadian university professors awarded the $100,000 Killam Prize for outstanding scholarship in 2009.

McGill University professors François Ricard, Philippe Gros and Wagdi Habashi, along with Queen's University professor John P. Smol, joined Weinrib in accepting the tax-free prizes handed out annually by the Canada Council for the Arts to scholars doing research in engineering, health sciences, natural sciences, social sciences or humanities.

Ernest Weinrib

Weinrib was recognized last month for groundbreaking work in areas of legal reasoning and questions about the relationship between law, freedom and rationality. Combining legal and philosophical analysis, he has been a pioneer in interdisciplinary legal scholarship in Canada.

Considered one of the best legal theorists in North America, Weinrib has written books, essays and articles about legal philosophy, private law and tort law.

While Weinrib is recognized as having a central role in the debates surrounding these areas of law, he is also seen as a controversial figure.

"What I'm interested in is ... understanding the whole nature of liability in terms of law's moral meaning and not just its instrumental use," Weinrib said.

"I approached it in different ways, I examined grounds of liability and worked on the connection between different concepts and structures and the presuppositions of liability."

He said that when he began writing about these areas of law 25 to 30 years ago, the approach to the analysis of private law and tort law served an external, instrumental purpose.

"My view is that it wasn't correct... The idea that [the laws have] moral meaning was controversial then, and in some circles, it still is today."

Weinrib, who has been teaching at U of T for about four decades and is the Cecil A. Wright Professor of Law, said he was thrilled to receive the prestigious award.

"It was very gratifying, but I was also very gratified by the recognition that it implied, not just for my work but for a number of people at University of Toronto who are pursuing a similar line," Weinrib said, giving credit to U of T for playing a leadership role in developing legal theory.

"I'm very grateful to the University of Toronto for providing that environment and grateful to my colleagues," he said, adding that his students also help him hone his skills because they force him to defend and clarify his ideas.

"I've benefited from these institutional advantages."

In addition to having a 40-year relationship with U of T, Weinrib, who said he has an interest in Jewish law, has also developed an ongoing relationship with Tel Aviv University.

He said that for eight out of the last 10 years, he has travelled to Israel after the school year at U of T ends in April to teach a course at TAU.

He said he enjoys the lively legal debates and the personal friendships he has developed, and he called TAU a "leading centre for legal thinking in Israel."

Poet honoured with Jewish studies award

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — The 2009 recipient of the Louis Rosenberg Distinguished Service Award from the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies (ACJS) is poet and professor Seymour Mayne.

The award, established in 2001 by the ACJS, honours an individual, group or association who has made significant contributions to Canadian Jewish studies in one or more fields. In 2008, the award was renamed in tribute to the scholarship of the late Louis Rosenberg.

Seymour Mayne

Mayne, originally from Montreal, is a professor of Canadian literature, Canadian studies and creative writing at the University of Ottawa, where he has taught for "two times chai plus one" years.

He is the author, editor or translator of more than 50 books, and his work is represented in more than 80 national and international anthologies.

Mayne received the award on May 24 at the closing banquet of the day-long "Community Day: Snapshots of the Jewish Canadian Experience" held at Ottawa's Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

His colleague and friend, Trent University English professor Zelig Pollock, spoke of Mayne's literary accomplishments.

"He has contributed to Canadian Jewish literature as a teacher, translator, anthologist, critic, editor, lecturer, community leader and, most importantly, as one of the leading figures in Canadian Jewish poetry.

"Over the course of an immensely productive career, Seymour has garnered many well deserved awards – and his work has been translated into many languages, including French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Yiddish – but perhaps none of these marks of esteem as fully and appropriately recognizes the range and impact of his accomplishments as the Louis Rosenberg Award," Pollock said.

In addition to his own work, Mayne has been active in promoting Canadian Jewish studies, and instrumental in founding this city's Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program in 2006. The program offers a variety of interdisciplinary courses, in both English and French, as well as a minor in Canadian Jewish studies.

"Almost as important to Seymour as his own poetry has been his effort to provide a healthy creative environment... for others, especially for those younger than himself. His encouragement of others through his tireless work as an anthologist, lecturer, editor, translator and, of course, much beloved teacher of literature and creative writing, are all aspects of this calling. The most notable recent example is the establishment in 2006, after years of effort, of the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program of which he is founding director. Its aim – to promote an understanding of Jewish life, culture, language, literature, and history in a Canadian context – could hardly be more Seymour-like," Pollock said.

Mayne acknowledged Sara Vered and members of her family who were present at the award ceremony.

"The Vered Program is a tribute to Sara and her late husband, Zeev, for the vision to establish something unique in Canada," he said.

There is no other program like it in Canada, Mayne added, and it has gained worldwide recognition.

"We are now internationally known... We Canadian Jews suffer from what a lot of Canadians suffer from – an inferiority complex... there are now more scholars doing research on the Jews of Canada [outside the country] than there are in Canada itself... I hope our program will continue to grow from year to year and from generation to generation."

$2M pledge benefits NYGH breast screening clinic

Compiled by CJN Staff

North York General Hospital (NYGH) has announced a $2-million pledge from Charlotte and Lewis Steinberg, enabling it to buy the most advanced mammography technology available.

This state-of-the-art digital mammography with tomosynthesis technology is the latest innovation in breast cancer screening and diagnosis, improving the chances for early detection and identifying breast cancer tumours as small as a few millimetres.

"We are excited to add this technology to our diagnostic capabilities," said Dr. Elizabeth LaMere, chief and medical director of medical imaging.

"In addition to the benefits of digital mammography, tomosynthesis is a technique that has the potential to improve detection of cancers and reduce false positive findings."

Having been approved for use in Canada in March 2009, North York General Hospital is the first Ontario hospital to purchase digital mammography machines with tomosynthesis, which offer improved tumour detection in younger patients and/or patients with dense breasts. The machines are a state-of-the-art Hologic Selenia Dimensions system.

Digital mammography with tomosynthesis complements standard mammograms and digital mammograms as an important tumour diagnostic tool. Research shows the potential benefits to patients include fewer unnecessary biopsies, fewer recalls and faster, more accurate diagnoses.

"This technology is an important step forward in helping to improve early detection of breast tumours, which in turn will help improve quality of care," Lewis Steinberg said. "We are delighted to be able to support North York General Hospital's breast cancer services in this way."

With this gift for the purchase of three digital mammography machines – two with tomosynthesis imaging technology and one with biopsy capability – the Steinbergs have become the largest individual philanthropic donors in North York General Hospital's history.

Charlotte and Lewis Steinberg

"In these turbulent economic times, the Steinbergs generosity inspires us all to embrace the health of our community," said Charles Beall, chair of the North York General Hospital Foundation's board of governors.

Tomosynthesis takes multiple angled low-dose images of the patient's breast in an arc pattern, which are then reconstructed into a series of up to 100 thin (one millimetre), high-resolution slices that can be displayed dynamically, creating a three-dimensional effect. This approach eliminates tissue overlap and noise found in currently employed digital and traditional mammography.

"We are deeply grateful for the continued support and exceptional generosity of Charlotte and Lewis Steinberg," said Bonnie Adamson, the hospital's president and CEO. "Our staff are committed to providing the highest level of care to our patients and their families. This new technology will further enhance our ability to offer superior breast cancer screening and diagnosis."

The three digital mammography machines will be operational by this fall. This additional imaging technique will improve diagnosis and detection of breast cancer for all patients referred to the hospital for assessment, which last year totalled almost 9,000 people.

This includes patients referred by their family physician for routine screening, patients referred through the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) at the hospital's Branson site, as well as those referred for a diagnostic assessment, encompassing patients referred to the BMO Financial Group Breast Diagnostic Centre, which opened at the hospital's Leslie Street site in 1997.

This centre was one of Canada's first centres for rapid assessment breast patients, offering a multidisciplinary approach to diagnosis of breast cancer.

The Steinbergs have a long history with NYGH and have supported many important programs at the hospital, including the Charlotte and Lewis Steinberg Emergency Department and the genetics program, and have provided funding for the breast services' first sentinel node machines.

Lewis Steinberg said that he and his wife decided the new technology would be a tremendous asset to the hospital and they wanted to do what they could to help. "These are critical times, and a lot of people are cutting back on donations. We hope to be a good example."

In recognition of the Steinbergs gift, North York General Hospital's breast services will be named Karen, Heather and Lynn Steinberg Breast Services.

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Poverty called a key determinant of health

Continued from page 3

to eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000; and Wendy Wolfman, director of family and community services, Jewish Family & Child.

Rothman said that almost 20 years after Campaign 2000 was established, its mandate is still to "keep the government's feet to the fire. Since 1991, we have made virtually no progress. Things improved and then they got worse again. Clearly, there is work to do."

Poverty is a key determinant of health, she said. "It is a public interest issue because it is harmful to all of us. Poverty costs the government millions of dollars and households thousands of dollars [annually.]

"Our message is that we as a society can pay now and prevent poverty, or pay more later."

"More than 3,000 Jewish children in the GTA live in poverty, and one-third of these [live in households] with a single mother. Poverty does not affect all groups equally."

Rothman said children living in poverty say such things as "'I feel ashamed when my dad can't get a job; I pretend I forget my lunch;' and 'I can't go on school trips.'

"They don't get much opportunity to receive homework help, because many of their parents are working more than one job."

Wolfman said that the 2001 census cited 20,000 Jewish poor, out of which 4,000 were working poor, 10,000 were immigrants, 9,000 were government supported and 3,000 were children.

"We know that children raised in poverty struggle in school, and this causes a cycle of poverty.

"It is important to know that a person who earns $9.50 an hour in a 40-hour week earns $19,760 annually, and that is $2,000 below the poverty line."

She said that JF&CS distributed more than $12 million this past year in direct assistance and camp subsidies, and saw 2,000 clients.

Naomi, a former client, said she went to JF&CS for help when her two children were small and she and her husband were living on one income. "We could barely afford diapers or formula. We received financial help, and we got a Passover food box. It made a difference between us eating and not eating."

Naomi, who now works in the Jewish community, said that without JF&CS, "we wouldn't have survived. My kids had swimming lessons, and we went to parenting classes."

They've now come full circle, Naomi said. "We received help from the Jewish community, and now I work for the Jewish community."

Adler urged the audience to speak out about poverty so that the government will hear. "We [at UJA] can direct you to the proper person in government. If you have someone to open the door for you, you will be heard. You just need the tools to get started.

"Sign a petition calling for the eradication of poverty, write a letter, call a radio talk show, go to a meeting, or call your MPP. Tell the world that there is a poverty problem. You are the voice we can use to move forward." — **C.B.**

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No-frills CJA campaign emphasizes 'the new poor'

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — In keeping with the sombre economic times, this year's Combined Jewish Appeal (CJA) will be unusually austere. There will be no big-name speakers, fewer cocktail parties, and a consolidation of some events among the divisions.

General chair Ian Karper and women's chair Sandy Martz said the campaign will focus on explaining to donors and potential new contributors how seriously the slump is affecting many in the Montreal Jewish community.

They refer to "the new poor," previously middle class families, who are finding it hard to make their mortgage payments or keep their children in Jewish day schools because of a job loss.

Agence Ometz, a social service agency of Federation CJA, has observed a significant increase in clients who have lost middle management positions, who are in the 35 to 55 age range.

There's also an increased demand for tuition assistance at the Jewish schools, much of it coming from people who never asked for help before, Martz said.

This past year, the federation for the first time begun offering free meals twice a week to anyone who says they need it, and also sponsored several no cost Passover seders in different locations around the city.

BBYO members at the recent spring regional convention at Camp Northland

Record number of teens attend BBYO convention

Compiled by CJN Staff

A record number of Toronto-area teens boarded the buses to Camp Northland for BBYO's spring regional convention, this year.

With imagination as the weekend's theme, the convention encouraged the teens to enrich their connection to Judaism, sharpen leadership skills and develop strategies for strengthening BBYO, a leading pluralistic Jewish teen movement.

The convention marked the end of a landmark year for BBYO's Lake Ontario region, which saw a large increase in teen involvement. In Toronto alone, membership has increased 25 per cent since the 2007-08 school year, and more than 300 teens from Lake Ontario region were involved in BBYO programs this year. Additionally, nearly 100 Toronto-area middle-school students were involved in Teen Connection, the BBYO program created especially for Jewish pre-high school students, which has helped yield BBYO's largest incoming class of freshmen in years.

> ***'No longer community's best kept secret'***

"No longer is BBYO the Toronto Jewish community's best kept secret," said BBYO program director Kevin Goodman. "With the launch of three new chapters this year, more teens than ever before are taking advantage of the fun and meaningful experiences that BBYO has been providing to Jewish high school teens for over 80 years."

In addition to setting the agenda for the coming year and electing the 2009-10 Lake Ontario region executive at the convention, participants enjoyed the Sunday awards ceremony where senior Michelle Naftalis was presented with the 17th annual Lake Ontario region award for outstanding BBYO leadership, in memory of Marci Birzon. Also recognized were Maya Feldberg, who received the award for emerging leadership, and members of Chaverot chapter, who won the regional spirit gavel.

Convention co-chairs were incoming presidents Michelle Covant and Michael Gallowitz, who were elected to lead BBYO's 2009-10 regional executive. Also elected were vice-presidents Kelly Indarjit and Eli Krapivnik for programming, Alissa Malina and Josh Harendorf for membership, Michelle Efrosman for communications, and Maya Feldberg and Russel Bahar for service, advocacy and Judaism.

For more information on BBYO in the Greater Toronto Area, contact Kevin Goodman at 416-398-2004, ext. 222, or kgoodman@bbyo.org.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov Lou & Doni Brown on your 60th anniversary. Wishing you good health and happiness always. With love, your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Happy 93rd birthday to Henry, upcoming 84th to Fanny and 63rd anniversary to you both. Never surrender. With love, from the entire family.

Abigail and Joshua would like to wish their Grandpa, Joel Jeffries, a happy 70th birthday! Love from Mommy & Daddy too!

Mazel tov Morris & Blanche Shmit on your 60th anniversary. With all our love, Francy & Larry, Eta & Julius, Sara & Phil and all the grandchildren.

Happy first anniversary! Wishing us many more happy and healthy years together. We should be in here again on our 50th! Love, PF.

Miriam, Oren and Jasmine Levy, mazel tov on the birth of Elan Matai! With love, Fred & Debbie Granek.

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What's New Deadlines. Monday, June 1, is the deadline for the June 11 issue, and Monday, June 8, is the deadline for the June 18 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Sunday, June 7

TORAH DEDICATION

World Mizrachi Organization, Mizrachi of Canada and the Toronto Jewish community dedicate a sefer Torah to honour **Kurt Rothschild** for his dedication to the land, the people and the Torah of Israel. The Torah will be placed in the synagogue of the new community of Chalutza, Israel, home to many former residents of Gush Katif. Special guest **Rabbi Daniel Hershkowitz**, Israeli minister of science and technology. Procession at 9:30 a.m. at Englemount and Viewmount avenues. Proceeds to Congregation Toras Emes.

FAMILY FUN DAY

Interchange Family Fun Day, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., rain or shine, Hwy. 400 and Hwy. 7, to support the Dr. Jay Children's Grief Program, helping children face their own or a loved one's terminal illness. Includes mini-golf, games, food, rides, entertainment and more. Tickets $15. www.drjayfoundation.com or 416-586-4800, ext.7406.

RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, rosh yeshiva, Yeshivat Har Etzion, speaks on "Teaching Religious Zionism in North America." Sponsors are Canadian Friends of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Ulpanat Orot, Yeshivat Or Chaim and Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. No charge. 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim. 416-789-3213.

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The Joys Not the Oys of Being Jewish and LGBT. Music by **Corey Sandler** and musical companions. 7-9:30 p.m., Presented by Jewish Diversity committee, Jewish Family & Child. Congregation Darchei Noam, 864 Sheppard Ave. W. No entrance fee. Refreshments available. Call **Andria Spindel**, aspindel@rogers.com.

BETH AM STORY

Book launch 7-9 p.m., Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Sisterhood Hall. To buy a book, send a cheque to the shul for $25, marking it "Beth Am Archives fund," for an income tax receipt. RSVP **Rosalyne Federman**, 416-635-0563.

CHESS TOURNAMENT

Associated Hebrew Schools Kamin branch hosts a chess tournament for Jewish school students kindergarten to Grade 12, day and supplementary schools. 300 Atkinson Ave., lunch room. Registration 10-10:45 a.m., Play begins 11 a.m. RSVP brian@geodesic.ca.

FUN IN THE PARK

Sunday in the Park with Lilah, a family fun day and silent auction, is at the Fieldstone School, Dufferin Street south of Lawrence Avenue. Proceeds benefit research at Sick-Kids into neuroblastoma, a rare but devastating childhood cancer. Lilah is a survivor of neuroblastoma. Registration 9 a.m., walk at 10 a.m., games, fun and lunch follow. www.lilahsfund.com.

Monday, June 8

BUILDING BRIDGES

Emotive perspectives of Poland's past and present. Moderator **Peter Jassem**, chair, Polish Jewish Heritage Foundation. 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Centre Holocaust Congregation. $5 at door appreciated. Call Lodzer Synagogue, 416-636-6665, or **Rochelle Michaels**, 905-881-8907.

Tuesday, June 9

BETH DAVID SISTERHOOD

Canadian women's struggle for political and professional rights, presented by **Diana Mingail**. Closing sisterhood meeting. 8 p.m., Sisterhood Hall. Refreshments. Non-sisterhood members $5 at door.

Continued on page 25

Presented By
TARTAN LAND
Festival June 14th Downsview Park
2 km WALK • 5 km RUN • 10 km RUN
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Job Postings can also be viewed at www.mercaztoronto.org/educators/jobpostings.cfm

The CENTRE for Enhancement of Jewish Education
UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
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Continued from page 24

PARENTING WORKSHOP

Retired teacher and principal **Ted Borovoy** presents one-session parenting workshop "Rewards, Punishment and Self-Esteem." No charge. 7-9 p.m., Jewish Family & Child. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext.215, or go online to www.jfandcs.com.

Wednesday, June 10

PLANTS AND HEALTH

Weizmann Women & Science presents "Plants in the Aid of Human Health." Speakers **Gad Galili** and **Dr. Richard Beliveau**. 7:30 p.m., Oakdale Golf & Country Club. $36. **Joan**@weizmann.ca or phone 416-733-9220.

NEW BEIT MIDRASH

Rachael's Centre for Torah, Mussar and Ethics is launching its new Beit Midrash program. Open house 488 Champagne Dr., 7:30-9 p.m. RSVP info@rachaelscentre.org or 416-630-6488.

Other News

PETER KENT CANCELLED

Temple Kol Ami adult education committee program with minister of state for foreign affairs (Americas), **Peter Kent**, scheduled for June 5, has been postponed until the fall. For more information, call **Brenda**, 905-709-2620.

HOLOCAUST MEMOIRS

Azrieli Foundation's second series of Holocaust survivor memoirs is launched June 15 at the Winter Garden theatre. Excerpts from the memoirs will be read by the authors and their loved ones. Narration and presentation by journalist **Joe Schlesinger**. Keynote speaker **Nechama Tec**. 7:30 p.m. Dessert reception follows. Free registration. E-mail toronto.launch@azrieli.ca, or phone 416-223-0003.

CIRCLE OF CARE

Volunteers needed for Kosher Meals on Wheels drivers, Jewish hospice, escorts to medical appointments and friendly visiting. Professional training and orientation provided. Call **Penny**, 416-635-2860, ext. 462, or e-mail pedwards@circleofcare.com.

ROTHSCHILD LECTURE

Men's Service Group, Baycrest, presents a lecture by **Kurt Rothschild**, past president of World Mizrachi. June 11, 7-8 p.m., Baycrest Terrace Assembly Room. No charge. Call **Sabina Ntim**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2297, or sntim@baycrest.org.

RABBI HONOURED

Adath Israel Congregation pays tribute to **Rabbi Steven Saltzman** for 20 years of service as senior rabbi. Shabbat services, June 13, 8:45 a.m. Guest sermon, **Rabbi Dow Marmur**, rabbi emeritus, Holy Blossom Temple.

ZAREINU MOVEATHON

Twelfth Zareinu Moveathon raises funds for Zareinu Educational Centre, a day school and treatment centre for children with a wide range of physical and developmental challenges, June 14. Gather at Downsview Park for a day of entertainment, food, games and rides and 2-km walk. 5- and 10-km runs and a 20-km bike ride. June 28, Zareinu Moveathon Pro Tour, 50-, 100- or 162.5-km bike rides. Starts at Bishop Reding High School, 1120 Main St., Milton. Includes pre- and post-ride massages, food and rest stops, showers and change rooms, finish line barbeque. Minimum sponsorship $1,000. To register, or for more information, go to www.moveathon.com.

CRISIS ON CAMPUSES

Town Hall meeting discusses Crisis on Canadian campuses: a campaign of misinformation is being used to destroy the State of Israel. Moderator lawyer **Guidy Mamann**. Chabad Lubavitch Centre, Thornhill, June 11, 7:30 p.m. Donation at the door appreciated. Sponsored by the Jewish Defence League of Canada. Call 416-736-7000.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors hosts a tea to celebrate the intergenerational program. Includes a display of photos and writings by students about seniors. June 11, 1:30 p.m., at Miles Nadal JCC. Call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

"The Road to Happiness" is the theme of the annual To Our Good Health seminar of the **Association of Jewish Seniors**. June 10, 9 a.m.-1 p.m, Earl Bales Park. Speaker, psychologist **Berte Rubin**, volunteer recognition, entertainment, kosher lunch. Free for paid up AJS members. Guests $15, couples $25. Reservations required. Call **Tammy Parker**, 416-635-2860, ext. 458.

Beth Sholom Synagogue Chai Society presents Strawberries and High Tea. June 10. Guest Speaker **Diana Mingail** speaks on the Jews of India. Lunch at 12 noon. $10. RSVP **Rivy**, 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Borochov Centre. For more information, call 416-630-9444.

Earl Bales in the Park. Sunday dance, June 7; Casino Rama, June 10; Lunch and Laughter Group, June 18; Casino Niagara June 23. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Outdoor pool opens officially June 21.

Ext. 291 for membership information.

Jewish Discovery Museum has My Hebrew picnic. Share Hebrew with your child through music, puppets and games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers welcome. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m. Newborn to 4 years, with adult. Ext. 390.

Shabbat Club. Your child can join with peers to sing, tell stories, make challah, play games and do age-appropriate crafts. Fridays, 9:45-11:15 a.m. Ages 3-5. Ext. 390.

Macccabi Games information. Contact **Grant** at gsmith@bjcc.ca, or ext. 257. For youth ages 13-16.

JVIA network – a new group connecting active, vision impaired Jewish adults hopes to establish a recreational and phys-ed program and organize interesting outings and activities. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

Conversation Cafe, a joint program with JIAS. Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m.. Offers newcomers a chance to practise their English in a social environment.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Thirteenth annual Festival on Bloor. Sunday, June 14, noon to 6 p.m. Bloor Street from Bathurst to Spadina. Live music at the Tranzac Mainstage and Theatre at the Fringe Stage. Activities for kids of all ages, and more than 70 craft and specialty food vendors. Call ext. 0.

Festival of Photography. Mircea Popescu: Foreign and Familiar exhibition continues to June 15. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday.–Sunday 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Ext. 133 or visualarts@mnjcc.org.

Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition submission deadline is June 30. First prize, professionally directed and performed public play reading at Miles Nadal JCC. For guidelines and more information, contact **Esther Arbeid**, ext. 606, or esthera@mnjcc.org.

KOFFLER CENTRE

Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-636-1880 ext. 228, www.kofflerarts.org.

Russia: Beyond Utopia. Canadian debut of images of post-Communist Russia by photographer **Andrew Moore**. Until June 30, Loggia Gallery.

A Touch Away: a mini-series screening. Concluding session June 9, Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto. $10. 7 p.m.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

NEW DAY CARE CENTRE: Seen at the dedication of the Gradel & Weisfeld Day Care centre at Bar-Ilan University's Ramat Gan campus, are, from left, university director Haim Glick; president Moshe Kaveh; Milla, Susan and David Gradel; Norman Sternthat, representing Gabi Weisfeld of Toronto; Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan's Dov Altman; and Vera Muravitz, Bar-Ilan's U.K. and Australasia Operations. **[Yoni Reif photo]**

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Mannie Baker	May 17/09	2121 Bathurst Street,
Bleama Rosenfield	May 19/09	11 Townsgate Drive,
Sam Roy	May 19/09	105 Dupont Street
Sam Kaufman	May 20/09	75 Graydon Hall Drive,
Goldie Gord	May 20/09	2 Covington Road,
Alex Davis	May 21/09	18 Bernier Avenue
Sara Itelman	May 21/09	31 Patrice Crescent
Dolly Berman	May 22/09	118 Alamosa Drive
Sadie Moranis	May 21/09	3 Colvestone Road
Ruth Rosenstein	May 24/09	8 Covington Road,
Bev Gurza	May 22/09	201 Belgravia Avenue

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
AZRIEL KARP ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 7th at 11:30 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst south of Steeles
Shomer Shabbos Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
Morton Mayer Cohen ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 14th 11:30 a.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
986 Wilson Ave.
TIBA Section
Relatives & friends are invited to attend

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Coast to Coast

Lawrence Cannon, minister of foreign affairs, right, met with the President of the Palestinian Authority and Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Mahmoud Abbas, on May 25. Both reiterated their support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [Photo courtesy of Denis Drever Photography]

Jewish delegation meets with PA President Abbas

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Representatives of the Jewish community met last week with Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas in an "open" dialogue – but one in which little that was new emerged.

Delegates from the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC) and other Jewish organizations met with the Palestinian leader and chief negotiator Saeb Erekat in Ottawa during a short visit to Canada. The one-hour meeting – requested by the Palestinians – featured a frank exchange of views, said CIC national chair Moshe Ronen.

Abbas called on the Jewish community to advocate for "a true peace, a just peace," Ronen said. "There was nothing dramatic or new in what he asked. He wanted us to continue dialogue. He wanted Canada to play a role in refugees and he wanted the Jewish community to use its influence to urge the parties to resolve their differences."

During a short Canadian visit, Abbas met with Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. Afterward, the Palestinians flew to Washington for talks with U.S. President Barack Obama.

A news release issued by the Prime Minister's Office said "Canada believes these issues must be settled between the parties themselves. Canada also remains prepared to assist in the peace process in any way the parties would find useful."

Following a meeting with Abbas – who said he would make settlement expansion a key issue – Cannon called settlement growth "illegal.

"Canada has never supported the expansion of settlements. We believe that it's an illegal move," he said.

Ronen said the CIC believes the settlement issue is a "red herring." Settlements did not prove to be an obstacle in peace talks with Egypt, Jordan or in the withdrawal from Gaza, he said.

Ronen said he met Abbas and senior Palestinian leaders three years ago and noted last week's encounter contained "less rhetoric, especially from Erekat."

The CIC has met with senior Palestinians in the past. "When we visit Israel, we interact from time to time with members of the Palestinian Authority to get an understanding of the position they put forward and to better be able to put together our advocacy and know what they're saying."

He detected a sense of urgency in the Palestinian delegation. "They believe that the Mideast is less important to the Americans, who are engaged elsewhere, and they will lose interest in the peace process" unless Israelis and Palestinians move quickly, Ronen said. "I think [Abbas] is eager to move forward as he's in a position of weakness" vis-a-vis Hamas.

The Jewish participants raised several issues with Abbas, including the failure of the PA to curb incitement and terrorism. They asked whether Abbas would explicitly announce that a two-state solution would mark an end to hostilities and whether he'd accept a Palestinian state that was demilitarized.

"His answers were not totally satisfactory regarding incitement," Ronen said. "He felt the PA is doing as much [as it can] to arrest extremists and that he is acting in full coordination with Israeli security forces. He wants stability in the region and he felt incitement was well under control."

Asked whether one of the two states should be a Jewish state, Abbas said "it's not up to him to define the Israeli state," Ronen reported.

Abbas called the "right of return," which many suspect is a code for swamping Israel with hostile refugees, as a "non-issue...He felt Israel would determine who would enter the country," Ronen said.

Abbas stated he would refer any peace settlement to a public referendum and he predicted 75 per cent support for a resolution, a result that would undermine Hamas.

Joining Ronen in the meeting were Rabbi Reuben Poupko, co-chair of the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus, Marc Gold, president of Federation CJA of Montreal and Eric Maldoff, chair of the Quebec-Israel Committee.

Federation marks 75 years by feting 75 volunteers

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Although it only adopted its current name in 2005, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa has been in existence for 75 years. Formerly known as the Jewish Community Council of Ottawa/Vaad Ha'ir, it has overseen the physical, spiritual and financial welfare of the community for three-quarters of a century.

On May 20, the community came together to honour 75 of its dedicated volunteers, people who have given of their time and effort in a variety of ways to ensure that the needs of their community are met. The 75th Anniversary Volunteer Awards presentation was held at the Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building and was attended by local MP Paul Dewar.

Federation president and CEO Mitchell Bellman said that volunteers "are the true strength of our organization... we are a strong and growing Jewish community 75 years after the Vaad was founded, largely because of our volunteers."

> ***'The true strength of our organization'***

Bellman said it was extremely hard to decide which 75 people to honour, because there are many deserving individuals in the community. He noted that the award recipients have not only made great contributions personally, but are also representative of the many others who couldn't be named.

Norman Zagerman, a past president of the Vaad Ha'ir, spoke about the history of the community, citing various milestones and noting proudly that the federation "has carried on the tradition that no member of the community will be denied services because of lack of financial means."

The MC for the evening, CBC Radio news producer Laurence Wall, introduced each award recipient with a brief description of the volunteer work he or she has done. Most of the volunteers have been involved in a variety of activities over a lengthy period of time. Several were members of families with a history of extensive volunteer work.

Federation chair Jonathan Freedman, said his own family has been in Ottawa for 120 years.

"Most [immigrants] came to Ottawa penniless, and many have needed the services of our various agencies," he said. "Let us look ahead to the next 75 years and the continued growth and prosperity of this great community of ours."

The names of the volunteers that were honoured will be engraved on a plaque, which will be in the federation offices.

Three generations of the Kimmel family – Morris, Ariella and Steven – won volunteer awards [Peter Waiser photo]

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Notice of Annual Meeting

Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
The Baycrest Day Care Centre
Baycrest Hospital
The Jewish Home for the Aged
and
The Baycrest Centre Foundation

Winter Garden, Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged
3560 Bathurst Street, Toronto

June 18, 2009 **RSVP:**
3 p.m. to 5 p.m. **416 785-2500, ext. 6303**

The following by-laws will be presented for approval:

Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care	By-law No. 3 - 2009
The Baycrest Day Care Centre	By-law No. 3 - 2009
Baycrest Hospital	By-law No. 3 - 2009
The Jewish Home for the Aged	By-law No. 3 - 2009

Each By-law No. 3 - 2009 of the above corporations enables only elected directors to vote at future meetings of the members. This is in keeping with recommendations of the Auditor General of Ontario regarding hospital governance. *By-law No. 3 preserves governors as members but removes their voting power as of July 1, 2009.* The quorum required to convene annual meetings is reduced to six voting members. By-law No. 3 confirms that the Investment Committee for each corporation is a joint committee of the corporation and The Baycrest Centre Foundation and that The Baycrest Centre Foundation determines the Investment Committee Chair.

The Baycrest Centre Foundation By-law No. 17

By-law No. 17 replaces the previous Foundation By-law and includes the following changes. References to the Men's Service Group and the Leadership Development Group have been repealed since these groups are now inactive. The composition of the Executive Committee has been expanded to include standing committee Chairs, the President of the Women's Auxiliary, and the Chair of Baycrest. An independent Finance Committee and an independent Audit Committee replace the former Finance and Audit Committee which was joint with Baycrest. The Investment Committee remains a joint committee with a majority of members and its Chair appointed by the Foundation. A new Fundraising Cabinet will report to the Chair of the Donor Development Committee. Board members may now serve an unlimited number of three-year terms in office, subject to nomination by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

Ignatieff praises CJC as being 'conscience of Canada'

Continued from page 1

"You won't hear that kind of doublespeak from our government ever," he said to a standing ovation.

"I am proud of what our government has done." In reference to Holocaust deniers, he added, "We have placed priority on the advancement of knowledge of history, of [denouncing] anti-Semitism and [advancing] human rights.

Keynote speaker Michael Ignatieff, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, praised CJC for being the conscience of Canada.

"They have spoken for the larger principle of human solidarity. The best way to protect your own rights is to protect the rights of others."

Ignatieff said Canada cannot be silent when one state denies another state the right to exist. "We must stand with Israel in times of [Israel's] trial."

He told the audience that his rules for life in public office are to listen to everyone and have an open door, "but that does not mean I agree with everyone. We cannot be neutral when historic facts are denied, and we cannot meet with groups that have links to terrorism."

He added that we cannot say one thing in a synagogue and another in a mosque. "My overriding duty is to unite Canadians and define what is legitimate and illegitimate in the Middle East.

"Criticism of Israel is legitimate, but to call it a war criminal [and intimidate] those who defend it is not. Attacks on places of worship and study are never legitimate."

The Middle East conflict provokes passionate disagreement, he said, but it should not cause conflict in Canadian communities. "It shouldn't be turned into a political wedge."

Outgoing CJC co-presidents Sylvain Abitbol, left, and Rabbi Reuven Bulka, third from left, confer the Samuel Bronfman Medal upon Julia and Henry Koschitzky. [Special Event Photography]

Ignatieff said it is reckless for politicians to win votes by claiming a monopoly on the support of Israel. "I don't want my party to be alone in the defence of Israel. I want all parties to [defend Israel]."

Silvan Shalom, vice-prime minister of Israel and minister for regional development and the development of the Negev and the Galilee, said that since its inception, Israel has not been able to enjoy even one minute of peace and quiet.

"The history of the Jewish people teaches us that Jews were the first to suffer from hatred. We are still engaged in the struggle and we are still in conflict, but today the State of Israel is not engaged alone."

Many people support Israel, he said, "but when I close my eyes and listen to the prime minister of Canada, I think I am in Jerusalem in the Knesset."

Shalom acknowledged that without Canadians and Canadian Jewish Congress, "we couldn't make it. I thank all of CJC for its devotion to Israel."

During the proceedings, Julia and Henry Koschitzky received the Samuel Bronfman Medal for distinguished service to CJC and the Jewish community. It was the first time a couple had been honoured with the award.

In the morning sessions of the plenary, Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada, and Jack Layton, MP and leader of the NDP, presented policy statements.

May told the group that her party backs the two-state solution and that the right of Israel to exist is non-negotiable. "Peace and nonviolence are better served by engaging in the region. Governments of the world must keep an eye on [it]," she said.

Asked what role religious groups can play in protecting the environment, May said the essence of responsibility for each other is embedded in creation. "It is important to point out that the values of sharing and respect [are what] move the country forward."

Layton said the core meaning of the word tzedakah is justice. "We must help those less fortunate because it is right. Justice means the end of poverty, the end of genocide, the end of racism.

"Social justice begins at home. We need to start by assisting the least fortunate. The gap between rich and poor has never been wider, and in the depths of this economic crisis, there are 800,000 poor children [in Canada]. Half of all families feel one or two paycheques away from falling into poverty."

In the Middle East, he said, the NDP has a proud tradition of working for peace, and is committed to the right of Israel to exist within secure borders and of the Palestinians to have an independent state with secure borders.

"Here in Canada, we must work together for justice and peace at home and abroad. Let's work together with open hearts and open minds. It is never too late to build a better world."

Among the nine resolutions put forward, the resolution to overturn the approved name change of Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region, was soundly defeated. That means the name remains Quebec Jewish Congress, a division of Canadian Jewish Congress.

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- Knowledge of the Toronto Jewish day school system

Please submit cover letter and resume to Sigalit Habsha by email at shabsha@leobaeck.ca or by fax at (905) 709-1999.

Harper honoured at Wiesenthal benefit

Compiled by CJN Staff

Prime Minister Stephen Harper received the Simon Wiesenthal International Leadership Award from the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) at its annual Spirit of Hope Benefit in Toronto on Sunday.

Harper, who attended the event along with Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and numerous other political leaders, received the award for his actions in defence of international human rights and principled stance on issues linked to the Center's mission, the FSWC said in a statement.

"The Simon Wiesenthal International Leadership Award is the highest honour bestowed by our organization and is respectfully named after Simon Wiesenthal, a man who dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice and human rights," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

"Prime Minister Harper has demonstrated strong moral strength in his actions on the domestic and international levels and in understanding the difficulties of the Jewish people in Canada, Israel and throughout the world."

The award was the second that Harper received on Sunday from a major Jewish organization. Earlier in the day, he accepted the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award from Canadian Jewish Congress at its 29th Plenary Assembly at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

More than 2,000 people representing numerous cultural, professional, community and governmental groups gathered at Roy Thomson Hall to show support for the FSWC and raise funds for its 2010 education programs.

"Since 2004, the Spirit of Hope Benefit event has given Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center hope and moral support to help its staff and volunteers deliver quality programs throughout the year," said FSWC chairman Gerald Schwartz, president and CEO of Onex Corporation. "On behalf of the board, I congratulate everyone involved with the organization for harnessing our collective hope and transforming it into consistent action."

Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the FSWC, praised supporters for sticking with the organization during the recession.

"We urged our donors and the broader community to stay committed to our organization during these tough economic times, and the response has been remarkable," Benlolo said. "Our society cannot afford to turn its back on community-based education programs and allow hate, bigotry and anti-Semitism to grow in our communities. This show of support, which included impressive government representation, helps us renew our drive to reach even more people in 2010."

Seniors Scene

Over 100 Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch 256 Jewish War Veterans and their families recently feted retiring President Sam Romberg, second from right,at the Branch's 80th Anniversary luncheon in Toronto. Shown with Romberg, from right, are incoming President Murray Jacobs, Sid Gladstone and Al Rubin.
[Tony Mihok photo]

Legion's Wingate Branch gets new president

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Murray Jacobs, 88, is the new president of the Wingate Branch 256 of the Royal Canadian Legion

Wingate Branch, originally called the Jewish Brigade, celebrated its 80th anniversary last month.

Jacobs, who now lectures to students at Ontario high schools and universities about his war experiences, joined the army in 1941 when he was 20.

His unit was first stationed at the Horse Palace in downtown Toronto, adjacent to the Ricoh Coliseum. Jacobs remembers being woken up at 5:30 a.m. every morning by a full marching band, which would parade down the halls in the event any soldiers were still in bed. Whenever that happened, "you woke up pretty fast," Jacobs told The CJN.

As he came from a kosher home, it was difficult for him to adjust to eating "treif" army food, which he had to do as there was nothing else available.

Jacobs' unit went through 30 days of basic training and then another 30 days advanced training in Ontario before shipping out overseas to England from Halifax. The unit ended up stationed in the south of England, near the English Channel. The Germans were directly across the channel in France. A mechanic, Jacobs had the job of repairing tanks.

The unit's first mission took place on Juno Beach in Normandy on June 10, 1944, four days after D-Day. Jacobs recalls being strafed by German machine-gun fire during a surprise air raid on the second night. On one occasion, a noon German air raid killed many of his fellow soldiers.

"A lot of people professed to be brave – a lot of them are, a lot of them weren't. But everyone who said they weren't scared, that's an outward lie. Everyone was scared, whether [they] admitted it or not," Jacobs said.

When he and other Canadians landed at Juno and were pushing through the front line, they came across the bodies of some German soldiers, which the Germans had left in their hurry to retreat. The Canadians had to dig trenches to bury the bodies because of the unbearable odour.

"War is hell," Jacobs said. "There's good parts and there's bad parts, but it's hell."

Although it was important for him to maintain his Jewish identity during the war, Jacobs said that he was proud to represent his country and its ideals, especially as he was fighting against an enemy that represented the antithesis of those ideals.

"I was also fiercely proud of being a Canadian. You were living in a country where nobody bothered you, where you could do whatever you wanted to do… and if we didn't start fighting for these rights, we would lose [them]."

But anti-Semitism also ran rampant in Jacobs' own infantry, resulting in more than a few unpleasant incidents. Of the eight Jews in the unit, four had rank, including Jacobs, but that didn't prevent gentile soldiers from being disrespectful toward the Jews. Once, when Jacobs, who was a sergeant, performed inspection, one of the soldiers kicked over Jacobs' mess tray.

He ended up confronting the soldier. "It took me a while to find him," Jacobs said "and we went out. I took my jacket off, and he didn't use those words anymore.

"You're not allowed to hit anybody when you're wearing stripes," Jacobs added. "If I hit him with my jacket on, I could lose my stripes or be severely reprimanded for it."

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Comedic author Jonathan Goldstein adds new twist to very old tales

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

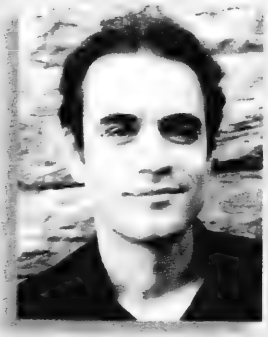
The Bible's Samson is a misguided, brutish lout. Noah? A cantankerous old man on an unappreciated mission. Elsewhere, Adam plays "village idiot" to Eve's intellectual mayoral role in the Garden of Eden.

Sound a little skewed? It should. All of the above stories and others can be found in Jonathan Goldstein's newly released book Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible! (Penguin Canada), a fictionalized, comedic, and loving take on a selection of some of the more well-known stories from the Old and New Testaments.

Meeting with Heebonics/The CJN for an interview in Toronto on the last leg of his North American book tour before returning to his home in Montreal, Goldstein, 39, said he was amazed at the positive reception to the novel.

Though more well-known lately for his weekly CBC radio show, Wiretap – wherein Goldstein conducts mock phone conversations with characters both real and born out of his fertile, comedic imagination – Goldstein has won accolades for his writing. His first book was 2001's Lenny Bruce Is Dead, and his deceptively simple wit and style are on full display again in Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible!

The fact is, the book actually started out as a series of radio short stories that Goldstein read on air over the course of his career at CBC and prior to that in his early broadcast days with This American Life on National Public Radio in the United States.



Jonathan Goldstein

But rather than the raft of ill will and complaints one might expect about his artistic tampering with some of the Bible's iconic characters, Goldstein said people have been very accepting of his latest work.

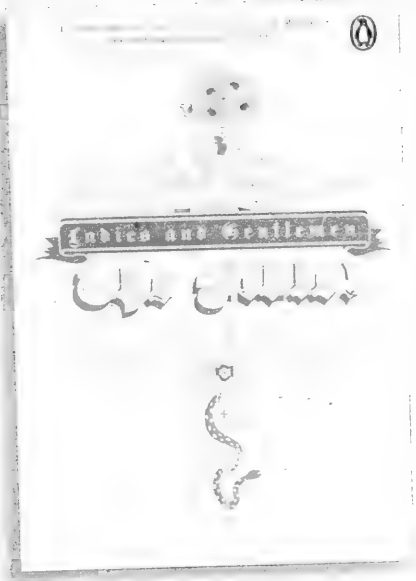
"The beauty of writing stories about characters that people come to the table knowing something about is that you don't have to spend a lot of time with detailed character studies," he said. "Once people hear [the names] Adam and Eve, the stage is set. Then you can manipulate, twist it and thwart expectation."

Goldstein added that on one level, he thought it would be "fun" to write these stories and make for entertaining listening, as well as hold readers' attention.

On another level, however, he said these are some of the "first stories that I learned, that I was told, that are hardwired into my head from an early age."

And the rub on that point, he said, is that the learning wasn't necessarily from the source material itself; namely the Bible. Instead, Goldstein said he seemed to absorb these biblical stories through various media in roundabout ways.

"It was watching Fred and Barney get swallowed by a whale on The Flintstones [or] watching Mel Brooks' [movie] History of the World and seeing what his Moses did with the Ten Commandments. Stuff like that," he said. "I also had a kids' Bible I was obsessed with. There was just so much to dig into that as I started writing these stories... I was digging into a part of my childhood."



Speaking of childhood memories, Goldstein tips his hat to Montreal Jews of a certain vintage in the book's preface, describing a traditional neurotic, chaotic, but ultimately lovable family dinner at "The Grey Derby" – his paean to the now-defunct Brown Derby restaurant, where many a Jewish clan would gather on a weeknight to slurp down pickles, latkas and deli meats.

To his recollection, on the back wall of the restaurant was a huge mural, "not particularly well drawn" of a David and Goliath scene, the former in the act of smiting the latter, he said.

That image served as the basis for his take on David and Goliath in his book, in which Goliath is portrayed as a murderous Philistine who, in addition to killing Jews, likes to taunt them with horrible jokes about their culture, lack of sexual prowess and all manner of childish insults.

Along comes David, an aspiring high-concept comedian, who immediately takes offense to Goliath. Not so much for his homicidal actions against the Jews, but rather for his utter lack of comedic sensibility.

It's a spin only a humorist like Goldstein could devise, and it reads like an expletive-laced Seinfeld episode, albeit in biblical times.

Still, despite the farcical nature of much of the book, Goldstein manages to imbue each story with an element of pathos.

For instance, in his chapter on Noah and the Ark, Goldstein portrays the shipbuilder as a curmudgeonly old coot, constantly insulting his sons, Shem, Japheth and Ham, and calling into question their work ethic.

God ends up speaking to Noah through the whistling in his nostrils and tells him he's going to bring the flood to wipe out the world.

"The whole thing was a big mistake. Except for you. You I like," God's voice says.

Noah builds the ark, convinced of his righteousness and saves his wife, sons and their wives, along with the animals.

Goldstein ends the chapter with Noah enraged at his family for a perceived lack of gratitude at having been saved, while his son, Ham, walks about the boat solemnly, remembering friends and acquaintances lost to the flood before seeking out his wife, Lila, and putting his face in her hair and waiting for the rain to stop.

It's a poignant image that leaves the reader with more questions than answers about the flood and the nature of man.

"I don't know that I set out to particularly write these as funny stories," Goldstein said. "As you start to humanize these characters, as you unpack them and break personalities out of these figures... that's when the humour starts to seep in. When you think, 'Well, what kind of a guy is Noah? Who is crazy enough to listen to the voice of God and not doubt his own sanity.' He has to be a strong character."

Goldstein added: "There are moments of 'funny' [in the book] but I didn't want them to be at the expense of the subject's themes. Still, any time you have the intersection of the sublime... with the human, that's the perfect formula for comedy. Like seeing the face of God in a pancake. It's inherently silly, but human."

While not "religious," Goldstein said that his understanding of a Jew's relationship with God was akin to a wrestling match.

"This book was my way of wrestling."

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Ephraim Katzir dies at 93

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

JERUSALEM — Ephraim Katzir, Israel's fourth president and an internationally recognized biophysicist died Saturday at his home in Rehovot, several weeks after his 93rd birthday.

Katzir's tenure, 1973 to 1978, spanned two seminal events in Israeli history: the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the historic visit of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem in 1977.

He left the presidency after one term to return to scientific research, declining a second term due to his wife's illness.

"Ephraim Katzir was devoted to the State of Israel in all that he did and was a scientific pioneer," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. "He also contributed to Israel's security, and his integrity and modesty set an example."

Born in Kiev in 1916, Katzir immigrated at age six with his family to British-ruled Palestine and studied biology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, receiving his PhD in 1941, according to his official biography on the Foreign Ministry website.

Ephraim Katzir, Israel's fourth president

He served in the Haganah, the underground Jewish defence organization, for which he helped to set up a military research and development unit that developed explosives, propellants and other munitions.

During the war that followed Israel's independence in 1948, he was appointed head of the military's science corps. He served as the Israeli military's chief scientist from 1966 to 1968, the website said.

Katzir was among the founders of Israel's renowned Weizmann Institute of Science and headed its biophysics department, where his work on synthetic protein models deepened understanding of the genetic code and immune responses.

Katzir was awarded the Israel Prize, the country's highest honour, in 1959 for his contribution to the natural sciences. He received the Japan Prize in 1985 for his work on immobilized enzymes used in oral antibiotics. In 1996, the former president was selected as the first Israeli to be invited to join the American Academy of Sciences.

Israel cabinet ministers reject loyalty oath

By BARAK RAVID

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The cabinet ministerial legislative committee rejected on Sunday a bill stating that those who wish to retain Israeli citizenship would have to declare their loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state.

The bill, put forth by the Yisrael Beiteinu party, stated that the oath would include a pledge of loyalty to Israel as a Jewish, Zionist, and democratic state, to its emblems and values, and serving Israel either through military service or through any equivalent alternatives.

Almost all of the committee's members opposed the proposed bill, excluding only Yisrael Beiteinu Knesset members.

Sunday's decision dealt a blow to Yisrael Beitenu, led by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman. The proposal was central in his election campaign last February. The party finished a strong third by playing on the perceived disloyalty of Israel's Arab citizens, roughly one-fifth of the population.

Although Yisrael Beiteinu officials stressed the bill was aimed at all Israelis, they said it was important given what they described as the anti-Israel behaviour of Israel's Arab citizens during the 2006 Lebanon War, the December-January Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip.

> **'The administration must support the moderates'**

Yisrael Beitenu lawmakers can still try to get it through the Knesset as an independent initiative, but it appears to lack majority support.

Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman welcomed the decision, saying that "bills such as this one will not be brought before this government or any future government, and sanity will once again play a role in the governing of the state of Israel.

"The administration must support the moderates and fight the extremists. Opposition to this bill is a necessary step in that direction."

The explanatory notes accompanying the bill stated that Israeli citizens have shown signs of disloyalty to the country, its emblems, and its values in recent years, and are dodging military service and national service.

On Saturday, the Higher Arab monitoring Committee, comprising Israeli Arabs, issued an urgent letter to President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and to Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, warning of the possible ramifications of recent legislation proposals made by right-wing MKs, including the loyalty oath bill.

According to the letters, this legislation could have "grave and existential" consequences for Israel's Arabs.

The committee convened an emergency meeting on Saturday in response to a recent spate of legislation the committee has described as "racist and fascist" and aimed against Israel's Arab public.

The legislation includes a bill to outlaw the mourning of the Nakba, or catastrophe, of the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Arabs from Israel on the day of Israel's establishment.

Another bill, which has already gained initial Knesset approval, aims to make it a crime to publicly deny Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

UN probe of Gaza war to begin

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JERUSALEM — The United Nations said a team of independent experts mandated to probe alleged war crimes in Israel and Gaza was to leave for the Middle East over the past weekend.

UN spokesperson Rolando Gomez said the mission, led by veteran prosecutor Richard Goldstone, was expected to start its work this week.

Gomez told reporters in Geneva Friday that Goldstone has repeatedly asked the Israeli government to co-operate with his mission.

Israel said Friday that it will not cooperate with a United Nations team appointed to investigate alleged war crimes committed during its 22-day offensive in Gaza.

"This committee has been instructed to find Israel guilty no matter what, and there is no point in co-operating with such a masquerade," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Yigal Palmor.

Israel and other countries, such as Canada, have accused the UN Human Rights Council – which mandated the fact-finding mission in a January resolution passed by 33 in favour, one against and 13 abstentions – of overtly singling it out.

The resolution that gave the UN team its mandate "is profoundly biased," Palmor said, pointing out that it has only ordered a probe into alleged Israeli violations, while ignoring Hamas, the radical Islamist movement ruling Gaza.

Israel launched the Dec. 27 to Jan. 18 offensive in Gaza in response to rocket attacks by Palestinian militants from the coastal salient at its southern towns and villages.

Israel has described the probe as intrinsically flawed because it was ordered by the 47-member UN Human Rights Council, which has an anti-Israeli track record.

Goldstone has indicated that he will attempt to enter Gaza via Egypt if not allowed in through Israel.

He also said that he wants his team to examine both sides of the December/January conflict.

Israel Briefs

Israel's collapse predicted

The two-state solution will cause the collapse of Israel, the Palestinian Authority's ambassador to Lebanon said in an interview. "With the two-state solution, in my opinion, Israel will collapse because if they get out of Jerusalem, what will become of all the talk about the Promised Land and the Chosen People?" Abbas Zaki told Lebanon's ANB TV. "What will become of all the sacrifices they made, just to be told to leave? They consider Jerusalem to have a spiritual status. The Jews consider Judea and Samaria to be their historic dream. If the Jews leave those places, the Zionist idea will begin to collapse. It will regress of its own accord. Then we will move forward," he said in the May 7 interview, which was translated by MEMRI-The Middle East Media Research Institute. "What is needed is a settlement, not a *hudna* [truce]," he said. "After 45 years of struggle, we have the right to reach a conclusion to this conflict, rather than extending the *hudna*, enabling Israel to expand on a daily basis."

Latin American denials

Venezuela and Bolivia denied an accusation in an Israeli government report that they're supplying uranium to Iran for its nuclear program. The secret Israeli document containing the allegation was prepared in advance of Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon's visit to a conference of the Organization of American States in Honduras. But Bolivia said it doesn't produce uranium, with presidential minister Juan Ramón Quintana calling the report nonsense, the New York Times reported. President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela said in the Times that it was another accusation meant to tarnish his government. The Israeli document cites previous Israeli intelligence conclusions in stating that the two countries are providing uranium to Iran. It didn't say where the uranium originated. The report said Bolivia has uranium deposits, while Venezuela has an estimated 50,000 tons of untapped uranium reserves that reportedly it's not mining currently. Both countries recently cut diplomatic ties with Israel.

Soldier returns cash

A soldier who stole a credit card from a Palestinian home during Israel's military operation in Gaza returned the money with interest. The soldier used the card to withdraw about $400. He was charged last week with looting and pleaded guilty to the theft. A few days after the theft, the Palestinian lodged a complaint. His trial was scheduled to begin last week.

No settlement growth: U.S. administration

The Obama administration wants a complete stop to settlement expansion, Hillary Rodham Clinton said. The U.S. secretary of state's remarks after a meeting with her Egyptian counterpart were unusually blunt and far-reaching. "With respect to settlements, the president was very clear," she said. "He wants to see a stop to settlements – not some settlements, not outposts, not natural growth exceptions. We think it is in the best interests of the effort that we are engaged in that settlement expansion cease. That is what we have communicated very clearly, not only to the Israelis but to the Palestinians and others. And we intend to press that point." U.S. officials until now have not explicitly called for an end to "natural growth" and have tacitly approved "vertical growth," or the addition of rooms and apartments within settlement confines to accommodate growing families. Israeli government officials insist that "natural growth" will continue.

Amos Elon dies

Amos Elon, the distinguished Israeli essayist and historian, died at his home in Tuscany. Elon's wife, Beth, told the New York Times that he died May 25 from leukemia at age 82. Elon, one of Israel's most distinguished essayists and historians, was born in Vienna in 1926 and moved with his family to Palestine in 1933. The author of nine books, Elon also was a longtime correspondent and columnist for the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. His most recent book was The Pity of It All, a history of German Jewry from the 18th century until the rise of Hitler.

– files from JTA

Election of new president poses dilemma for South African Jews

By MOIRA SCHNEIDER AND URIEL HEILMAN
JTA

When it became clear that the African National Congress had coasted to another victory in South African elections last month, Jewish community officials reacted differently than some of the community's rank and file.

Michael Bagraim, the president of the Jewish community's umbrella organization, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, told JTA that his group's relationship with the president-elect, Jacob Zuma, had "always been good." He also noted that South African Jews voted for "every single political party."

But with more than 80 per cent of the country's Jews supporting the opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, many community members highlighted the ANC's problematic record on Israel.

In a country dominated by a single political party – the ANC, which began as the black liberation movement and has won every election in the country since the end of apartheid in 1994 – South African Jews are faced with a dilemma.

"Do they engage in an aggressive campaign against the ANC when they condemn Israel and Jews, or do they try to curry favour with the government in the hope that in the long run itserves our interests?" asked one Jewish South African activist who spoke to JTA on condition of anonymity. "The Board of Deputies has taken the latter approach in order to secure Jewish rights in South Africa."

Jewish reaction to Zuma's election as president underscores the delicate balancing act that Jews in this shrinking community must practise concerning a political party many find hostile to some major Jewish concerns.

Hailed by blacks as the party of liberation, the ANC also has a long history of anti-Israel activity.

Last year, the ANC was a signatory to a statement that described Israel as an apartheid state whose very birth was illegitimate. Some in the ANC, which is allied with an anti-Israel trade union party and the country's Communist Party, favour cutting ties with Israel and subjecting the Jewish state to a trade embargo.

At the ANC congress in Polokwane, South African, at the end of 2007, at which Zuma defeated Thabo Mbeki in a fierce battle for the party's presidency, the ANC passed a resolution widely seen as anti-Israel.

Analysis

Yet despite the overwhelming Jewish vote against the ANC, Jewish community officials have taken pains to say publicly that they see Zuma as being responsive to Jewish concerns.

At a meeting last September with leaders of the Board of Deputies, Zuma said that while there indeed are individuals within the ANC who favour adopting a harsher line toward Israel, the ANC remained in favour of a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than Israel's elimination. After the meeting, he issued a public letter to that effect.

But Zuma also denied that the Polokwane resolution was anti-Israel, saying, "It was a resolution specifically on Palestine and solidarity with the Palestinian people given our historical relations."

The Palestine Liberation Organization supported the ANC during the apartheid era.

While the ANC's victory in April was the latest in an unbroken string, the election did mark something of a break with the past. For one, the ANC's vote total declined for the first time. Also, the party also lost a province, the Western Cape, to the opposition and failed to keep the two-thirds majority it had in parliament.

Zuma himself is also unlike previous ANC leaders. While his predecessors, notably Mbeki and Nelson Mandela, hailed from the black elite, which had some relationships with Jews, Zuma comes from different stock. He was born in rural Zululand, never finished high school and has multiple wives.

He's also been a controversial figure in South Africa. In 2005, Zuma was charged with rape. He was acquitted.

Zuma's record on Jewish issues is not long. In June 2007, he sent a letter to the fundraising dinner of the End Israeli Occupation Campaign that condemned the West Bank security fence as an "apartheid wall" that aims to extend Israel's borders, "imprison large sections of the Palestinian population into ghetto prisons, is calculated to destroy Palestinian family and economic life, and entrap a whole nation into a life of poverty and dispossession."

Yet the Board of Deputies says Zuma has been warm toward the Jewish community. Bagraim said he met with Zuma shortly before the elections and that Zuma told him he was interested in visiting the Jewish community in Cape Town soon after the vote.

"It's almost a Mandela-type approach: we hug him when we see him," Bagraim said of Zuma. "He's very open to discussing anything. I think he'll be a greater friend than Mbeki."

Privately, some South African Jews say the best they can hope for is that this government won't take any major steps to alter ties to Israel.

While the Board of Deputies has complained about the ANC's pro-Palestinian stance, Bagraim said that "unbalanced" statements on Israel in the 14 years since the country's transition to democracy mostly have come from the ANC, not the government itself.

When a deputy foreign minister, Fatima Hajaig, told a pro-Palestinian rally in January that "the control of America, just like the control of most western countries, is in the hands of Jewish money," then-South African president Kgalema Motlanthe met with Jewish officials to assure them that everything would be done to ensure the community's safety.

Milton Shain, a professor of history and the director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, said the ANC is not anti-Semitic.

"In the ANC, there's a broad antipathy to all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism," he said.

Daniel Mackintosh, a 24-year-old law student, said there is a great deal of unjustified fear-mongering in the Jewish community about the government.

"I think South African Jews are going to continue to be amongst the most prosperous and happy groups in the country for the next five years," he said.

Italian Jews launch national publication

JTA

ROME — The Italian Jewish community launched a national publication aimed at promoting broader public awareness of Jewish life, traditions and culture.

The first edition of Pagine Ebraiche, or Jewish Pages, a 48-page tabloid, was printed this month. It's being published by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.

Jewish Pages was launched at the annual Turin Book Fair, where thousands of free copies were distributed. The publication includes news, commentary, interviews, book reviews and arts coverage.

The union said the bimonthly publication, the first of its type and scope in Italy, would supplement the magazines now being published by local Jewish communities in several cities, as well as the growing number of Italian Jewish websites, including the Union's flagship information portal, www.moked.it.

Some 30,000 to 35,000 Jews live in Italy, most of them in Rome and Milan.

New groups learning to advocate for Israel

By DINA KRAFT
JTA

BARCELONA — On the top floor of this city's Jewish community centre, a group whose ancestors were cut off from the Jewish People more than 500 years ago are receiving tips and training to become pro-Israel advocates in the 21st century.

"We can use cyberspace to circumvent the traditional media," Raanan Gissin, a former Israeli government spokesperson, tells them.

His voice rises with excitement as he outlines the potential for co-ordinated pro-Israel messaging through blogs and websites.

Listening intently, scribbling notes and asking questions is a group of what might appear to be an unlikely band of foot soldiers for Israel advocacy: the descendants of Jews who converted to Catholicism in Spain and Portugal in the Middle Ages during the Inquisition.

They have travelled from small towns and cities across the Iberian Peninsula to Barcelona for a three-day conference to learn more about their Jewish roots. Amid talks on Jewish history, theology and identity these people – known as Marranos or Anusim, Hebrew for "the forced" – also learned how they could be voices for Israel in their communities.

Anti-Israel sentiment runs particularly high in Spain, where the mass media tend to provide highly critical reporting on Israel, and public opinion surveys suggest hostile attitudes toward Jews and Israel. Several top Israeli military commanders are being charged by Spain's high court for possible war crimes for their authorization of the bombing of a Gaza apartment bloc in 2002 that killed a top Hamas commander and 14 civilians.

"Spain is one of the most difficult countries in terms of Israel's image, and the Anusim see and feel it on a daily basis," said Michael Freund, chair of Shavei Israel, which organized the seminar.

Shavei Yisrael reaches out to so-called "lost Jews" around the world who seek to know more about their heritage.

"Many of them have expressed a desire to do something about it, to speak out about it, to speak on Israel's behalf," Freund said.

"I think the potential is vast for Israel and the Jewish People because the Anusim – because of their personal background and historical connection with the Jewish People – feel an affinity to Israel, and they are perfectly positioned as citizens of Spain and Portugal to serve as unofficial ambassadors," he said. "I think it's time for the State of Israel to realize that and to make use of the goodwill that exists here."

Several of the 60 people attending the conference have already become involved. Some said they were afraid of facing anti-Israeli sentiment in their hometowns.

A middle-aged doctor from Barcelona, who preferred not to have his name used, said he was threatened by a local Muslim in response to articles he wrote under a pseudonym, defending Israel.

"Israel is considered a criminal state, and people are always looking to see how they can further frame Israel," he said. "I fear officials in Israel do not view Europe importantly enough and that's a mistake. We have to change the mentality here."

In recent years, Spain's centuries-old anti-Semitism based on religious dogma has taken a new form in anti-Israel sentiment, he said.

Einat Kranz-Nieger, the deputy chief of mission at the Israeli Embassy in Madrid, outlined some of the major ideas Israel is trying to transmit internationally: its commitment to the Israeli-Palestinian peace effort, the need to improve Palestinians' security and standard of living, and the global and regional threat posed by Iran.

In a tense moment in the discussion, several participants mentioned the potential risks they face in speaking out for Israel and asked whether Israel would assist them if necessary. They did not receive a clear answer.

Seminar organizers said their comments underscore the sensitivity of those seeking some sort of return to Judaism, whether through official conversion or a connection with local Jews.

"People feel they live in a gray zone," said Rabbi Eliyahu Birnbaum of Shavei Yisrael. "They are not officially Jews, but some are identifying themselves as Jews in very non-Jewish communities."

Estimates for the number of people with Jewish roots in this region vary. Many Spanish and Portuguese have family names that indicate a Jewish past. Some at the conference spoke of families observing unexplained traditions such as lighting candles followed by a grandmother's mumbling of unintelligible incantations, or the washing and salting of meat.

According to a recent genetic study, about 20 per cent of Portuguese and Spanish citizens have Jewish backgrounds.

Rafael Peretz, 47, is from the town of Saragossa, about 150 miles west of Barcelona, where only three Jewish families live. He recently started a website about Anusim, Kolisraelorg.net, which features a section on Israeli advocacy. There are links to several Spanish-language pro-Israel bloggers, and Peretz sends messages on online social networking sites and posts videos on the video-sharing site YouTube to help get out what he calls more balanced information on Israel.

"In Spain, there is not much information about the reality of life in Israel," said Peretz, who started investigating his Jewish roots several years ago.

When Peretz was a child, his father had brought him to a synagogue and startled him with the announcement: "We come from the Jewish People."

At the seminar, Gissin said that one must think creatively in order to advocate for Israel successfully.

"You have to learn how to fight, how to speak – short sentences, use stories," he said.

Gazing around the room, Gissin said, "You are a living testament to what we are talking about. Each of your stories is a living document to the eternity of the Jewish People."

Gang leader confesses to killing Halimi

JTA

PARIS — The head of a gang accused of murdering French Jew Ilan Halimi confessed, but it is still unclear who inflicted the fatal injuries.

"You know very well I was the one who did it," Youssouf Fofana told a French court May 28, in reference to the 2006 kidnapping, torture and murder of Halimi, who was 23 years old.

His statement was reported to journalists by judicial sources, since the press is not allowed access to the trial because of the juvenile status of two suspects at the time of the crime.

Fofana headed a gang called the Barbarians, accused of capturing and torturing Halimi for three weeks before he was found near death on Feb. 13, 2006. Some of the 27 suspects, including Fofana, are also charged with acting out of anti-Semitic motives.

In the coming weeks, judges will try to determine which suspects dealt lethal blows to their captive. Fofana said during his court appearance that he covered Halimi with a flammable liquid before lighting him on fire, in addition to stabbing him over the course of the kidnapping, news reports indicate.

However, the next day, a contrasting version of events told by police officers suggested that two other suspects may have been responsible for taking the bound Halimi to a nearby wood, burning him alive and leaving him for dead, according to a report in the French daily Liberation.

The police testimony was based on Fofana's initial version of the crime, told to authorities in 2006, said Liberation, which gathered its information from anonymous judicial sources.

Halimi was found barely alive, naked and bound, near a southern Paris subway rail line. He died hours later.

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CJN Profile

Price of oil dictating shape of new economy, says Rubin

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

It's all about oil, says Jeff Rubin, one of Canada's leading economists.

Best known for his work on global energy markets and his prescient forecast that oil prices would skyrocket, Rubin has just written a book about the shape of the future international economy.

In Why Your World Is About To Get A Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization (Random House Canada), he brings bad news and good news.

As supplies dwindle and demand jumps, he expects the price of oil in Canada to rise to $2 or perhaps even to $2.50 per litre within two or three years.

"There is no such thing as cheap oil," said Rubin, who recently resigned as chief economist of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. "Oil might be less expensive in the middle of the recession, but it will never be cheap again."

But as punishing oil prices jolt the economy and reverse the trend toward globalization, long lost local economies will re-emerge and the world will become a greener, more environmentally sustainable place, he said in an interview last week at his publisher's office.

If you think that Rubin is dreaming or making it up as he goes along, consider the fact that he established a credible track record as an economic guru on the strength of another successful prediction.

Rubin, who holds degrees from the University of Toronto and McGill University, correctly warned financial markets back in 1989 that Toronto real estate values would decline by 25 per cent.

He figured that the housing market was long overdue for a correction because the federal government wanted to curb inflation, which was being fuelled by the spiralling cost of residential homes.

Rubin, too, was instrumental in influencing government policy.

When he called for the Goods and Services tax to be set at seven per cent instead of the original 10 per cent, the finance minister of the day was hardly pleased.

Nor was Rubin's boss happy with his recommendation. "I was almost fired," said Rubin, who was CIBC's chief economist for 17 years.

Rubin was proven right. In the end, the government settled for a seven percent rate.

Rubin, 54, the son of a research director of a Canadian industrial lab, began to think seriously about carbon emissions when he concluded that oil is anything but a finite resource.

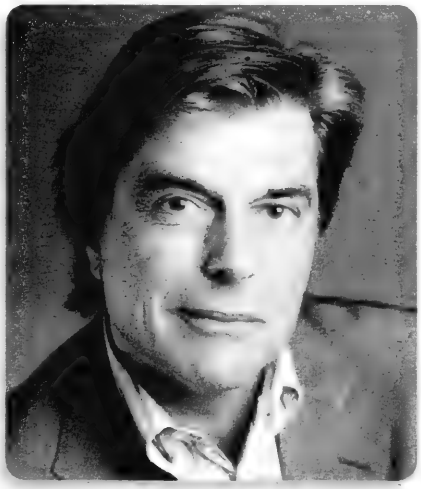
"I hooked up with people who were familiar with the issue of depletion," he explained.

In his easily accessible and cogently argued book, he sets out his central argument:

"The world's oil wells are running out of the stuff that keeps the whole system going. Every well will eventually run dry ... Even with the most advanced technology, oil companies get barely half of the oil out before geophysics and economics conspire to make what's left not worth going after."

Take the United States, for example.

Since the 1970s, U.S. oil production has been halved, from 10 million barrels a day to five million today.



Jeff Rubin

[Greg Tjepkema photo]

Yet, as oil consumption has risen from 15 million barrels a day in 1970 to almost 20 million today, Americans are burning more oil than ever.

The conclusion is inescapable, at least according to Rubin.

"We are not going to wake up tomorrow and find that the world's oil wells have run dry," he writes. "But we will face the dawning realization that there is a little less each day, and that what remains will cost more to burn.

"Eventually, we will face the wrenching choice between adapting to the realities of a new, smaller world or clinging to the artifacts of an old world we can no longer have."

Fleshing out this theme, Rubin observed, "Triple-digit oil prices will render the global economy obsolete and revitalize local economies. Hence, our world will become smaller and greener."

On the most basic level, American winter fruits may become exorbitantly expensive and therefore out of reach to the average Canadian.

"We won't be eating California oranges in January," he said. "We'll have to be satisfied with Canadian apples. We'll have to adjust our diets."

Frozen lamb chops from New Zealand will also be affected by the coming changes, he noted.

"It burns too much oil to shlep New Zealand lamb to Canada. Distance costs money and produces carbon emissions."

As far as the consumption of food is concerned, Rubin believes that the brave new world is already upon us.

"I see this happening very quickly. In my neighbourhood, we see only locally grown produce."

He added, "Food imports will become less and less important. Last year, the United States bought $6 billion worth of food from China. That's not tenable anymore."

Chinese steel exports will also take a hit, with the result that rust-belt jobs in the United States will return, he pointed out.

Soaring oil prices will have an impact on real estate as well.

If gas costs $7 a gallon in the United States, commuters from the suburbs will frantically look for homes in the city, where prices will rise correspondingly.

Cities will become more densely populated and suburbs may yet be converted back to farm lands.

"Urban sprawl doesn't make sense anymore," he said.

The auto industry, already reeling from falling demand and higher prices at the pump, will shrink in this harsh economic environment.

"Detroit makes twice as many cars as we need. There are 248 million vehicles on the road in the United States at the moment. Twenty per cent will be yanked off the roads as people stop driving. The message is – get off the road. That's where the market is taking us."

In a smaller world, the ordinary Canadian may cancel a cycling trip to Tuscany and opt for a vacation in Muskoka or the Catskills instead.

"We won't travel around so much, and some destinations will definitely suffer. It'll have a beneficial effect on the environment. We'll have a more greener world. We won't go green because of some moral commitment, but because the market will lead us there."

Rubin's timely book has struck a chord, having also been published in the United States and Britain. In addition, German and Croatian language rights have been sold.

Having reinvented himself as a writer and speaker, Rubin intends to write more books.

In his next one, he hopes to explore themes he merely touched upon in his current volume.

As he put it, "I never run out of stuff to say."

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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Montreal writer wins top Canadian Jewish Book prize

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

It is not a glittering gala event like the Giller Prize, nor does it carry the gravitas of the Governor General's Awards, but the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards ceremony – which was held May 25 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre in downtown Toronto – is the Jewish community's annual reaffirmation of its strong commitment to homegrown Jewish literature.

Attended by more than 200 people, the 21st annual awards ceremony honoured eight authors who came from Victoria, Brandon, Montreal and New York, as well as Toronto, to receive their prizes. The winning titles were chosen from a pool of more than 100 submissions by Canadian authors or permanent residents, published in 2008 and reflecting Jewish themes or significant Jewish content.

From left, Toronto Star columnist Ellen Roseman; Edward Trapunski, chair, book awards judging panel; winning author Peter C. Newman, and Lori Starr, executive director, of the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

The top fiction prize went to Ami Sands Brodoff of Montreal for her novel The White Space Between, a Holocaust-related tale that explores a mother-daughter relationship against the backdrop of modern Montreal. The novel is published by Toronto-based Second Story Press, which also produced The Diary of Laura's Twin by Toronto author Kathy Kacer, the winner in the youth literature category.

For Kacer, it was an extraordinary moment – the culmination of a week in which she won two other major literary prizes, a U.S. Jewish Book Council award for The Diary of Laura's Twin and a Yad Vashem award for children's Holocaust literature for Hiding Edith, one of her nine previous books. "It's been a good week," she told The CJN. "I've been overwhelmed with awards. I kind of pinch myself every day."

Barrie Wilson, the Toronto author who took the history prize for How Jesus Became Christian (Random House Canada) explained that the book arose as a result of his intellectual explorations into early Christianity, as well as his personal experiences as a former Anglican married to a Jewish woman, who eventually converted to Judaism. "As part of that conversion experience, I learned how Jewish Jesus was and how non-Jewish Paul was," he said. "I found that the religion of Paul sideswiped the religion of Jesus, and I looked at the true roots of Christian anti-Semitism."

Correction

As the result of an editing error, the story "Vancouver musician pays tribute to Pete Seeger" (CJN, May 21) incorrectly referred to Camp Naivelt as Zionist. Camp Naivelt is a secular, family-oriented camp. We apologize for the error.

For Isa Milman, it was a visit to an old Jewish cemetery in Lipton, Sask., that set her on the "wondrous journey" that resulted in Prairie Kaddish (Coteau Books), which took the poetry prize. The poems therein took her four years to write, the Victoria-based poet, who is a child of Holocaust survivors, told The CJN. "From the moment I stepped into that Lipton cemetery, I was hooked. I knew I had to pursue this."

Yet another prize-winning title centrally informed by the Holocaust was Gratitude (Penguin Canada), by Joseph Kertes, who won the prize in Holocaust literature for his rich tale set in a Hungarian village in 1944. "It was a subject I was trying to avoid most of my life," he said. "It was something I ran from, in a sense, and yet it raised itself up to me quite frequently. . . . I had to go to rooms in my mind that I didn't want to – dark rooms – and yet they were always there. So it took me many years to both run from and execute this work."

In accepting his prize in biography and memoir, Peter C. Newman – the legendary Canadian author whose most recent work is Izzy : The Passionate Life and Turbulent Times of Izzy Asper, Canada's Media Mogul (Harper Collins Canada) – gave an expansive speech about the late Asper's many remarkable qualities, including his generosity as a philanthropist, sharp sense of humour, and tendency to play bizarre practical jokes. "I've written about a lot of Canadians in my books, but Izzy was the most interesting," Newman commented. "Why? Because he was a mensch, in every sense of the word."

For scholarship on a Jewish subject, the prize went to Reinhold Kramer for Mordecai Richler: Leaving St. Urbain (McGill-Queen's), which may be the strongest biographical work on Richler yet published. "I realized that all I had to do was read a few of his books and put a few of his words together," said the author, a professor of English at Brandon University. "You don't even have to be a great writer. Because Richler is so good, if you pulled a few things together you could end up with a good book."

David Roskies won the prize for Yiddish literature for Yiddishlands (Wayne State University Press), which is in part a memoir of his mother, Masha, a formidable force in the Montreal Yiddish community, and her circle of Yiddishists and intellectuals; it is also a vibrant portrait of how Jewish culture was transported from eastern Europe to Montreal. Roskies concluded his acceptance speech by singing a Yiddish song from his late mother's repertoire that was first sung in Vilna in 1919.

What goes into the making of a book?, The CJN asked Roskies. "Well, it has to be a book that you have to write," he replied. "So once you throw yourself into it, it takes over your life: that's what happened to me. I spent two years writing this book, basically day and night – which is to say, when you're not actually writing it, you're thinking it. In my case, I started writing this book the day I got up from shivah after my mother died. It was a book I knew I would have to write some day, but I couldn't write it so long as she was alive."

From left, Tiana Koffler Boyman, chair of the Koffler Centre of the Arts' board of directors; winning authors Barrie Wilson, Joseph Kertes, Ami Sands Brodoff, Peter C. Newman, Isa Milman, Reinhold Kramer and Kathy Kacer, and Marc Boyman.

For the first time, the 21-year-old awards ceremony was held in a downtown location rather than in its previous home in the Leah Posluns Theatre in North York. Although the seats seemed less comfortable and the post-ceremony reception overcrowded in the smaller lobby, the event was well attended and by all indications a success.

The only serious disappointment was that an appearance by famed detective novelist Howard Engel had to be postponed due to illness. Engel, who was to receive a lifetime achievement award, assured The CJN by telephone that he is looking forward to the honour at a future date.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

AUTHOR OF HOW JESUS BECAME CHRISTIAN AT BETH DAVID ON JUNE 3

Prof. Barrie Wilson, who recently won a Jewish Book Award in history, will speak about his groundbreaking and controversial book, How Jesus Became Christian, at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am. The book contends that the religion of the apostle Paul displaced the teachings of Jesus so that Paul's preaching about a divine gentile Christ covered up the real Jesus and provided the basis for Christian anti-Semitism.

55 Yeomans Rd. Wednesday, June 3, 7:30 p.m. Free admission; refreshments. 416-633-5500. www.bethdavid.com

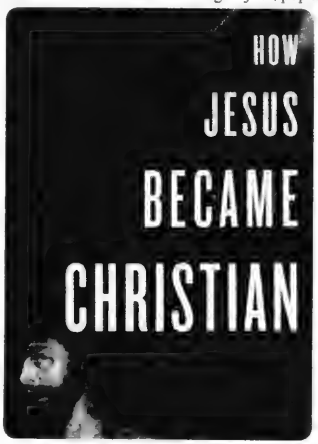
* * *

Hamilton Literary Fest: From Sinai to the Shtetl and Beyond – Where Is Home for the Jewish Writer? is the title of Hamilton's Temple Anshe Sholom Second Occasional Celebration of Jewish Writers and Writing, June 5 to 7. Features a rich roster of writers and topics. www.anshesholom.ca

* * *

Katz Teams Up with Piltch, Moses: Ace guitarists **Brian Katz** and **Rob Piltch** have made music together for many years, and while they don't perform together often, it's well worth the wait. Hear these elegant guitar maestros, with Katz on a nylon-string classical instrument and Piltch on an electric, for an evening of standards, improvisations and Katz originals. Free Times Café, 320 College St. June 5, 8 p.m. Reservations, 416-967-1078.

Katz and jazz and classical flautist-sax player **Kathryn Moses** present an eclectic evening of jazz, pop and classical selections, and some original compositions. Moses began her career as a symphony player in her native Oklahoma, then moved north and into the realms of jazz and pop; she is considered one of Canada's top jazz flautists. Mezzetta Café, 681 St. Clair Ave. W. June 10, 9 p.m. Reservations, 416-658-5687.



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Names in the News: Lola Rasminsky's uncomfortable feeling that only children from well-off families could afford art classes led her to offer free instruction in the arts for 40,000 children in Toronto's under-served neighbourhoods. Her efforts have earned her the Canadian Urban Institute's 2009 Local Hero Award, to be presented this week at a ceremony at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel.

Rasminsky is founder of the Avenue Road Arts School and the non-profit group Art for Children (now Arts for Children and Youth). "The lesson is that we have no idea how gifted and capable a lot of our young people are," she said. "Too often we only see a negative side of youth. I believe that if more at-risk youth were given a chance to develop their talents, we'd have safer cities. Engaging youth in art-making really does make a difference to our entire city."

* * *

Literary Notices

• Submission deadline is June 30 for the Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. First prize is a professionally directed and performed public play reading at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. For submission and other details, contact Esther Arbeid at 416-924-6211, ext. 606, or esthera@mnjcc.org.

• **Aviva Woznica**'s book Fire Unextinguished was recently chosen as a finalist in the 2009 Indie Book Awards.

* * *

Music & Theatre Notes

• **Theresa Tova** and **Matt Herskowitz** perform at Statlers Piano Lounge, 487 Church St. near Wellesley Street East. Cover $15, plus $10 food-drink minimum. Sunday, June 14, 8 p.m. (Dinner service commences 6 p.m.) To make reservations, visit www.statlersonchurch.com. The duo also perform at the Segal Centre in Montreal on June 21. www.segalcentre.org

• Yiddish singer **Mitch Smolkin** performs with **Klezmer en Buenos Aires** and musicians **Paul Brody**, **Boris Sichon** and **Aviva Chernick**; pianist **Marilyn Lerner** opens the concert, which is being billed as "a spectacular Father's Day event." Smolkin's last two concerts sold out in advance. $30, $25, $18. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Sunday, June 21, 3 p.m. 416-872-4255. www.mitchsmolkin.com

• Tickets go on sale this week for Teatron Jewish Theatre's new season, consisting of the comedies Brighton Beach Memoirs by **Neil Simon** and Bluish by **Janece Shaffer**, to be performed in the Toronto Centre for the Arts. www.teatrontheatre.com

• Temple Har Zion of Thornhill recently produced and released Hak'hel et Ha'am (Gather the People), a CD featuring cantorial soloist **Tara Abrams**, **Rabbi Cory Weiss**, music director **Eleanor Ackerman Rice** and instrumentalist-arranger **David Saslov**, who produced the recording. Har Zion's adult choir, junior choir and klezmer band are also featured on the CD. 416-490-9382, harzioncd@sympatico.ca

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Mitch Smolkin

Aviva Chernick

Travel Talk

By BILL GLADSTONE

ABRAHAM'S GATE, FEATURING WORLD'S EARLIEST ARCHES, IS RESTORED AT TEL DAN RESERVE

After extensive restoration work by Israel's Nature and National Parks Protection Authority, the 4,000-year-old Abraham's Gate at the Tel Dan Nature Reserve in northern Israel has been reopened to the public.

Composed of sun-dried mud brick on a foundation of large basalt stones, Abraham's Gate was first uncovered almost 40 years ago and has been restored to its original height of 22 feet. The gate serves as a link between the two towers below its arches, the earliest complete arches ever found in the world.

"Abraham's Gate is truly one of Israel's most coveted and significant historical treasures," says Oded Grofman, director of the Israel Government Tourist Office in Canada. "The reopening of Abraham's Gate is sure to add some extra excitement for visitors to Israel this summer."

Visitors to the Tel Dan Nature Reserve may also explore three different hiking routes and an archeological site featuring the remains of the biblical city of Laish. For details, please visit www.goisrael.ca.

* * *

New hotel in Tel Aviv

Travellers to Israel this spring may stay in one of the country's most artistically imaginative hotels. The Art + Hotel in Tel Aviv. The public areas of the Art + Hotel feature artworks, including huge murals and video art, by Zadok Ben David, Sigalit Landau, Maya Attoun and other leading Israeli artists. Retro-style furniture and modern design have been combined to create the cool atmosphere that the art scene in Tel Aviv enjoys. Israeli art is also exhibited in a 400-square-metre gallery.

Guests may partake of a rich Israeli breakfast in the library and watch the sun set over the Mediterranean from a rooftop deck. With 62 guest rooms, the hotel is a short walk from the veteran art galleries on Gordon Street and a short cab ride from the many new art galleries in southern Tel Aviv and Jaffa. www.atlas.co.il

* * *

Bible Lands Museum

A new exhibition, Echoes of Egypt, opened recently at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem. The exhibition features photographs, art works, lithographs and maps from the 16th to the 19th centuries that reveal Egypt's daily life and magnificent monuments.

Focusing on the era when the western world first began to discover Egypt's magnificence, the exhibition highlights Napoleon's failed Egyptian campaign in 1798 and the team of some 200 researchers, scientists and artists that he left in the country to document its wonders and glorious past. www.blmj.org

* * *

Ancient marble statue unearthed

An 1,800-year-old marble figurine depicting the head of a bearded man was recently uncovered during archeological excavations in Jerusalem's City of David.

The statue is believed to be from the Roman Empire around the time of the Emperor Hadrian between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The figure's short hairstyle, prominent lobes, curved ears and almond-shaped eyes suggest the object most likely portrays an athlete.

"The level of finish on the figurine is extraordinary, while meticulously adhering to the tiniest of details," said Dr. Doron Ben-Ami of the Israel Antiquities Authority. "No similar artifact made of marble bearing the same image has been discovered in excavations anywhere else in the country."

Travellers to the City of David may explore the site's visitor centre, 3-D exhibition and guided tours through the excavations that include Warren's Shaft and ancient water systems such as Hezekiah's Tunnel and the Second Temple Shiloah pool. For more on the excavations, please visit www.cityofdavid.org.il. For more on travel to Israel, please visit www.goisrael.ca.

* * *

Israel Notes

• A 1,500-year-old mosaic has been restored and opened to the public at the ancient synagogue in Ma'on-Nirim, a town in the western Negev. The mosaic, decorated with a seven-branched candelabrum and images of several animals and palm trees, is believed to be from the Byzantine period between the fifth and sixth centuries.

• Running June 10 to 16, Jerusalem's Light Festival will transform buildings and holy sites around the Old City into a vibrant display of light-inspired artworks. The festival will feature installations, performance art, architectural lighting and grand-scale screenings, turning several sites around the Old City into a unique nighttime visual experience. Also included are a light parade and sculptors' fair. For details, please visit www.goisrael.ca.

• Ben-Gurion International Airport has been named the top airport in the Middle East for the second year in a row. A survey by the Geneva-based Airports Council International ranked airports based on more than 30 aspects of service voted on by travellers.

• The city of Tel Aviv is introducing a new bicycle rental program. Modelled after similar initiatives in Paris and other European cities, the program will allow tourists to pick up bicycles at 25 rental stations around the city and drop them off near their destinations.

• The Israeli Opera is planning to mark its 25th anniversary in 2010 with an opera weekend at the Dead Sea area, highlighted by a production of Nabucco, Giuseppe Verdi's Jewish opera, at the footsteps of Masada. Daniel Oren is to conduct a variety of internationally acclaimed opera singers headed by Georgian bass Paata Burchuladze. Other special events including sunrise concerts on Masada and a gala concert with American opera singer Jessye Norman. The opera weekend is scheduled for June 3 to 5, 2010.

What's On at the koffler

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EXHIBITION

Russia: Beyond Utopia

On view through June 30
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4588 Bathurst Street

The Canadian debut of vibrant images of post-Communist Russia by acclaimed New York-based photographer **Andrew Moore**.

Presented as part of the CONTACT Toronto Photography Festival
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SCREENING

A Touch Away

Tuesday, June 9 | 7 PM | $10
Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue (at St. George St)

The dramatic conclusion of this popular Israeli mini-series with the show's producer and creator, **Zafrir Kochanovsky**, coming especially from Israel.

Made possible in part with the support of The Mifgash program and the Israeli Forum together with Kolel and Hillel of Greater Toronto.

kofflergallery

EXHIBITION

Joshua Neustein: Margins

Contemporary art unraveling the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Opening June 27 | Royal Ontario Museum

Concurrent with the Royal Ontario Museum's exhibition *Dead Sea Scrolls: Words that Changed the World*, *Margins* is a newly commissioned installation by New York-based artist Joshua Neustein, exploring themes and ideas suggested by the Scrolls. Using materials such as glass and soot, as well as drawing, sculptural and textual elements, Neustein's work engages visual art in a poetic reflection on writing and religion.

Presented by the Koffler Gallery and the Institute for Contemporary Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum

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A sweeping survey of Jews in Greece

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Jews have lived in Greece since time immemorial, yet strangely enough, there was "no such thing as a Greek Jew" until the 20th century, according to K.E. Fleming, the author of Greece – A Jewish History (Princeton University Press).

The anomaly is easily explained, writes Fleming, a professor of Mediterranean and modern Greek history at New York University and the director of its Hellenic Studies program.

K.E. Fleming

Greece, in terms of its borders, was a geographical work in progress until after World War II, since much of its territory was occupied by the Ottoman Empire and various European powers.

Salonika, which had the largest Jewish community in Greece prior to the Holocaust, was ceded to Greece in 1912. Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace passed into Greek hands between 1881 and 1920. Crete became Greek in 1913, while the Ionian islands were incorporated in 1864. Rhodes and the Dodecanese islands joined Greece in 1947.

Jews as a national group with a distinct Greek identity were officially recognized by Greece only after World War I, says Fleming, whose scholarly, deeply researched book is billed as the first comprehensive English-language account of Greek Jews.

Under a law adopted in 1920, Jews were recognized as a protected minority and, for the first time, were regarded as Greek Jews per se. The Greek government, in a campaign of Hellenization, began funding Greek language classes at Jewish schools in Salonika. By the 1930s, young Jews invariably spoke Greek rather than Ladino.

"With the cultural assimilation of thousands of Jews, a true Greek Jewish culture took root," writes Fleming.

At its heart, Fleming's book is a story of integration, exclusion, tragedy, dispersal and rebuilding.

Long before Greece's War of Independence in 1821, Jews fell roughly into two broad categories: Romaniotes and Sephardim.

The older but smaller Romaniotes were the descendants of Jews who left Palestine after the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem. Some Romaniotes, most notably in Jannia, claimed that their ancestors arrived in Greece in the wake of the Babylonia conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

The Sephardim settled in Greece after the expulsions of Jews from Spain, Portugal, France and Italy.

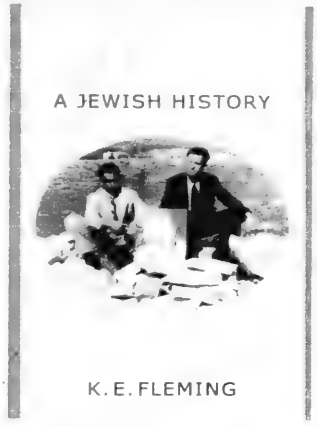
Apart from the Romaniotes and the Sephardim, Fleming notes, there were smaller numbers of Ashkenazim. Like the Romaniotes, they were gradually assimilated into the Sephardic fold.

Before this process took hold in the last century, the Jewish community was riven by tensions pitting Romaniotes against Sephardim.

On Corfu, for example, Romaniotes identified with Greece, while Sephardim looked to Italy. "Well into the 19th century, Corfu's community was so divided that Christian authorities were regularly asked to adjudicate intercommunal disputes," writes Fleming.

As Greece expanded its borders, Jews either sided with Greek forces or remained loyal to the Ottomans.

In Epirus, Jews fought alongside Greek troops, but in other places, most notably Salonika, Jews raised funds to help the Ottomans. "In regions with a pronounced history of anti-Semitism," Fleming says, "the advent of Greek rule was met with trepidation on the part of the Jews, who feared a loss of privileges, security and legal status conferred on them by imperial regimes."



With a strong identity as Ottoman subjects, the Jews of Salonika were the least Hellenized of all Jews in Greece. They suffered the consequences. In 1922, Jewish stevedores in Salonika lost their jobs and were replaced by ethnic Greeks from Asia Minor.

As a result, Jewish port workers immigrated to Palestine. In 1923, when 40 per cent of Salonika's population was Jewish, the local municipality banned Ladino and Hebrew from all public signs.

During the period from the end of World War I to the outbreak of World War II, overt anti-Semitism was not an uncommon phenomenon in Greece, Fleming suggests.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, printed in a Greek edition, enjoyed wide circulation. The prime minister of Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos, assured the Jewish community that such views did not reflect the government's position.

For Greek Jewry, the Holocaust was an unmitigated disaster.

Nazi transports from Salonika, in 1943, were the first to leave German-occupied Greece. Crete's entire Jewish community was rounded up in 1944.

When Greek Jews were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the vast majority were immediately gassed. Greek Jews in particular were recruited for the Sonderkommando, the squads that disposed of corpses.

In certain localities, including the island of Zakinthos, Greek Orthodox Christians assisted Jews, hiding them in the mountains with Christian families. Canadian novelist Anne Michaels took note of that incident in her first novel, Fugitive Pieces.

But in Corfu, a senior Greek official collaborated with the Germans, facilitating the deportation and murder of more than three-quarters of the island's 2,000 Jews.

Throughout the rest of Greece, the situation was the same.

Jews in Patras, Volos, Larissa and Trikala were saved by the resistance movement and by municipal authorities. On the other hand, the quisling Greek government, headed by Ioannis Rallis, organized a special police force to hunt down Jews and leftists.

Greece was inhabited by about 70,000 Jews when the German army invaded the country in 1940. When Greece was liberated, 10,000 Jews had survived the onslaught.

"In percentages, this reflects one of the highest destruction rates in all of Europe," observes Fleming.

By her estimate, 50 per cent of Greek Jewish concentration camp survivors emigrated, moving on to Palestine/Israel and, when possible, the United States.

They had reason to leave.

Greece, impoverished by the Nazi occupation, was plunged into civil war in 1946. As well, Jews who tried to reclaim their properties were rebuffed.

Yet Greece, as Fleming states, was the first European country to promulgate laws to help such Jews. These laws, however, were not strictly enforced.

In recent years, the Greek government has commemorated the devastating losses that the Jewish community endured during the Holocaust and acknowledged the contributions of Jews to Greek society. But with only about 5,000 Jews living in Greece today, the past seems more salient than the present.

Fleming, in her sweeping survey, distills the essence of both eras.

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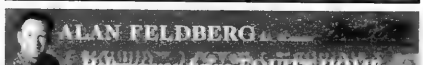

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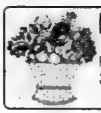

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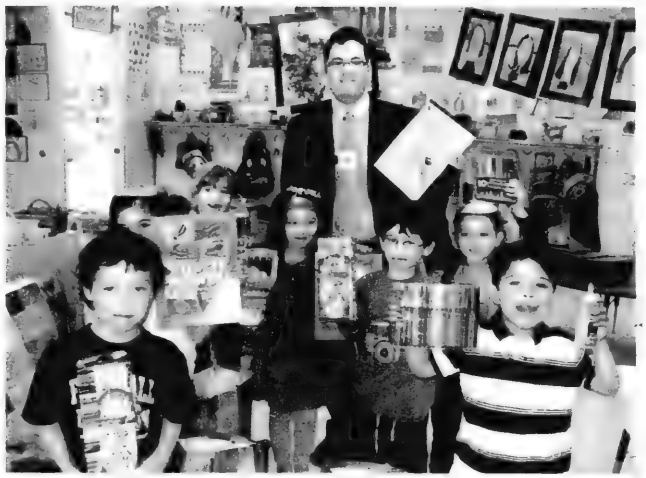

HELPING OTHER KIDS FEEL BETTER: Senior kindergarten students at the Leo Baeck Day School's north campus collected more than $400, as well as four big bags of art supplies, for Chai Lifeline Canada, whose volunteers visit hospitals and do art projects with children recovering from serious illnesses. Rabbi Mordechai Rothman, director of Chai Lifeline Canada, came to Leo Baeck to receive the donation and speak to the students about how the supplies would be used. Pictured from left are Joshua Erdman, Hannah Lapsker, Shayna Feldbloom, Jacqueline Kemper, Rabbi Rothman, Evan Gelbar, Rebeca Barkin and David Hascal.

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Junior Maccabiah girls aim for podium performance

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Earlier this season, gymnastics coach Charlene Knudsen decided the girls she trains would forego most local competitions and instead focus their attention on events south of the border.

From Knudsen's perspective, the move would pay off by giving her athletes some valuable international experience and better prepare them for the Maccabiah Games in July.

With the Games fast approaching, Knudsen is confident her girls will show well in Israel.

As co-owner of the Markham Gymnastics Club, as well as coach of the Maccabiah junior (under-15) and open teams, she'll be taking two of her club girls to Israel – Dana Potashner and Lindsay Solmon, both 13. Joining them on the junior team are 13-year-olds Amelia Briggs-Morris, Sabrina Barsky and Amanda Wolfe, all of Toronto.

The open team consists of Erin Berenbaum and Marlee Schinoff of Toronto and Dana Goldman and her sister, Danielle, of Montreal.

Last December, Knudsen and the junior girls competed in the Nadia Comaneci International Invitational in Oklahoma City. Potashner finished second all around, Solmon was fourth and Briggs-Morris won the gold medal for best performance overall.

In February, the Markham Club participated in the Vegas Cup and the team finished third.

A month later at the GTC Classics – Motown Madness in Michigan, the team earned another third-place finish.

To further prepare her charges for the Maccabiah Games, which run from July 12 to 23, Knudsen is consulting with a gymnastics judge "to put together the most amount of difficulty to give us an edge." (Athletes who successfully complete a more difficult manoeuvre score higher than those who finish an easier one.)

"At the same time, we want to be clean, to stay on the equipment and stick," she said.

Knudsen, who will be visiting Israel for the first time, said despite the expected tough competition from the United States and former East Bloc countries, "I'm expecting to go there and be on the podium."

In past Maccabiahs, Canada sent one or two athletes who competed individually. Now, for the first time, Canada will field a full team in junior and open events, allowing the girls to compete on an individual level and to have their scores count toward team results.

Gymnasts, from left, Amelia Briggs-Morris, Dana Potashner and Lindsay Solmon

Solmon, a Grade 8 student at the Academy for Gifted Children – P.A.C.E., said that the Maccabiah "is going to be a really big thing for me – my first time in Israel and my first international competition. It's going to be amazing."

Solmon said she's particularly curious to visit the Dead Sea and other well-known sites she's heard about.

As to the competition, for months she's been training 22 hours a week and she's seen a great improvement in her skills.

Potashner, a Grade 8 student at United Synagogue Day School, is also excited about the Maccabiah experience. "I hope that as a team and as individuals, the Canadian team will do very well. We'll just try our hardest and have fun."

She's looking forward to meeting other Jewish athletes from around the world: "As Jews, you have a special connection and it makes me happy to meet people from around the world with the same beliefs and to share the experience together."

Knudsen said the girls' performance level is consistently good. "Lindsay brings great strength to the floor exercise and the vault, and Dana brings great strength to the bars and the vault."

Like the young athletes, Knudsen is looking forward with relish to the Games. "I'm really excited to go with the Canadian team. This will be my first international podium competition [outside North America], and I'm interested in seeing the other countries and being part of the international experience and represent my country."

Both Solmon's and Potashner's families will be accompanying the girls to Israel, and Knudsen believes that will add to the experience.

"It's very special for the athletes to go to Israel and be part of the whole experience. It's very meaningful for the girls to be in Israel with their families," she said.

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Ram, Erlich go separate ways – for now

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For the first time in their careers, Israeli tennis players Andy Ram and Jonathan Erlich – the once-formidable duo dubbed AndiYoni who won the 2008 Australian Open – played last week at a major tournament with separate partners.

Ram teamed up with Max Mirnyi of Belarus in the first round of the French Open doubles tournament, while Erlich paired with Rohan Bopanna of India.

Ram decided not to pair with Erlich, who recently recovered from an injury, after the Challenger tennis tournament held in Ramat Hasharon. They're expected to resume their successful partnership later in the year.

Meanwhile, Israel's top singles player Dudi Sela competed in the second round of the singles tournament against Marin Cilic of Croatia, the 13th seed in the competition.

Those difficult decisions

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

I was the on-call covering physician. The medical resident was bringing me up to date. I could see from the corner of my eye a middle-aged woman and her two young adult children looking in our direction. She came over and asked if we would have time to speak to her about her mother. After we finished our rounds, we met the family in the quiet room.

"When do you think the swallowing study will take place?" the woman asked. "I know it is the holidays, so I guess it could be a few more days."

I knew from the discussion I'd had with the resident that the issue here was one of recurrent aspiration pneumonia, which means the contents of food and what is normally in back of the mouth enter the lungs and cause pneumonia. Although each pneumonia episode might respond to antibiotics, there are often recurrent bouts of infection because the underlying condition causing the pneumonias is often difficult to treat and each infection is a step in the direction of the final fatal illness that no longer responds to treatment.

The ill person often suffers from a neurological disorder such as strokes or late-stage dementia. It is very unlikely that the swallowing mechanism will improve substantially. In order to confirm that there is a severe swallowing disorder, one does a swallowing study in which X-ray contrast material is swallowed, and if it goes into the lungs rather than the esophagus, the risk of aspiration is confirmed.

If this is found, the usual recommendation is to insert a feeding tube directly into the stomach so that nutrition can be provided without the risk of the food being inhaled and causing aspiration pneumonia again.

I asked the woman's daughter, "Have you ever discussed with your mother or with your father [who we learned was cognitively aware and living at home] whether she would want a permanent feeding tube if she were not able to eat?"

As I expected the answer was, "We would never have discussed such an eventuality."

I said, "Even in the absence of direct discussions, from knowing your mother's values, what do you think she might have said to that prospect?"

"I do not know, but my father seems to be going in the direction of stopping the suffering and letting nature take its course."

I continued, "If you really believe that putting in a feeding tube is not what she would have wanted and your father would perhaps be the best judge of that, then doing a swallowing study may not be necessary. No matter what is found, you will have already decided that a tube is not what she would want."

I could see that this discussion was not one that they had contemplated. "If the decision is that a tube will not be used, then we can decide to do our best to feed her whatever she can tolerate and focus on making her comfortable, rather than pursuing all modern medicine's technological possibilities such as X-rays and feeding tubes," I said.

From the point of view of law and of ethical principles, not putting in a tube and withdrawing a feeding tube are the same, but in general people react differently to the two acts – one seems to be accepted as a rational choice, the other an act tantamount to "killing."

I asked the daughter and her children to have that deeply meaningful conversation with their family and consider their choices before making a final decision.

These are not easy decisions, but if done with thought and care, they can ease the decision-making process.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

GROUND VEAL MUSHROOM HERB LOAVES

1 tbsp olive oil
1/4 c chopped walnuts
1 c finely chopped onion
1 c finely chopped mushrooms
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp each, salt and fresh cracked pepper
1/4 c each, finely chopped fresh dill and parsley
1 lb lean ground veal
2 tbsp flax seeds
1 egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 350° F. In skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Stir in onion and mushrooms; cook, stirring often until onions are soft, golden and no liquid remains, about 8 min. Add garlic, cook 1 min. Remove from heat and transfer to large bowl. Stir in salt, pepper, flax seeds, walnuts, dill and parsley. Let cool completely. Stir in veal and egg, mixing thoroughly until well combined. Transfer to 6 lightly greased muffin tins. Bake 45 min. Let cool slightly before serving.

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About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

One of the questions I often get asked by my patients, and one that I believe is rooted in a popular misconception for many people, is: "How many eggs can I eat per week or can I eat eggs at all?"

Eggs are actually a safe and healthy food for all Canadians to consume fairly regularly. Here's what you need to understand. First, the facts: one egg contains 75 calories; 6 grams of protein, which is good; and 5 grams of fat (2 of them saturated). So, eggs are a good source of protein and very filling, making them a good food choice. The 5 grams of fat are not huge considering you can eat 40 to 60 grams of fat per day and maintain weight.

An egg also has 212 mg of dietary cholesterol. What raises the cholesterol in our body is actually fat, particularly trans fat and excess saturated fat. And yes, each egg yolk does have some saturated fat.

Then what's the best way to incorporate eggs into your diet?

I believe you can eat eggs often, but try this: use 1 whole egg plus two to three additional whites. Each egg white contains a mere 16 calories and 0 grams of fat along with 3 grams of protein, so you get the colour and flavour of the whole egg but a controlled amount of fat along with a very low calorie, filling portion of protein.

Eggs get you into trouble when you have a three-egg omelet, which has 15 grams of fat, with a tablespoon of oil or butter in the pan for another 10 grams of fat. If you add cheese, you are now having an omelet with 30 to 40 grams of fat!

So enjoy your eggs often. You can buy egg whites on their own to limit waste if you wish, mix them with your one whole egg, spray your pan with cooking spray and enjoy!

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

That boy said I'm a *ganif*

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I was riding my bicycle home from the office recently, and as I passed a home near Lawrence and Bathurst, a small, chassidic boy yelled at me, "*Ganif*," the Yiddish/Hebrew word for thief.

I stopped my bike, smiled at him and yelled back, "Chas ve'shalom," which basically means "God forbid."

The little boy froze in his tracks, likely startled that a kippah-less man understood Yiddish/Hebrew and had a phrase of his own in his back pocket.

Why would this small fellow call me a *ganif*? (I don't know what's worse: being called a lousy kike by an anti-Semite, or a *ganif* by a Jew). I wasn't bothering him or the neighbourhood, and I certainly wasn't stealing anything. Did this adorable tyke think that because I wasn't from the same "background" as him that I must be a thief?

Why, upon telling some friends this story, did I hear about other incidents in which *frum* children were taught by their elders that anyone who isn't like them in terms of religious adherence should be considered a goy – a gentile or a bad person?

I remember well my yeshiva education, which included the belief that those who don't follow Halachah aren't God's chosen people and are equivalent to idol worshippers. I was frequently told that my father, of blessed memory, a God-fearing Orthodox rabbi, was a *shaigetz* – a terribly pejorative term referring to a non-Jewish man, but literally meaning a creepy crawling thing, a detestable scoundrel or varmint – because his pulpit was in a shul without a mechitzah, which divides women and men during Orthodox prayer services.

These hateful attitudes and belittling expressions go both ways, however. I have lived in both the religious and non-religious communities and have a fair idea of the lack of brotherhood and sisterhood that can exist in and between both.

I have heard many negative comments from Jews who would describe themselves as Reform, Conservative or secular about haredi Jews, suggesting the latter are an embarrassing blotch on our community and willfully damaging Judaism. These comments are equally as disparaging as the ones emanating from *frum* Jews.

A similar divide exists in Israel, but groups such as Gesher (www.gesher.co.il) are working to counter it. On its website, Gesher describes the challenge and potential solution this way: "Israel's growing polarization is exacerbated by the negative stereotypes its secular and religious communities hold regarding one another. Secular Israelis often see their fellow religious citizens as fanatics who aim to impose their own values… Religious Israelis often regard their secular peers as libertines whose values are limited to their own self-gratification. To combat these destructive prejudices, there can be no intervention more effective than authentic encounter, dialogue and recognition of the other's common humanity."

The schism between haredi Jews and their non-religious counterparts in Toronto is huge, but unlike Israel, it's not being dealt with at all. It is, therefore, paramount that we create an entity like Gesher to bring together Jews of all backgrounds in a safe environment, giving them a chance to see the things that unify us, and understand and respect the things that separate our communities.

Dealing with this problem is inordinately important for many reasons, not the least of which is ensuring that our home front is united so that we can fight an even greater and more troublesome challenge – namely, anti-Semitism, which continues to lurk in the hallways of places such as York University and elsewhere and doesn't care about the denominational choice of its targets.

Sometimes it seems as if so many of us are sitting around waiting for solutions to happen. They won't. We need to fight.

See Avrums's Blog at http://avrum.net. Darfur?

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Kosher catering: a modern tradition

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

Tradition: it was important to Tevye and it's still important when you're making a simchah. Now it's easier than ever to honour the traditions of kashrut at any life-cycle event or gathering. From the time-honoured warmth of a synagogue to the spacious halls of the Air Canada Centre, choosing kosher food for any number of guests is both delicious and simple.

Why not hold a Jewish event in the ultimate Jewish venue: a shul? "It's quite wonderful and very touching," says Edmund Duarte of Uptown Gourmet Catering (416-633-3838), in-house caterer to Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, particularly when several generations of celebrations happen within the shul.

Which isn't to say there's nothing new in shul catering. "We try to be innovative, inventive; ahead of the curve as opposed to following it… there are things that people are doing out there that we started seven years ago," Duarte says. From martini-glass soup shooters to mushroom stations, he loves creating fun, customized menus that surprise and delight. "If it's kosher and it's within your budget, we'll do it."

When an occasion calls for a more traditional approach, for 30 up to 500 diners, there's no culinary compromise. "We do a lot of the traditional foods. I think we do them extremely well – there are 72 years of experience in my kitchen," Duarte says.

"People used to say, 'What do you expect? It's kosher.' Now, we have an educated consumer who expects quality, expects service, presentation equal to or superior to any fine restaurant in the city of Toronto. That's what we try to supply."

Duarte, who oversees each simchah personally, acknowledges the hot competition in the venue market and emphasizes that a synagogue must also hold its own as a venue. "Weddings are about elegance – this ballroom is one of the most elegant rooms in the city of Toronto," he says.

"Beth Emeth is not necessarily [just] a synagogue… we are a venue that comes with a built-in rabbi. We are a beautiful venue, with a beautiful room, with beautiful facilities."

Easy parking, security and convenient midtown location also make Beth Emeth an attractive site for family or corporate gatherings. Great food and great service make it an exciting venue, and its commitment to Jewish observance and rich history within Toronto's Jewish community ultimately sets it apart from the crowd.

Sometimes, tradition thrives in the most unusual places, such as the Royal Ontario Museum or Casa Loma. Whether it's an intimate family dinner or a community-wide event for thousands, Zuchter Berk Creative Caterers (416-386-1086; www.zuchterberk.com) offers almost 80 years' experience in creating premium kosher dining with a surprisingly flexible price tag.

Zuchter Berk's Isaac Drookman isn't above bragging a little: "We were the first ones to bring in kosher caviar," he says. Or about the fact that each event is personally supervised by a full-time employee assigned exclusively to that event, "from the very beginning to the very end."

Or about the beef. "We always age our beef in-house," Drookman says. Most kosher restaurants and caterers don't age beef due to the cost of storage space. Yet "it's the difference between good and great – it makes it an upscale meal."

A huge range of venues let clients tailor a simchah's menu and other factors to almost any budget and expectation. Beyond synagogues, which include three of Toronto's largest (Beth Tzedec Congregation, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation and the Sephardic Kehila Centre), Zuchter Berk's website lists dozens of popular sites around Toronto – and beyond.

"We just did a getaway in Montreal – 12 days straight, for 450 people, breakfast, lunch and dinner," Drookman says. Through an exclusive arrangement, Zuchter Berk will also soon begin offering kosher food services at Horseshoe Valley Resort, perfect for life-cycle or community events or golf tournaments.

Zuchter Berk's repertoire includes both meat and dairy catering, which isn't just for breakfast anymore: increasingly trendy daytime weddings often feature a delicious dairy menu. Another special touch: a full range of bakery services, with all baked goods created in-house. "At a Zuchter wedding, you'll see unique pastries that you won't see at others."

Even when it comes to wedding cakes, Zuchter Berk will design or help couples create something truly special: a sumptuous centrepiece for an occasion served up in the finest tradition of service and style.

Other kosher caterers advertising in this supplement are: Caterers York, 416-783-4293; Ely's Fine Foods, 416-782-3231; Hartman's Kosher Meats, 416-663-7779; L'Echaim Caterers, 416-650-5440.

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One-stop shop carries the latest in party favours

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

Want to make your next event a fun and memorable one? Look no further than Incredible Novelties (416-663-9900; www.incrediblenovelties.com) to meet all your party needs.

Former DJs and business partners Saul Sacks and Dan Jankelow have kept busy setting trends in the one-stop party shop industry for almost eight years. They got into the business after noticing clients at the bar and bat mitzvahs they were working at had no idea what to do with the novelty items they purchased, or how many they should be purchasing.

"Incredible Novelties is a one-stop shop where we bring you the latest trends in party favours and prizes for the bar and bat mitzvah industry," Sacks said. "We're the trendsetter in the industry."

Candy pillows, left, and shutters, right, two of a vast selection of incredible party novelties.

At Incredible Novelties, the focus is on not only providing a place to shop for party favours, but also an excellent, one-on-one client service experience. When clients comes into the store, first they are asked about their vision for the party and how many guests are attending. A consultant then takes them around the showroom to help put together an order and also gives advice on how the items they're purchasing should be used, so that there will not be any waste at the end of the night. The prizes are delivered to the event location the day of the party, ready for the DJs to hand out.

At Incredible Novelties, you can find everything you can imagine – and even some things you can't. Boas in a rainbow of colours, wigs, bandanas and a ton of hats, including one that lights up; LED music notes, fans and cola glasses are just some of the myriad of products available. There truly is something for everyone, regardless of budget.

"Our whole concept is budget friendly," Sacks said. "We've adapted to the economy by bringing in a lot of inexpensive items. We understand that there's a recession and people are having a hard time right now, so we adapt to the market to make sure we can service every single person having a party.

"The bottom line is, whatever the budget for any client, no matter what, it makes no difference. We will be there to work with them 100 per cent."

If something more personalized is what you're after, Incredible Novelties also does customized items – practical ones that will get used after the party. Calculators, business-card holders, calendars, USB keys and travel mugs are some of what they have to offer. Custom orders like these can be done in a week if need be, but generally take seven to 10 business days.

"What we're really known for in the industry is turnaround time, fast response. Our number one focus in this business is customer service," Sacks said.

With all their regular sale items kept in store, finding what you need is always possible, even at the last minute. And with items arriving weekly, there is always something new to check out.

Another one-stop party shop advertising in this supplement is: Dynamite Parties and Novelties, 905-669-7620.

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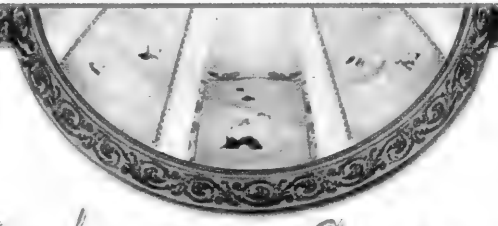

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Pros raise photography to artform

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

If a picture is worth a thousand words, choosing a photographer is key to preserving the memories of a great simchah.

Horvath Studio in Thornhill specializes in portraits for all occasions, including weddings, engagements, bar/bat mitzvahs and milestone events. Both indoor and outdoor, colour and black and white photos are offered, as are services such as photo framing and retouching.

Horvath has been around for nearly 50 years. Owner Sam Sciarrino, a self-taught master photographer, has been there since 1984.

There's still plenty of competition in the industry, but Sciarrino believes only a select few can compete with Horvath's track record.

"We don't use cheap consumer equipment to do a professional job" he explains. "We use professional equipment. We spend a lot of money on it and we follow through. These are the differences today, because there are a lot of people who are just jumping in the business and put the camera on automatic, using their 'prosumer' equipment and think they're getting away with it, but they're not."

While anyone can point and shoot, it's vital to understand the basic fundamentals of the art form, such as lighting and composition, a reality that's often overlooked.

"[It's] a natural knack that you can't really teach people" Sciarrino says, "and if you can incorporate that with your technical side, then you have a style all your own, which can be very hard to duplicate, because it's something that's within, it's not something from a textbook."

Mark Gilligan has been interested in photography ever since he was a young teen. He started as a professional at Macdonnell Photography in 1998 while still attending Sheridan College. Since he was already fairly advanced in the artform, he used his opportunity at Sheridan to improve his craft and take full advantage of its facilities

Sam Sciarrino

While at Macdonnell, Gilligan got into shooting weddings and bar and bat mitzvahs. What impressed him most about the studio was what it had to offer in terms of available equipment.

"The first time I stepped into their studio and saw what you could do with photography, I was hooked from then on," he says.

Gilligan predominantly uses medium-format Hasselblad cameras, preferring them over most of the other formats favoured by many photographers.

"A lot of photographers try to just use a 35 millimetre SLR" he says, "and I've just felt over the years and through some of my teaching that [having] a slightly bigger camera allows you to see more and feel more as you're setting up the composition in an image."

Gilligan has been eager to make a name for himself in the field since leaving Macdonnell. Recently, he built a galley-style studio on the main floor of his Danforth-area house as a first step toward professional independence, although he admits that he still has a way to go before he becomes a household name.

"The toughest thing is the marketing side of it, getting people to know who I am and what I do," he explains. "A lot of people, especially in the community I used to work in, knew me as Mark from Macdonnell Photography, whereas now it's about trying to get people to know 'Mark Gilligan Photography.'"

Mark Gilligan

The industry has changed quite a bit since Gilligan began his career, most notably in the switch from film to digital. He considers himself fortunate that he had the chance to begin his early training working in the digital medium, seeing as it is now industry standard.

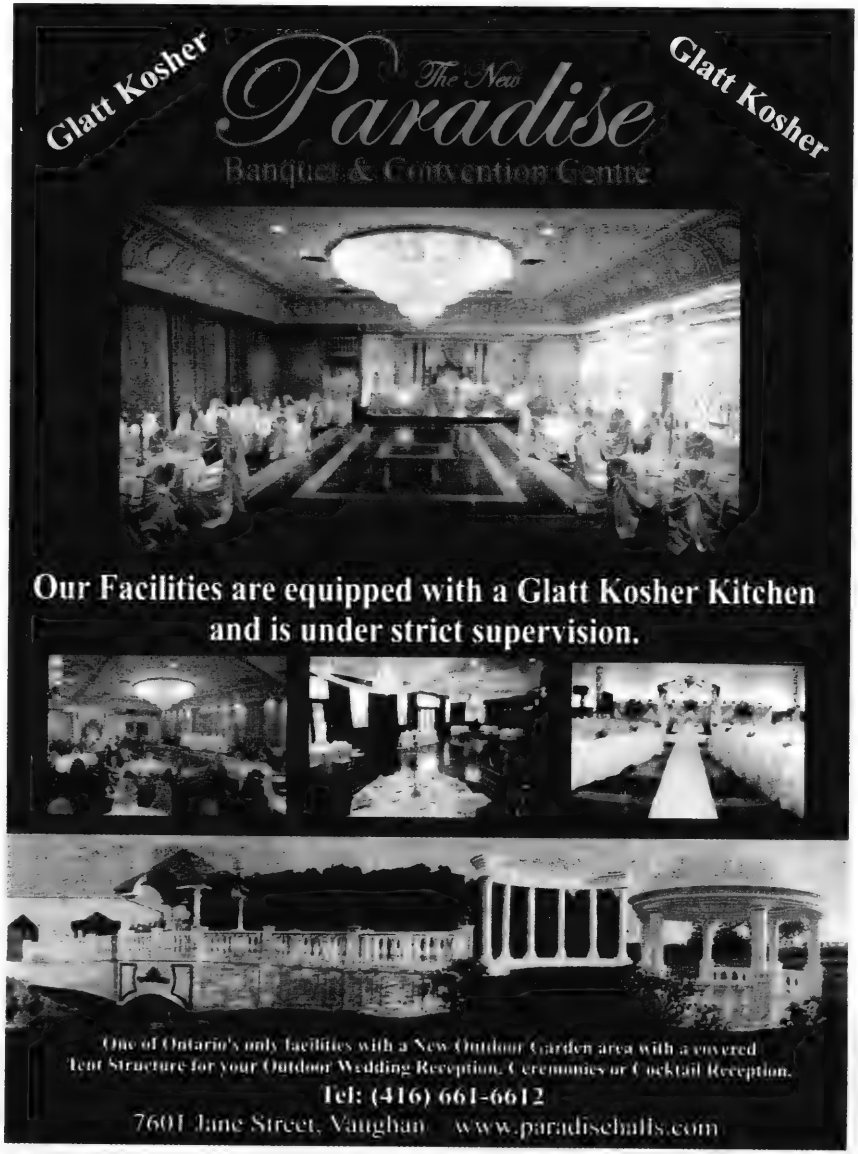
"I was lucky enough to be in a position where every studio I walked into was on that learning curve of digital photography" Gilligan says.

"Nowadays, digital photography is so accessible to everyone, the bar of quality of the photography is lowering. And that kind of helps me in a way, especially for the portraits. When people aren't using these images that are of higher quality as a professional should have, that's an easy selling point for me."

To contact Horvath Studio, call 905-707-5770 or e-mail sam@horvathphoto.com

To contact Mark Gilligan, call 416-274-3451 or e-mail info@markgilliganphotography.com

Other photographers advertising in this supplement are Signature Studios, 416-784-4488 and Sylman Photography, 905-889-0760.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Guests sell jewelry and coins at gold parties

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Elliot Sylman calls gold parties, the latest version of Tupperware parties. Pictured above are five women who have recently turned their gold into cash. Pictured, from left, are Michelle, Stephanie, Jordana, Elana and Evie.

Elliot Sylman will pay you to come to a party.

Owner of gold parties 4U (1-877-GOLD-910; 1-877-465-3910; goldparties4u@rogers.com), Sylman will attend a party and buy guests' gold jewelry and coins, no matter the condition.

"I buy broken pieces, single earrings or jewelry that's just plain out of style. I will also buy watches and some gems, and I pay guests on the spot."

Sylman, who has been buying gold for almost 15 years, said that he asks hosts to get together about 12 to 16 people who can drop in throughout the evening.

"It's an easy, relaxed atmosphere. Guests mingle in one room over coffee and dessert or wine and cheese, and I take them aside individually to weigh and appraise their pieces."

Along with paying the guests for their gold, he said he pays the host a commission from the amount of cash he pays out. "I buy all gold, from eight karat to 24 karat, as well as platinum."

Although most guests are women, he said he did have one man who brought two bracelets that his wife had bought for him.

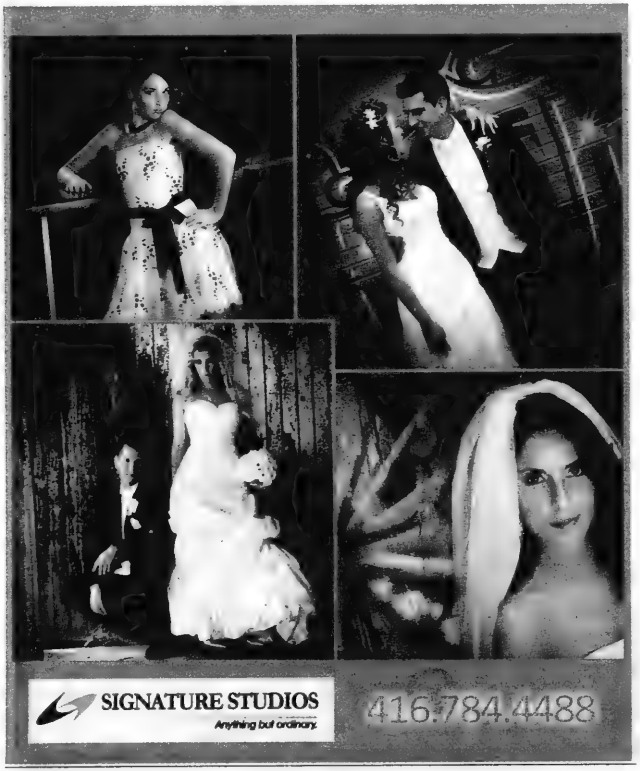
"Some people use the money to buy more current jewelry, and others use it to pay bills or send their kids to camp. It's like found money, because most of these pieces had been gathering dust in the bottom of a jewelry box. Guests walk in with these old, almost forgotten pieces, and they walk out with money."

Some parties have also served as charity fundraisers, he said. "The parties are such a hit that 25 per cent of the hosts book another party.

"A highlight of the party for me is the stories I hear. People tell me where the jewelry is from, and who gave it to them. I hear all kinds of things."

Gold parties are the modern version of Tupperware parties. "Instead of spending money, guests walk out with cash."

Sylman suggests contacting him three to five weeks before a prospective date, and he sends hosts e-vites that they can forward to their guests.



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Gift registries cover a gamut of items for every occasion

Entertainers at Catskills resorts used to draw laughs every time they related the adage of the bar mitzvah boy who received so many Mont Blanc pens that when he addressed the congregation, instead of announcing, "Today, I am a man, he said, 'Today, I am a fountain pen.'"

Now that gift registries are ubiquitous, recipients should never have to worry about getting duplicates of things they'll never use.

Let's face it: a bride doesn't need to start off with 15 silver trays, unless she and her husband are going into the catering business. Registering with a reputable store or organization can help prevent this frustrating experience.

Online registry a great time saver

However, celebrants need to decide on the type of gifts they'd like to get and where they would like to order them from.

Although store registries have been around for decades, their online counterparts have only made inroads since the 1990s. As well, when gift registries first started, people associated them with weddings, but now they exist for every occasion. Among the appropriate simchahs are baby namings, brit milahs, milestone birthdays, bar and bat mitzvahs, graduations, engagements and other special occasions.

Of course, weddings remain the most popular of all.

The online gift registry is a win-win concept for giver and receiver. But online gift registries are especially helpful for people living out of town or even in another country or continent. Once given the appropriate URL, a list of items with pictures and prices is immediately accessible. Recipients can monitor the list and augment it as their collection fills.

True, people can always send a cheque, give cash or buy gift certificates, but it's exciting to receive presents, and often the giver will choose something the recipient would never have thought of or splurged on if they went out to buy it.

If the store with the gift registry is near the giver, it's nice to pay a visit, look around and benefit from a sales associate's suggestions. Examining the fabric or hue close up is always reassuring.

Conversely, for busy people, buying online is efficient, and there's nothing to lose, because the recipient can always exchange the item if it isn't appropriate.

But before ordering gifts online, surfers should check to see if the store has a written policy that can be printed out and saved. That way, proof is always on hand and it can save embarrassment, if things don't work out the way they should.

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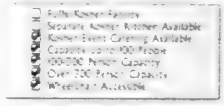
Venue offers 'state-of-the-art amenities

By MARNI BINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Events and Catering On The Park is located in a stunning historical site in midtown Toronto at 1095 Leslie St., at Eglinton Ave. E.

Formerly Inn On the Park, the venue has been completely renovated and just opened in September 2008. Director Chris Nikoletsos said the venue is perfect for any kind of event, ranging from corporate to bridal, and everything in between.



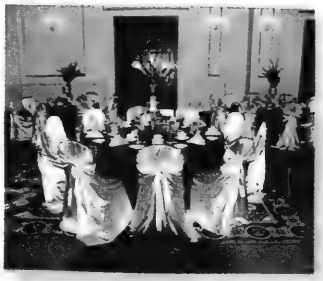
Events and Catering On The Park's five banquet rooms can accommodate groups ranging from 40 in the Seasons Room to 900 guests in the main ballroom. The Harvest, Oak and Trillium rooms can host 200, 120 and 80 guests respectively.

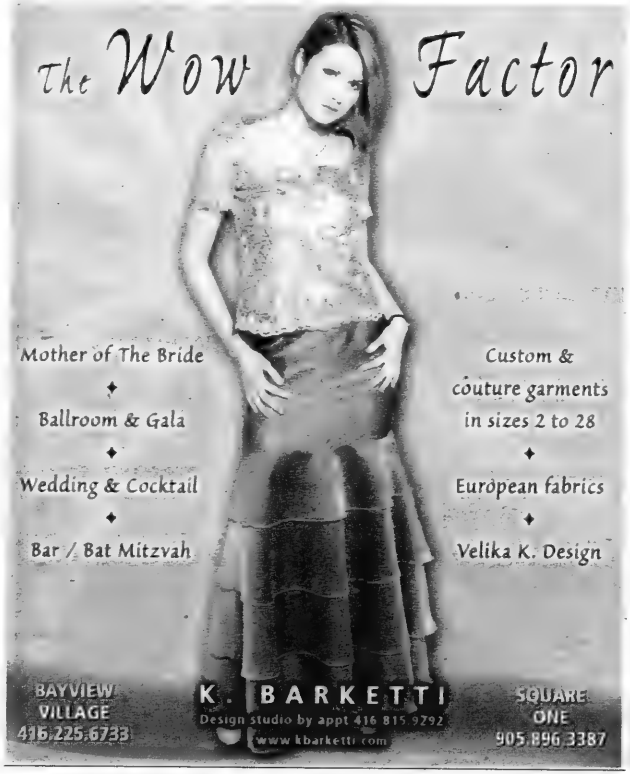
Although there isn't a kosher kitchen on site, clients are welcome to bring a kosher caterer in for their event.

When planning an event, Events and Catering On The Park offers assistance with every aspect of planning. A team of experienced and professional personnel will assist clients with special occasion requirements. The website, www.eventsonthepark.ca, lists specialties, including security, specialty linens, decorators, event co-ordinators, DJs, bands, musicians, limo service, valet service and florists. "We have the expertise to turn your dreams into reality. Whether you are planning a corporate event or a personal celebration, we are pleased to offer a wide range of services customized to meet the needs of your unique event," Nikoletsos said.

"Our new culinary facilities complement our exquisite in-house catering services. Offering a multitude of modern resources and state-of-the-art amenities, Events and Catering On The Park exudes an air of elegance, class and extraordinary attention to detail."

To book your event, call Nikoletsos at 416-510-2002 or e-mail info@eventsonthepark.ca. The venue's website address is www.eventsonthepark.ca.





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Music plays a crucial role at simchahs

By MARNI BRENDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Music plays a crucial role at a simchah, whether it accompanies a bridal party down the aisle, is in the background during a cocktail reception, or gets your guests up on their feet for a night of dancing.

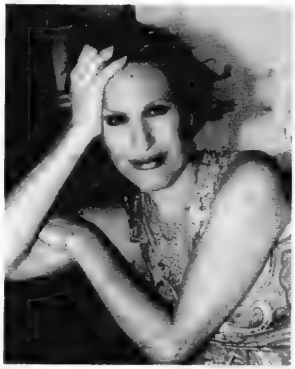
Sisters Eleanor Ackerman Rice and Cheryl Ackerman have been playing music together since they were children. As Ivory & Silver (416-918-3602), a keyboard and piano duo, they have been playing together professionally for the last 24 years at wedding ceremonies, receptions and cocktail parties.

With a vast repertoire to draw from, Ivory & Silver can provide your event with everything from classical to soft popular, Israeli music and show tunes. Rice said that the versatility of the keyboard and the sweet sound of the flute provide lovely background music for any function.

With both sisters classically trained, they are very flexible in what they can play and they can perform almost anything by ear. As children, they were both very heavily influenced by their father, musician Dave Ackerman.

"We were raised with music. Dad was a musician, and we grew up listening to show tunes." Dave Ackerman played saxophone, clarinet and flute at the Royal York Hotel Imperial Room and at the King Edward Hotel.

Rice credits her father for teaching them to learn to play a variety of pieces of music, because he knew from experience that one can never anticipate what they will be requested to play. He also taught them that "music is a business and you need to please the customer."



Fern Lindzon can switch from classical to swing to rock and jazz.

Their father passed away in 1998. Ivory & Silver's CD titled Tribute is dedicated to their parents.

Fern Lindzon (416-225-6977; e-mail: lindzon@rogers.com; website: www.fern-lindzon.com) is up for the challenge to plan the music for your next event. Whether you are looking for a solo pianist or a 10-piece band, Lindzon can book your background music, with or without vocals, and can even co-ordinate live music with a DJ for dinner and dancing at your reception.

Lindzon started playing the piano when she was nine and has been told she started singing at birth. Educated at the Royal Conservatory of Music and the faculty of music at the University of Toronto, Lindzon can provide your simchah with many types of music, including klezmer, Yiddish Israeli, jazz, Broadway, pop and R&B.

Ivory and Silver also have a vast repertoire to choose from.

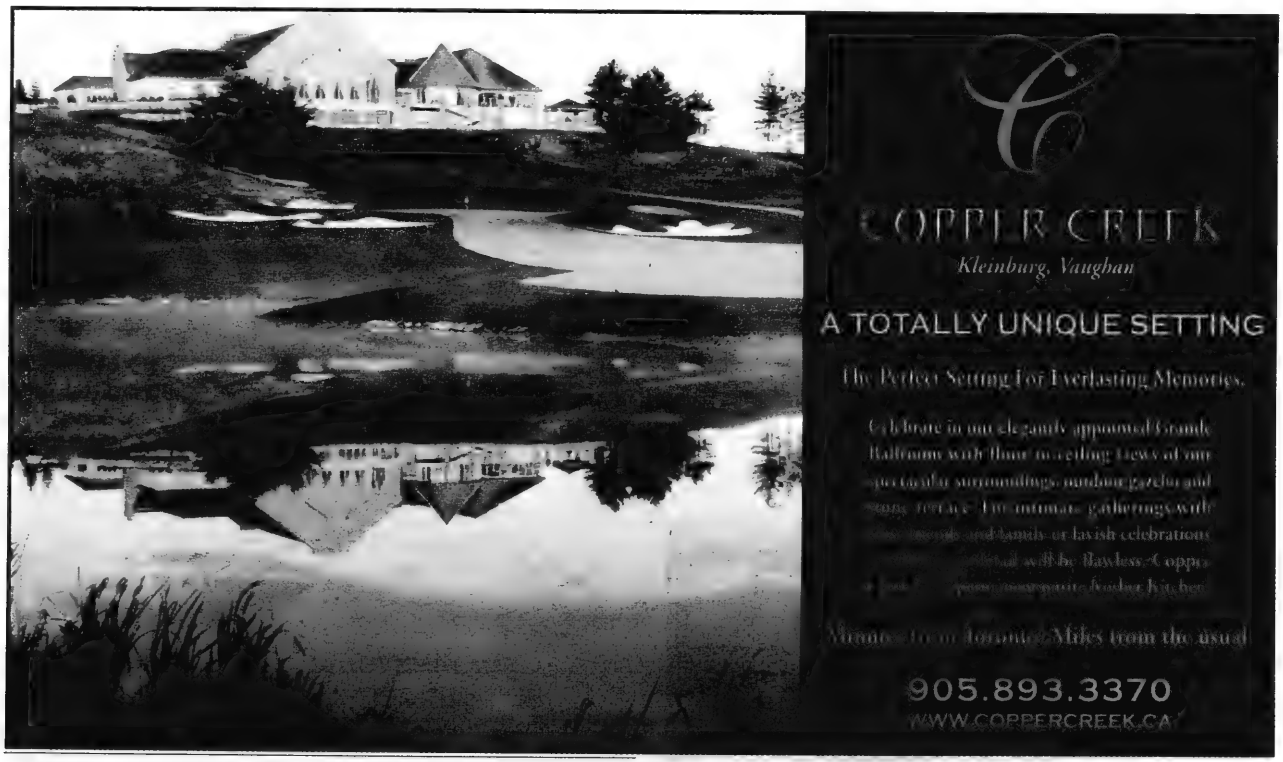
A performer and music co-ordinator for more than 20 years, Lindzon can provide continuous music throughout the different aspects of your event. Recently at a wedding she went from classical in the ceremony to jazz during cocktails, then during dinner brought in a Cuban band, rock 'n' roll, disco and swing.

Lindzon is confident she can arrange music for a small event or 2,000 people. She works closely with a sound company and thinks about volume, to make sure guests can speak to one another comfortably.

Lindzon said the main things she provides is a personal touch and a large repertoire, as well as the great musicians she works with. She also said that she takes background music seriously .

Lindzon also has a career as a jazz musician and is in the klezmer band Sisters of Sheynville, which has played at klezmer festivals across North America. Lindzon has played at the Toronto Jazz Festival. Her latest CD is called Moments Like These.

Other musical entertainers advertising in this supplement are: Joe Star Band, 905-881-1378 or 416-826-6661; The Kenny Simon Band, 416-638-2549; The Mike Freedman Band, 416-371-6278; Onemoretime, 416-484-1044; Paul Zurin Band, 905-770-3084.



The Park Hyatt Toronto is a top venue choice for Jewish couples.

Park Hyatt has 'really good' kosher catering

By MARNI BINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Having just celebrated its 10-year anniversary, the Park Hyatt Toronto has been a top venue choice for Jewish couples since its opening.

Located at Avenue Road and Bloor Street, the hotel is surrounded by chic and trendy shops, bars and restaurants.

The Park Hyatt's Roof Salon on the 18th floor provides guests with a panoramic view of Toronto and is perfect for a small dinner to a reception of up to 150 guests. Alexandra Menear, manager of public relations and marketing, said that their rooms are perfect for any occasion.

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- ☑ Kosher Event Catering Available
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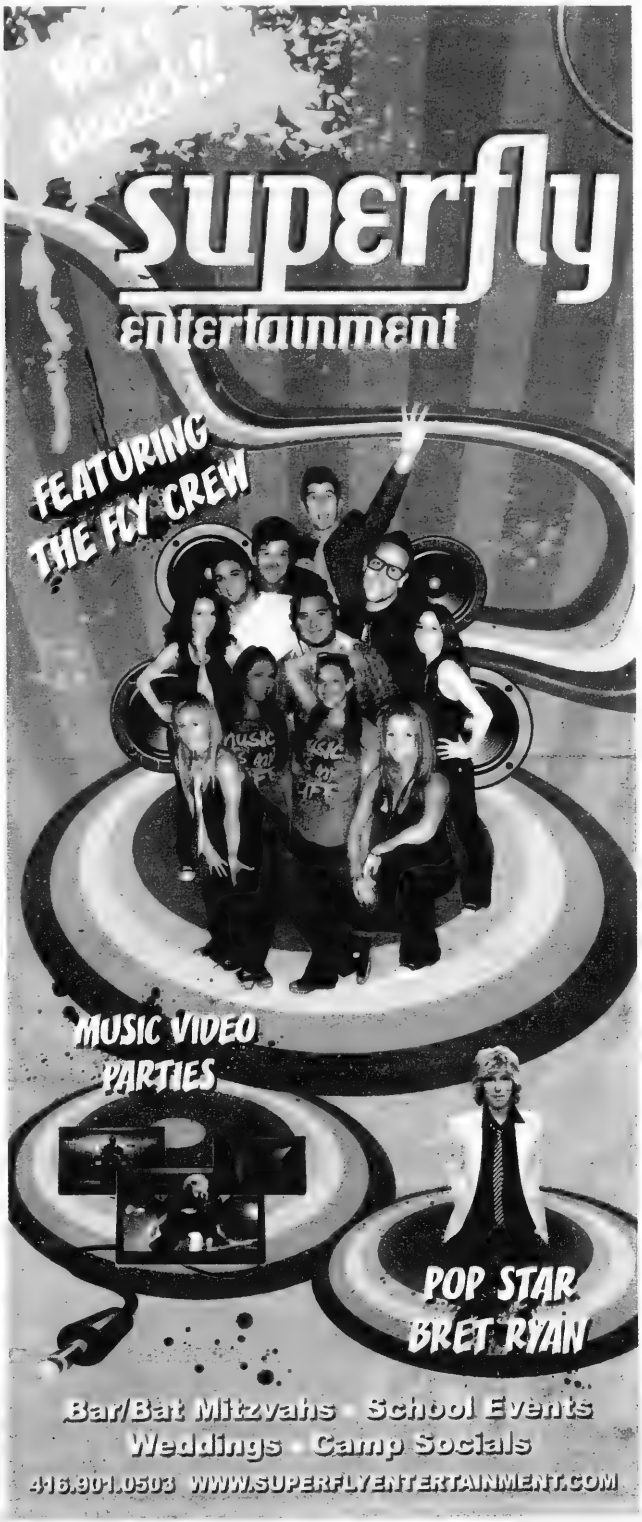
Having an on-site kosher kitchen also lends itself well to hosting a variety of events for the Jewish community. Menear said that the Park Hyatt Toronto is so popular because it is "rare for a hotel to have really good kosher catering." She added that executive chef Joan Monfaredi's food is amazing and that Monfaredi personalizes her menus to the personal tastes of her clients, whether the event is a wedding, bar or bat mitzvah, engagement party, milestone birthday or corporate affair.

With two wedding specialists on staff to work with a bride and groom, there is ample staff to work with clients from the first phone call to the wedding night. In fact, the Park Hyatt Toronto provides a bride and groom with everything they need before, during and after the wedding.

A bride can stay over in one of the hotel's lovely rooms, visit the Stillwater Spa the day of her wedding to get a massage and have her hair and makeup done, then she can dress, walk down the aisle, dance at her reception and retire to her honeymoon suite – all without leaving the comfort of the Park Hyatt Toronto.

For more information about the Park Hyatt Toronto or to book your event, contact Roberta Blanco, director of catering, at roberta.blanco@hyatt.com or 416-324-1572. The hotel's website address is www.parkhyatttoronto.com.

Other kosher venues advertising in this supplement are: Baycrest Hospitality Services, 416-785-2500 ext 2477; Bellvue Manor, 905-761-7288; Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, 416-633-3838; Beth Torah Congregation, 416-782-4495 ex. 41; Caterers York/ Adath Israel, 416-635-5340; Copper Creek Golf Club, 905-893-3370 ex. 202; Paradise Banquet & Convention Centre, 416-661-6612; Royal Affair Kosher Catering @ La Primavera, 416-953-0887; Windsor Arms Hotel/Royal Kosher Catering, 416-971-9666; Venetian Banquet & Hospitality Centre, 905-660-1110; Beth Tzedec Congregation, 416-781-3514.



Remember your simchah with a customized sign-in book

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Want that special occasion to last a lifetime? Let HiTIDE Productions capture your most precious moments forever with customized slideshows, photo albums and sign-in books.

Artist Edith Itzcovici-Levy started HiTIDE two years ago out of her house and has since brought life to countless still photos for special occasions, using the latest digital editing software and incorporating a variety of transitional and motion effects, set to music.

Itzcovici-Levy did digital photo slideshows for years as a hobby, usually as a favour for friends. Impressed with her work, they encouraged her to go into business for herself, and she took their advice.

Although many websites now have photo templates that users can run their pictures through to create a slideshow, there are only a limited number of options available for most programs. Itzcovici-Levy, however, doesn't work with a template, and therefore has more freedom with the level of customizations she can offer her clients.

The most recent addition to her repertoire are her customized digital photo sign-in books. These have come a long way since the sign-in boards of the past, when the bar or bat mitzvah child would have a giant board featuring his or her picture and all of the attendees would sign the board. HiTIDE's sign-in books go far beyond that, incorporating a multi-formatted layout of picture montages that reflect the mood of any occasion, whether it's weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, anniversaries, birthdays or graduations.

"It's not a templated book," she says, "so it's not a one-size-fits-all where I just throw the pictures onto a template. I really design the book the way the client wants it… I sit down with the clients before [the event] when we have our first discussion, and I really try to understand what they'd like. I try to understand what the child's interests are… [and] we'll have that theme running through the slide-show montages or the sign-in book."

Itzcovici-Levy is aware of the competition in her field, especially in an age when many people are technically savvy and own high-end software. Of course, keeping one's product at a fairly reasonable price is also the mark of a reliable professional, an ideology HiTIDE subscribes to.

"I thought, 'There's got to be a middle ground.' I mean, there are people looking to do this stuff who can't afford to spend in the thousand dollar range… so I think what I've done is I've tried to price myself accordingly so that it's affordable to just about everybody, given the time that it takes to put these together."

Itzcovici-Levy is content with the scope of her current projects for now, but says she would like to do more with the medium by utilizing film in her projects. Her goal is to eventually expand into doing more school videos –she is currently working on a slideshow video for a Grade 8 graduating class in Montreal.

To contact HiTIDE Productions, please call 416-568-7163 or e-mail edith@hitideproductions.com

Edith Itzcovici-Levy started HiTide two years ago.

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Talk to our Banquet Manager about our choice of elegant rooms for your affair.

Hard Rock Café is a "cool" venue for bar/bat mitzvahs

By MARNI BINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

When planning a simchah, especially a bar or bat mitzvah, most families look for a theme to tie all the elements together. Whether it's baseball, dance, Hollywood, or a winter wonderland, a theme can run from the invitation to the place cards, centrepieces, signing board and loot bags.

Hard Rock Café sales and marketing manager, Marcelo DeOliveira, said the Hard Rock (416-362-3636, www.hardrock.com) at Yonge Street and Dundas Square in the heart of downtown Toronto, is "a venue with a theme already built into it."

For the last 31 years, the Hard Rock Café has been displaying rock 'n' roll memorabilia for its patrons to admire, and, in the last four years or so, it has been catering to boys and girls looking for rock 'n' roll-themed bar or bat mitzvahs.

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Kids who are involved with music or play music can appreciate the history of the priceless items displayed throughout the Hard Rock Café.

Prominently displayed are some of Bob Dylan's clothes, his guitar and Madonna's corset. The collection includes memorabilia from the 1960s to today's pop and top 40 megastars.

Haley Frydrych, 16, has attended a couple of bar mitzvahs at the venue and was thrilled to come so close to clothing once worn by Britney Spears.

"It was so cool to go somewhere different and get so close to stuff once used by celebrities," she said. She also enjoyed walking the red-carpet entrance, which she said felt just as if she was attending an awards show.

DeOliveira believes the Hard Rock Café is a popular choice for simchahs because people "like the overall feeling of being in a nightclub lounge instead of a banquet hall" and guests enjoy the atmosphere.

The menu for any event can be personalized to reflect the tastes of the hosts. Child favourites are soft pretzels, mini pizzas, mac and cheese, chicken tenders, mini burgers with sweet potato fries, and candy and a create-your-own-sundae station to finish off the meal.

Upscale menu options are available as well, and DeOliveira has a culinary team experienced in many areas that can offer a complete banquet menu to choose from. Some adult favourites are beef teriyaki, seaweed salad, dim sum and vegetarian California rolls, poached wild Alaskan sockeye salmon, grilled beef tenderloin, and white and dark chocolate mousse and a milk chocolate fountain with fresh fruits for dessert. "Depending on the number of guests, we are able to offer our clients the option of having one buffet for the children and a separate buffet or plated service for the adults," DeOliveira said.

As for meeting kosher dietary requirements, DeOliveira offers clients the option to hire a catering company to serve kosher meals during their event.

DeOliveira said that the Hard Rock Café is a full-service venue and staff can assist anyone in planning events.

The Hard Rock Café staff starts the planning process from the day you book, and DeOliveira is there until the last guest leaves.

"We are in contact with our clients from the very first phone call/e-mail until after the event to ensure they have all the support they need from us, from menu suggestions to a DJ, photographer, florist referrals, to day-of support and event coordination. We always ask our clients to be a guest at their own event and let us look after all the details," he said.

The Hard Rock Café is versatile enough to fit a small intimate gathering of 15 people to a 350-person standing reception. The two separate levels can be used for any type of event, and the Hard Rock Café and the Hard Rock Lounge combined offer the maximum space for a large event.

Whether guests are standing or seated, buffet or plated, the Hard Rock Café offers anything you could need for your event – and you can enjoy it sitting next to Van Halen, Willie Nelson or Nickelback's guitars.

Kids who like music (and who doesn't?) can appreciate the history of the priceless items on display. [Photography by Lora]

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Your choice of DJ can make or break an event

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

As most youngsters know, a good DJ is the backbone of any party, so it's vital to have someone you trust to bring you the best the industry has to offer.

Samuel Cole-Elkind started his DJ company, Serious Entertainment, with his friend and business partner, Zale Turner. It's a young brand that's centred around bringing both established and up-and-coming performers to Toronto audiences, such as rap artist Aubrey "Drake" Graham, who recently performed a sold-out show at Sound Academy – Serious Entertainment's first concert event – to rave reviews.

"This historic event for Canada put fans in awe of the abundance of public support Serious Entertainment was able to generate and proves that with enough hard work and creativity, you can do anything you set your mind to," Cole-Elkind says of the concert.

Indeed, Cole-Elkind is setting his ambitions high for his project.

"We bring in the best entertainers to Toronto, the best performances," he says. "We choose very carefully whom we are bringing in. We're trying to turn Toronto into what New York is – a world-class entertainment capital."

Cole-Elkind believes in keeping strong ties with the Forest Hill Jewish community he grew up in. These connections have helped him grow Serious Entertainment's talent roster, which includes Drake, whom he describes as "a good Jewish boy from Forest Hill" who attended the same elementary and high school as Cole-Elkind.

Noah Cape re-launched Superfly recently.

Another entertainment brand is Superfly, established by Noah Cappe in 2001, but was re-launched a few months ago as a brand specializing in DJs for corporate events, weddings and bar and bat mitzvahs.

"It just got to the point where I was ready to put the focus back on the private event aspect of my life and had an amazing group of people that were just clamouring for something new and wanting to be a part of a fresh kind of approach," Cappe says.

Cappe is also a Toronto native. As a child, he acted and performed in television and theatre, which led him to where he is today.

"The more I did it," he says of his career, "and the more years of building relationships with suppliers and getting to know a lot of the families and clients, I think I just realized there was a great opportunity for me to be able to take how I thought events could be and what direction I thought these shows could go in and before I knew it, I was sitting behind a desk, steering the ship."

Superfly accommodates all of its clients' needs and is flexible in terms of budget constraints, tailoring an event to fit anyone's particular vision. Essentially, it starts with a DJ as the foundation and then builds from there.

"I don't believe in pre-made packages," Cappe says. "I think that every event is different and that two people can have a party in the exact same venue, with the exact same amount of people and same menu, but want two different experiences. We start all of our contracts and all of our relationships with our clients on the ground floor."

Cappe stresses how much the company has evolved in the past few months since its re-launching, essentially turning into a brand new product. Of note is the addition of an interactive video dance party option for bar and bat mitzvahs, with which Superfly can customize popular music videos and add track mixes and visual effects that surpass the industry standard.

Serious Entertaiment

"We've invested a ton of money in buying top-of-the-line equipment that nobody else in the industry has right now," he says. "I think it really adds something that no one's really seen on the private side before, especially at bar and bat mitzvahs."

To contact Serious Entertainment, call 416-704-9222, or e-mail sam@seriousentertainment.ca.

To contact Superfly Entertainment, call 416-901-0503 or e-mail info@superflyentertainment.com.

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Downsizing, Restructuring, and Scaling back
Event Planners – A Necessity not a Luxury

Downsizing, restructuring, and scaling back are the recurring "themes" in event planning during this volatile period. Yet, we still want to celebrate life cycle occasions and discover the silver lining in every cloud.

"In discussions with our clients we know everyone is conscious about not going over the top in planning social and corporate events. They don't want to appear too flashy, yet they still want to host events which are elegant, creative and have elements of fun", comments Karen Jacobs of UP & COMING EVENTS.

"As event planners we are able to share ideas and resources to create unique events that have all the elements of a good party, without blowing the budget" adds partner Karen Garscadden.

People often think that having an Event Planner is extravagant and indulgent. "I can do it myself", many say. However, doing it your self can create expensive mistakes and without access to the resources of an experienced planner, one may not always negotiate the best deal.

Garscadden claims "as repeat customers to our vendors, when we need to be budget conscious our suppliers are often approachable and respect restraints. We know how to save you money and get the best bang for your buck."

Whether it's a champagne & caviar extravaganza or a beer and pretzel party, event planners have creative ideas, resources and tricks of the trade to make your party memorable.

In a recent consultation with a bride & groom who were planning their wedding, their professional planner guided them through a series of scenarios that reduced costs over 20%, without sacrificing the overall look and feel of their special day.

It is times such as these, that we need to celebrate more than ever, to lift our spirits and escape (if even for a few hours). So let the party begin!

Up & Coming Events have been planning social and corporate events for over 22 years. Call this award winning team to help you plan your "UP & COMING EVENTS"
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UP&COMING EVENTS

Rose Reisman caters tasty, healthy cuisine

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

If you're having a corporate party, planning your first dinner party of the summer or organizing a large simchah, Rose Reisman can provide tasty, healthy cuisine for the event.

Rose Reisman Catering (416-467-7758; www.rosereismancatering.com) is going into its fifth year of business. Reisman, who has more than 15 years experience in the healthy eating business, stressed that a nutritious meal is not a tasteless one.

"I want people to know this is the way you live, this is the way you eat, and it's delicious," she said.

Whether the client is a downtown Toronto law firm or someone having a wedding with 500 guests or an intimate dinner party, Rose Reisman Catering will work with event organizers to create the perfect menu – and let clients sample the food ahead of time. Rose Reisman Catering is also happy to create meals for those with specific nutritional requirements.

☐ Kosher
☑ Non-Kosher

"We want to really make sure our clients are happy, and we put all that into our service, which is very important," Reisman said.

To keep clients happy and stress free, Rose Reisman Catering also does event planning. Suggesting the appropriate venue, creating flower arrangements and centrepieces and giving beverage suggestions that complement the menu are just a few of the services they offer.

"You cannot have just one business today in the food industry," she said.

Not only does Rose Reisman Catering serve delicious food, it's also reasonably priced – and won't break the bank. For corporate clients, lunch – consisting of a sandwich and two salads – can be had for about $11.50 a person. Full buffets with main courses, salad and desserts can be prepared for $14.95 each.

With the recent implementation of the Personal Gourmet line, you can get Reisman's tantalizing meals delivered fresh straight to your door. And with her restaurant, Glow, opening in the new Shops at Don Mills, at Don Mills Road and Lawrence Avenue East, in just a few weeks, enjoying Reisman's nutritious meals can become a daily experience.

Another non-kosher caterer advertising in this supplement is: NKM Chapman's Essential Foods, 416-444-4477.

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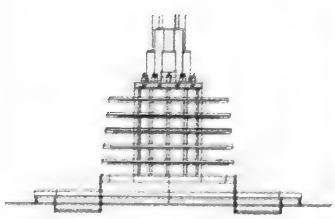

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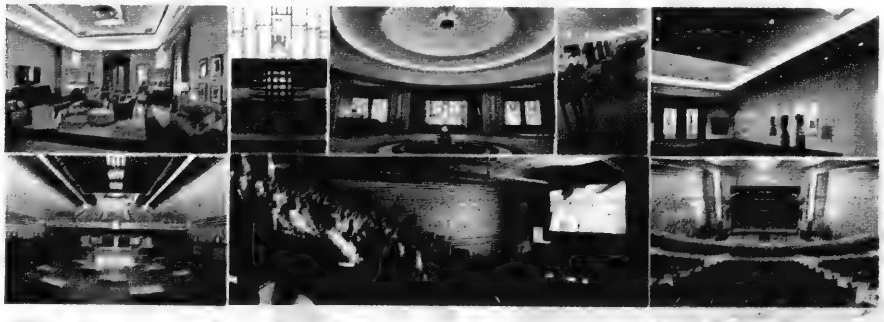

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Party sandwiches, salads, desserts and handmade chocolate

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

You don't need to slave in the kitchen to wow your guests. Catering can be the perfect solution for brunches, teas and showers, and the classic party sandwich is always a hit with guests.

Lesley's Party Sandwiches (www.lesleyspartysandwiches.com) specializes in this party fare.

Owner Lesley Byrne (905-660-0551) has a reputation as the Greater Toronto Area's party-sandwich queen.

She supplies such retail food shops as Pusateri's and What A Bagel. People can also order directly from her at her shop at 55 Glen Cameron Rd., Unit 19, but it's advisable to call ahead, she says.

Lesley's makes all the traditional fillings – salmon, tuna, egg and smoked salmon and cream cheese. She offers ribbon sandwiches – they come in double and triple deckers – as well as triangles and pinwheels. The colourful array is enhanced by her use of whole wheat for nutrition and white bread for added colour.

The traditional fillings are ideal for brit milahs, baby namings, shivah platters, corporate meetings and lunches, and anniversaries and birthday parties.

Chocolate Charm

☑ Kosher
☐ Non-Kosher

"I do a lot of kid's party sandwiches like cream cheese and cukes. I'm known for my peanut butter and jam, peanut butter and banana and peanut butter and Nutella sandwiches."

The mother of three and grandmother of seven started the business in her kitchen 20 years ago, shortly after arriving from South Africa. "As an immigrant you're always looking for something new. People enjoyed the sandwiches when I started and it snowballed."

Chocolate Charm specializes in kosher chocolate treats.

For the last four years, her daughter, Nicky Yubal, has been helping Byrne run the business that has grown to a staff of 10.

Lesley's Party Sandwiches

☐ Kosher
☑ Non-Kosher

Lesley's has also expanded its party sandwich repertoire to include more adventurous fillings, such as Brie cheese and fig preserves, and cheddar and pressed tomatoes.

The company has also diversified the menu to include cocktail wraps, dairy platters with cream cheese and smoked salmon, cheese trays, grilled vegetable platters and scones for high tea.

Byrne says Lesley's now offers "fabulous" salad selections that include, mango salad, a layered Mexican salad, and a mixed greens with strawberries, and cranberries. "This is a delicious salad with homemade sugared almonds and homemade strawberry dressing.

"We also do beautiful vegetable and fruit arrangements," she adds.

She recommends finishing her meals off with a dessert platter.You can choose from a selection that includes an assortment of squares or strawberries and raspberries dipped in chocolate.

If chocolate is your passion, you may want to indulge your guests with the ultimate meal finale – handmade chocolate from Chocolate Charm (416-787-4256). The chocolate shop – it specializes in dairy and parve chocolate treats – is located at 3541 Bathurst St., a few blocks south of Wilson Avenue.

Under COR supervision, Chocolate Charm (www.chocolatecharm.ca) offers truffles, chocolate, baskets trays, smash cakes and a huge array of novelty-shaped gifts, all made from Swiss and Belgian chocolate, says owner Bob Levine."We're a good chocolate shop that happens to be kosher, so we attract people from across the city."

Continued on page B39

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Travel agencies offer trips to Israel for bar/bat mitzvahs

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Planning a bar or bat mitzvah can cause many months of sleepless nights.

You have to worry about choosing the venue, the invitations, the photographer, the menu. and, of course, the entertainment.

Then there's those extra 20 pounds you have to shed before the big night. And we haven't even broached the whole matter of seating arrangements, and who's not talking to who.

Well there's a simple solution for this simchah-induced stress: you can have your child's bar or bat mitzvah in Israel and let the tour companies take care of all the details.

Travel Force Logistics or TFL (905-764-9200 or info@tflcanada.com) and Aufgang Travel (905-771-7800) are two well-established travel agencies specializing in family bar/bat mitzvah tours in Israel.

Both companies offer trips to Masada and the Dead Sea.

Both companies stress the high quality of their tours. "We get the top rooms in the best hotels," says Avi Rodak, vice-president at Aufgang Travel (7077 Bathurst St.; www.aufgangtravel.com).

Ornan Sharaby, owner of TFL, describes the quality of the tours offered through her company as five-star only. The company also offers the Dine Around Program, which is exclusive to TFL, he says. "We give people a list of 10 different upscale restaurants for certain nights in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where they eat their dinner."

He says the tour leaders "know how keep children occupied so that their parents can relax."

Rodak describes the Aufgang guides as very skilled. "We have our own selection of guides who we feel are the best."

Both TFL and Aufgang offer deluxe group or private family tours. The TFL group tours, which are generally geared to 40 people, are 12 or 15 days. The longer trips include three days in Eilat. The trips are run in March, April, June, July August and December.

Aufgang Travel's bnei mitzvah tours – they keep their groups to 30 to 32 people – are 11 days long and take place from Aug. 16 to 27 and from Dec. 20 to 31.

Both Rodak and Sharaby say that the tours can be customized before and after the group portion to include visits to other areas in Israel or to stops in Europe.

"We don't want anybody's trip to be a cookie-cutter trip", says Rodak.

TFL and Aufgang offer customized as well as group tours, and there are advantages to both, Rodak says "With the customized tours, families have the full flexibility, except where there are specific appointments to be at places. Some visits require advance booking.

"With a group tour, there's not a lot of flexibility in the group context, but what you lose in flexibility, you gain on the social side. You meet new people. The kids meets other kids."

Sharaby says the tour activities are planned to foster friendships between the participants "On our tours they make friends for life," he says.

While there are many similarities between the tours, the bar/bat mitzvah services take place in different venues. TFL holds the service on top of Masada, while Aufgang has traditionally opted for Jerusalem.

Sharaby says that they usually have the bnei mitzvah ceremony on the fourth day. "We can have anywhere between eight and 14 children. We have our rabbis do a rehearsal the day before.

"The children are sent a CD about two months before the trip so that they can prepare for their parshah.".

The service in Jerusalem is customized for the group, says Rodak, explaining that because many of their families are Conservative or Reform, the service is held at the South Wall, where there is no mechitzah. "This way families can be together. Mothers can see their sons' bar mitzvah service, and the fathers can watch their daughters."

He also notes that the South Wall is much quieter than the Kotel or Western Wall.

After the ceremony, TFL celebrates the bnei mitzvah with a big banquet at a hotel in Jerusalem complete with dancing and DJs, says Sharaby, adding that people can also invite relatives in Israel to the party as well as to the ceremony.

Rodak says that the bnei mitzvah ceremony takes place early in the trip so that the children can relax. The banquet may be at a hotel or restaurant, depending on the group.

Both companies offer itineraries that start in Jerusalem and include visits to Masada and the Dead Sea, which is only an hour or so away from the capital. Rodak stresses that they try to minimize the number of hotels people stay at.

After Jerusalem, both travel groups head north to the Galilee and Golan Heights. They do water rafting and tour in jeeps. Aufgang includes zip lining, at Kiryat Shmonah. "You sit in a harness that is clipped to wire that runs down the hillside, explains Rodak.

Travel accommodations for the Aufgang group in the north is at a special kibbutz guest house at Kfar Blum.

Sharaby says his tour group has hotel accommodations at the Sheraton in Tiberius, but the families experience "kibbutz hospitality" when they dine in the private homes of kibbutz families at Ein Gev. His group is also hosted for lunch in Ussifiya, a Druze village.

Both groups then head south along the Mediterranean coast, stopping at such famous landmarks as the Baha'i temple in Haifa, the ancient port of Acco and, of course, Tel Aviv and Jaffa.

Rodak says it is important to choose activities and tour sites that will engage children. For example, he says in Jerusalem, the families participate in neighbourhood games, which is the equivalent of a treasure hunt. "It's a lot of fun for everyone."

The tours include visits to such museums as Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the Ayalon Institute near Tel Aviv, a secret military factory that produced bullets during the 1948 War of Independence. "The factory was under the laundry. The kids live it and experience it viscerally," says Rodak.

A tour group walks down the colonnade-lined excavations of the Old City.

On day 12 of the 15-day tour, the TFL group flies from Tel Aviv to Eilat, where they enjoy a yacht cruise and snorkelling, as well as free time on the beach. The group also visits Coral World Underwater Observatory and Aquarium. "In the glass underwater observatory, you see every type of sea life," says Sharaby.

Swimming with the dolphins at Dolphin Reef is also on the agenda with the bar and bat mitzvahs swimming for free, he says. "It's our gift to the bnei mitzvah."

"The dolphins are very friendly. The children love the idea that they can swim with dolphins."

TFL also offers a free trip to the bnei mitzvah with three paying adults.

"Israel has so many interesting sites that the challenge is to put together a tour in an interesting way so that it's meaningful to the group, says Rodak.

"The family trip to Israel is a great step in the life of the family. There are not that many opportunities to do an adventure like this as a family."

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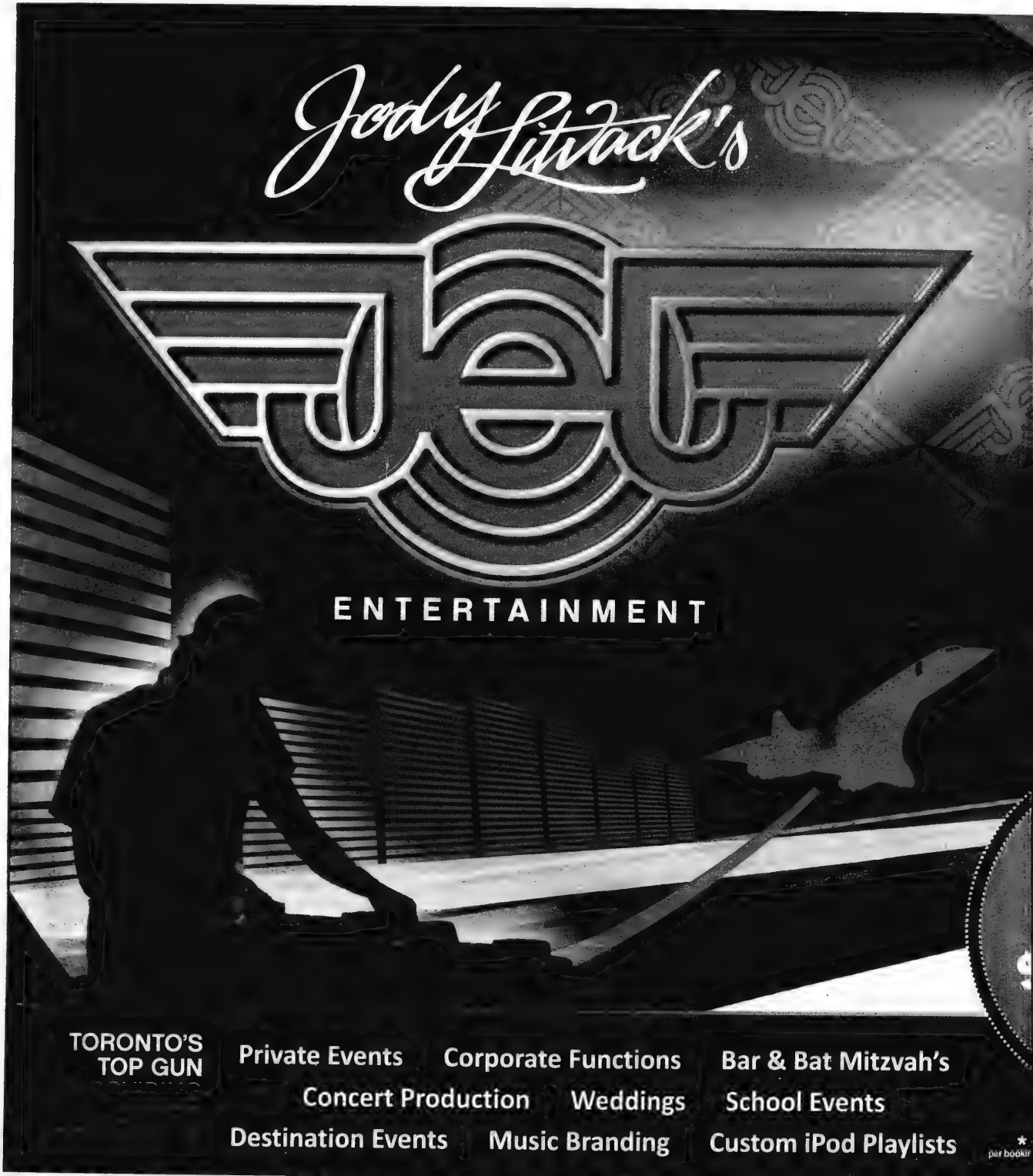
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Crafting keepsake ketubot

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

You've chosen the hall, the caterer, the music... now how about a ketubah? Once, the rabbi might have simply provided a standardized marriage document. But today's couples are seeking ketubot that reflect their values as well as artistic taste.

"I've always been really drawn to nature," Moira Sherman said. When it came time to choose a ketubah for her wedding earlier this year, she turned to Michelle Cohen of Ketubah Garden (416-653-9972; website: www.theketubahgarden.com/). Sherman began by visiting Cohen's website and choosing an image that appealed to her love of trees and natural imagery.

Cohen said, "The people who find me say, 'This really spoke to me.'"

For Sherman, the experience went far beyond just choosing a template and filling in the blanks; the ketubah's basic design was just the beginning. Sherman and her fiancé worked with Cohen, who has a degree in religious studies and teaches art at Toronto's Heschel School, on creating a suitable text for the ketubah.

While the traditional Aramaic text has remained more or less standard since the time of the Talmud, liberal rabbis, secular officiants and even the couple themselves are putting more thought into the words they hope will carry their marriage into eternity.

The traditional ketubah text is essentially a contract in which the groom promises to provide his wife with all her needs. Within the Reform and Conservative movements, a ketubah's text might reflect commitments made by both husband and wife; a secular text might affirm cultural over religious ties. An Aramaic or Hebrew version or translation may or may not be included.

Even in more traditional circles, a new form of the traditional text is occasionally used that makes provision for a Jewish divorce, in the event that the marriage doesn't last.

Couples will need to consult with their officiant about the text and possibly the artistic design of the ketubah, Cohen said. Many have strict rules about what must be included, and they can also help spot-check for errors. "You don't want to know on the day of the wedding that there's a mistake."

Beyond the text, Sherman wanted a ketubah that she could display proudly in the home she and her husband share, and didn't hesitate to work with Cohen to get what she wanted. "I told her, 'Here are the colours in our bedroom,'" Sherman said. Based on that, Cohen recommended colour choices for the text, along with gold illumination to highlight the image.

With the text and colours finalized, Cohen sent an e-mail proof to Sherman, who loved what she saw. But even then, she was unprepared for how much she'd love the finished ketubah when she saw it in person: "It was just stunning – it was absolutely beautiful. It almost had a Celtic, whimsical feel to it," Sherman said.

Though much of Cohen's business is now international, thanks to her website (which is being revamped to make it even easier to buy online), her favourite part of the ketubah business may still be the moment when local clients come over to see what they've created together. "One couple saw it, [and said], 'It's really happening – we're really getting married,'" she said.

Beyond the standard templates on her website, Cohen can customize ketubot to incorporate meaningful graphics and even photographs: a picture of the couple or a symbol they want to weave into the image.

Weddings aren't the only thing keeping her busy. Anniversary ketubot are a particularly thoughtful gift, often from a couple's children, for a couple who may have been married for 40 or 50 years with only a standard synagogue-issue ketubah.

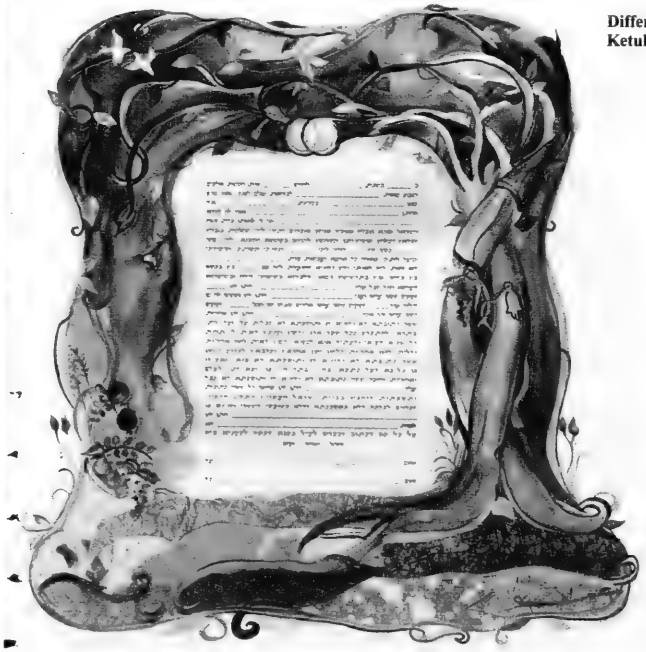
An anniversary ketubah can include meaningful artistic touches and text that acknowledges the couple's long-lasting commitment and the family they have created together, even sometimes incorporating the names of their children and grandchildren in flowing, natural designs.

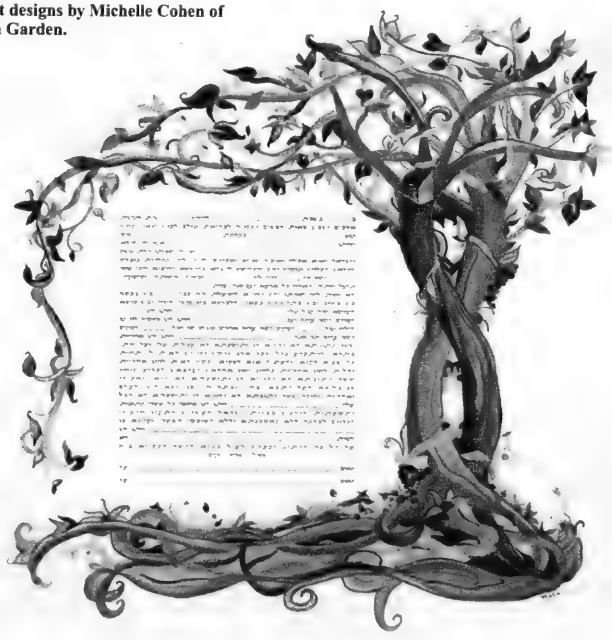
The giclée print process Cohen uses is a modern innovation over the traditional lithography method. While lithography requires large print runs to make it affordable, giclée gives Cohen the flexibility to create an individual high-quality ketubah print using fade-resistant, archival-grade inks and papers.

"It's truly a piece of art," Sherman said. And despite the fact that most of her interactions with Cohen were online, it was never just about filling in a form. "There was a lot of care put into the process," Sherman added.

With hundreds of ketubah artists worldwide, there's no shortage of websites to turn to. But as Sherman discovered, what counts is not so much the number of predefined choices but rather the ability to make the experience personal.

Working with an artist to craft a custom ketubah that will reflect the couple's unique spiritual values and esthetic can become one of the more meaningful preparations for a lasting marriage.





Different designs by Michelle Cohen of Ketubah Garden.

Klezmer music has a lot of popular appeal

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Musicians Jonno Lightstone, band leader of Hu Tsa Tsa and member of the Yiddish Swingtet (416-651-7521), and Jordan Klapman of the Yiddish Swingtet (416-588-0854), are quick to dispel any ideas that klezmer music has only limited appeal.

"[Klezmer] is very popular worldwide," Lightstone says. "You can hear klezmer music all over Europe now. There's klezmer bands in Germany, Italy, France, Poland and parts of the U.S."

For the uninitiated, klezmer is an eastern European style of Jewish music that originated in the 19th century and has its roots in European folk and polka music, but later mixed in elements of jazz, swing, big band and classical after making its way across the ocean to the new world. Staple instruments include fiddles, keyboards, accordion, strings, brass and percussion, but a variety of others may also be incorporated.

Klezmer has a loyal following among Jews, but it's also become a subcultural phenomenon in the wider musical world.

"It's pretty broad, the demographic that likes klezmer music," Lightstone says. "For swing music, it's usually a little older, but klezmer appeals to a broad range of people, young and old... a lot of non-Jews like the upbeat feel of klezmer music. It's so joyous, and I think that's contagious. Everybody likes good, fun party music."

Jordan Klapman

Lightstone got into klezmer through a friend who had a klezmer band in California. When he heard them play, he felt the passion of the music, and knew it was something he had to get into.

When asked about his influences, Lightstone mentions the steady diet of classic rock he grew up with, including the likes of the Beatles and Rolling Stones, but he also had an appreciation for the old, pre-World War II recordings made in New York by Jewish artists such as Dave Tarras and Naftuli Bronvine, as well as more modern recordings by Brave Old World.

Lightstone's bandmate, Klapman, expresses a similar passion for the genre, stemming from his Jewish roots.

"I kind of fell in love with this stuff," he says. "It's great – very beautiful, very exciting and also very meditative Jewish music... that was kind of my introduction to really knowing what Jewish music was beyond Havah Nagilah and the Israeli experience, which is what [my generation] all grew up with."

Initially, like many klezmer musicians, Klapman played gigs at weddings and bar mitzvahs, but recently he's moved on to playing jazz festivals as an accompanist and as a music director for various vocalists, such as Adi Braun. On the side, he also works as a lecturer on the music of Tin Pan Alley, the great Broadway composers and Jewish pop musicians such as Carole King, Neil Sedaka and Burt Bacharach.

As with Lightstone, Klapman has his own list of favourite musicians he grew up listening to: Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Teddy Wilson and Oscar Peterson, to name a few.

Lightstone and Klapman note that klezmer has both influenced, and been influenced by other musical genres as it has evolved over time.

"I've always maintained that klezmer is the original world music, because it was developed by Jewish musicians wherever they lived, and it's the result of them coming into contact with many different cultures and integrating that into Jewish music," Klapman says.

Jonno Lightstone

He continues: "The Yiddish Swingtet has been a group that's grown out of [Lightstone's] klezmer experience and mine. It's sort of a hybrid that allows us to do authentic klezmer music, as well as classic swing jazz. And we kind of wear two hats with that group – both a Jewish hat and a Benny Goodman, Django Reinhardt, Gypsy-swing kind of thing as well."

And it's precisely that kind of universality that Klapman believes has both Jews and gentiles making repeat visits to their concerts.

"It appeals to everybody," he says. "We've done folk festivals, we've done jazz festivals, [and] we've even played baptisms [and] taken it into churches... I love the way this music bridges communities."

The Yiddish Swingtet's latest CD, Shul Days, was released in 2007 and has been getting considerable airplay on CBC and Sirius radio.

Other musical entertainers advertising in this supplement are: Joe Star Band, (905) 881-1378 or 416-826-6661; The Kenny Simon Band, 416-638-2549; The Mike Freedman Band, 416-371-6278; Onemoretime, 416-484-1044; Paul Zurin Band, 905-770-3084.

Advertising Feature

Pistachio's eco-friendly invitations, gifts send twofold message of caring

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Any notion that earth-friendliness equates to homeliness is quickly dispelled at **Pistachio,** where eco and cachet go hand in hand.

In seven short months, Pistachio has evolved, in the psyche of the buying public, from an intriguing but somewhat unknown quantity to a nonpareil destination for customized invitations and unique gifts. With two locations and expansion on the horizon – and product availability in selected Indigo and Chapters stores – the brand's acceptance and share of mind have enjoyed exponential growth.

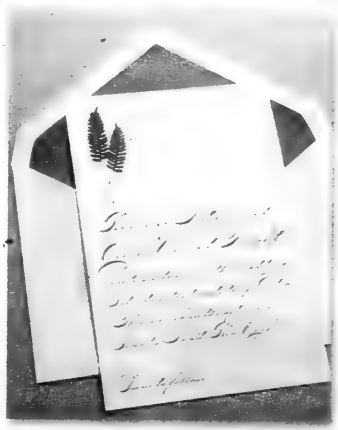
Custom stationary

In the not-too-distant future, when earth-friendly stationary and gifts have gone mainstream and giving natural comes naturally, some will look back and credit Heather Reisman's brainchild with having provided the initial impetus. Others will simply continue to derive as much pleasure from giving as getting; buying eco has that effect on you.

Before you get up close and personal with the merchandise, however, the very materials from which the store is constructed are a testament to eco-sensitivity. From the recycled wood floor to the cornstarch-based packaging, Pistachio is earth-friendly from the ground up; instore signage explains how the materials used in its construction were sourced. If a better world awaits us tomorrow, this is surely a portal into it.

Enviro-goodness, however meritorious, does not a brisk business make sans style and panache. Happily, Pistachio's product selection has both in spades, suggesting a new-age adage: if it's ecochic, it'll sell quick.

Of particular interest if you're planning a simcha is the opportunity to print personalized invitations by letterpress, the oldest traditional printing technique. The hand of the pressman ensures that each impression is unique. Eschewing gaudy intricacy in favour of exquisite simplicity – generally featuring one or two precise design elements and, often, two-toned or two-textured envelopes – the finished product has won over a growing number of wedding and Bar Mitzvah planners.



Where style meets earth-friendliness

"A stunning invitation makes a statement," says President Kirsten Chapman. "Printing on recycled materials makes a statement within a statement." Underscoring the environmental commitment is the content (100% post-consumer recycled) and the certification (100% FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)).

A Suite of coordinated Invitations, RSVPs, Menus and Thank-You notes not only echoes this twofold mantra of ethics and aesthetics, it's priced competitively with both mainstream offerings and other letterpressed products. And it may be the only such stationary printed right here in Toronto.

Digitally-printed invitations are also available, with 24-48 hour turnaround time.

The price range is wide, but affordability rules the day. From kids' party bags for as little as $10 to a range of other items under $15, it's clear that earth-friendly can also be pocketbook-friendly.

In addition to an Apothecary brimming with the very best in Skin Care, Bath & Body Care, Personal Care, Hair Care and Fragrance products (from Jurlique, Pharmacopia and John Masters Organics, among others), Pistachio has sections for baby (including organic blankets), toddlers, toys and crafts, specialty foods and beverages, kitchen, garden, pets, and an extensive paper department featuring greeting cards, boxed notes, stationary sets and gift wrap.

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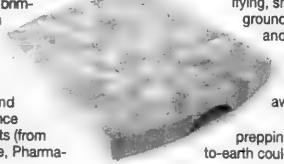
When you're shopping for babies through toddlers — yours or someone else's — Pistachio provides the added comfort zone of safety. In today's marketplace there's considerable uncertainty surrounding the content of lead and other deleterious elements in children's toys. Not so at Pistachio, where you can check labels and ask probing questions because you *want* to, not because you *have* to. Each item sold here is carefully scrutinized to ensure it's safe for people of all ages. So when Junior initiates his new toy by sticking it in his mouth, relax. Earth-friendly, non-toxic paint makes it safer to gnaw on than some fast foods.

A member of the Pistachio team from the get-go, Chapman has enjoyed "the learning curve involved in researching the full spectrum of products — where they're from, how they're made, with what" — and sharing that knowledge with customers. It's been especially gratifying, she adds, to be part of a groundswell that's seen more and more customers embrace the Pistachio experience and become more environmentally aware in the process.

Who knew invitation prepping and shopping down-to-earth could be so uplifting?



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Party planners make sure simchahs run smoothly

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Sometimes the only person who can make sure your event runs smoothly is a party planner, wedding planner or consultant.

She knows who should be where, when they should be there, and how to make sure to make things right when something goes wrong. She can find that vegetarian meal for your cousin who never rsvped, she can find the right florist, and she works behind the scenes the day of your event so you don't have to.

Judy Stein of Judy Stein Consulting (905-764-2728, www.judysteinconsulting.com) was 19 years old when she was hired to plan her first party. She was offered the job because of her personality and because she looked organized, not because she had any experience, she said. "York University didn't have a course at the time for party planning," she joked.

Shortly after her first party-planning experience, she was a bridesmaid five times in a two-month period and found herself lending a helping hand at every wedding.

Judy Stein has planned all kind of parties from birthdays to corporate events , weddings and bar mitzvahs.

At her friends' weddings, Stein noticed that there was a need for someone to listen to brides, instead of telling the brides what to do, which is still her philosophy 31 years later.

Stein has planned parties of all kinds: birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, and corporate events. She encourages brides to call her once they have a ring and a date in mind, and then let her do the legwork for you. Stein keeps her clients on track, so they don't do things too early or too late.

Stein has already received bookings for 2012 and 2013, and she said business has not slowed down since the economic downturn. She finds people are scaling back their budgets but not their wants and needs for their simchahs. She said that when budgets shrink, her clients turn to her to make sure the event doesn't look scaled back at all.

Stein believes that her clients are happy at the end of the day because their event is a reflection of what they are about, not what she is about. She said she makes their dreams happen.

Sharlene Wilder, owner of A Wilder Party (416-712-9790, www.awilderparty.com), considers herself to be an "event concierge" and said she offers "a new approach to event planning and consulting."

Wilder said that people think they have everything covered in their event-planning process and then sometimes they face a stumbling block along the way. She said this is where her services factor in.

Wilder is available as both a consultant and event planner, and/or can be hired by the hour for specific services. She compared her services to those offered by a concierge – the client has a desire and she fills it, whether it is shopping for loot bags, helping to make centrepieces, or using her contacts to fulfil event needs. She takes on tasks that are too difficult or time consuming for clients to do on their own.

Wilder started event planning at a young age, because her mother was a party planner and she helped out. Wilder sees herself as someone who is there along the journey, not just at the destination.

Wilder prides herself on thinking outside the box and providing different ideas about options for simchah baskets, décor and giveaways.

Her primary focus has been on bar and bat mitzvahs, because she can use her creativity and she knows kids. However, she is available for any event or need. There is no task too big and no detail too small for her.

Other planners and consultants advertising in this supplement are: Heidi Gruenspan, 905-738-5030; Gayle Kertzman, 416-484-4467; Risa Gold, 905-886-1233; Cherry & Baker & Associates, 905-771-1121; Up & Coming Events, 416-665-6100; C & C Events, 416-720-4616.

A Wilder Party's primary focus is on bar and bat mitzvahs.

Pictures, above and top right, courtesty of A Wilder Party.

Pictures above and top left, courtesy of Judy Stein Consulting.

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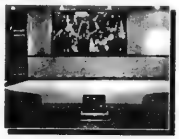

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One-stop shop for all your Judaica

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Looking for the best deals in town for all your Jewish shopping needs? Make The Israeli Source your one-stop shop for wholesale Judaica.

The Israeli Source has been around since 2006. Located at 60 Doncaster Ave., in Thornhill, Ont., it's considered by many to be the go-to store for all things Jewish.

Israeli Source owner Chuck Elnekave had his beginnings in the business working with his family importing wholesale products from Israel. Elnekave met his wife, Barbara, while working at another local Judaica store, and together they started their own brand to "give the Toronto community a different approach to Judaica shopping."

A hands-on experience

Israeli Source has everything one could want when looking for Jewish products – from kippot, tzitzit, tallitot and tfillin to holiday and gift items like books, dreidels, mezuzot, candles, Kiddush cups, artwork and jewelry. There's also a wide variety of audio-visual material such as CDs and DVDs for kids and adults, as well as computer software and accessories.

Although there may not be a lot of competition for this kind of Jewish specialty store in Toronto, there is a certain limitation to having a business that's concentrated on one particular demographic.

"It's a very seasonal business we're running here," Elnekave says, "There's Pesach, there's Rosh Hashanah, there's Chanukah… During the rush with all the weddings, it's helpful [for business], but there are definitely seasonal ups and downs."

Elnekave will be expanding his store's current online selection to include a separate website called simchacentre.com, which will focus on catering to customers' wedding and bar/bat mitzvah needs. Although many stores seem to thrive on being online for the sake of convenience, Elnekave says Israeli Source remains primarily a hands-on experience for shoppers.

"I find that people still do want to be able to come in to our store and actually touch and feel," he says. "It's not like buying a DVD, where you just want to get the title you want and that's it… people do want to actually see and hold the item.

"We have a lot of business for that kind of stuff in our store," he continues, "but I guess, in that regard, we're looking to expand because people come to us all the time telling us our prices are phenomenal."

With strong ties to the Jewish community, Elnekave believes in the importance of doing charity work.

"These are the organizations that are run by our community, and especially because we are so much more of a store where people come to shop as opposed to [shopping] online, it makes for a very personal connection with customers and it definitely makes us want to give back to our community."

Please visit www.israelisource.com for more information, or contact 905-482-2025 or e-mail info@israelisource.com.

Invitations are ties that bind guest to simchahs

By MARNI BINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Whether for a bar mitzvah or a wedding, invitations can be seen as the tie that binds all the guests to the party. It is saved as memorabilia and acts as a concrete reminder of the event for years to come.

Partyzazz (905-881-5736; www.partyzazz.com), a division of Henco Consulting Inc., is a full party-planning company that provides unique, individualized invitations. Working from her home studio for the last 20 years, owner Heather Hennick has been designing invitations for every event imaginable for a wide range of customers.

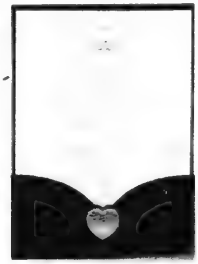
As a graphic designer and sign artist, she promises that her work is "anything but ordinary." She attributes her ability to create one-of-a-kind invitations to her training as a graphic designer.

"Being graphic-design specialists, we are able to work very creatively digitally, as well as having the professional know-how to lay out a simple card, giving it elegance just based on the layout," she says.

Being a creative designer and artist, she is able to satisfy special requests for creative monograms and theme designs, whether printed or just as décor for an event.

Hennick works with her clients to stay on budget. She said that in this economy, "people are still looking for creativity, but also they want someone they can rely on to do the job right the first time."

As a self-proclaimed one-stop shop, Partyzazz offers a variety of services, from calligraphy to addressing envelopes for her clients. Besides invitations and theme décor, Partyzazz creates centerpieces. In addition to being trained as a graphic artist, Hennick has a diploma from the Canadian Institute of Floral Design, which is a definite asset when she's designing centrepieces.



Designs by Invitation by Partyzazz (left) and Stationery Plus (centre and right).

On her website, Hennick writes, "Any of our original designed and handcrafted invitations can be dressed with a wrap or layered or embellished with an origami flower or other creative seal."

Celebrating her 30th anniversary in the invitation business, Gilda Lefton of Stationery Plus (905-881-5588) believes that in the current challenging economy, she can add value to her clients' simchahs, because challenging economic times call for creative solutions.

In part to honour the 30th anniversary of Stationery Plus, and in part to recognize the challenge that today's economy is placing on its clients, Trans-Canada Thermographers, one of Lefton's long-time suppliers of high-quality wedding, bar/bar mitzvah and special-occasion invitations in all price ranges, is partnering with Stationery Plus to offer further generous discounts and other offers.

"Invitations do not have to carry a high price tag in order to be elegant and to really set the stage for an important milestone for a family," says Lefton. "I always do my best to work with clients and suppliers to provide invitations and accessories that send the best message to guests within the clients' price range.

"The invitation is the first thing that the guest receives to announce an event and then the guest sees that invitation on a bulletin board, a counter, or a refrigerator every day until the event, which can be six to eight weeks away. My goal is for my clients' guests to see that invitation and really look forward to a wonderful event."

She says that most of her business comes "either from referrals, or from a family that, for example, came to me for a bar or bat mitzvah and is now celebrating a wedding. Once my clients have a comfort level with me, they know that I can read their tastes and they typically return in the future."

Lefton, in addition to supplying invitation needs, also carries a wide variety of kippahs, seating cards and other accessories.

Another invitation place advertising in this supplement is Pistachio, 416-322-9451.

Hotel's rooftop garden provides ingredients for spa's body treatments

Spa Life

By KATHRYN KATES

Since 1928, guests have enjoyed the elegance offered at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, and adding to the luxurious-stay experience is the 5,000-square-foot Elizabeth Milan Premier Day Spa.

Owner Elizabeth Milan has more than 30 years' experience in the beauty industry. Milan is a founding member of Premier Spas of Ontario and is former chair of the Seneca College esthetics program. She has long been considered by her peers as an esthetician's esthetician.

In 1990, Milan relocated her successful spa from midtown Toronto to the tony downtown hotel. Michelin Guide lists Elizabeth Milan Spa as "a must-see in Toronto."

The beauty expert's clientele includes the rich and famous such as actor Jennifer Lopez, opera star Placido Domingo and, fittingly, for the Fairmont Royal York Hotel… the Duchess of York.

"In a hotel, a lot of people seem very intimidated. Perhaps they've never been to a spa before, so we want our clients to feel welcomed and comforted," says Milan. "I need them to feel that we are professional and that we stay on top of all the health issues, for example our Jacuzzis blow out air, instead of holding the water, so bacteria can not breed."

The environmentally inspired green-walled spa has Asian décor accents. There are 11 treatment rooms, including two wet rooms with therapeutic baths and a special VIP Royal Vault Suite, a pedicure room, three manicure stations, full-service hair salon, a retail space and relaxing lounge area. Presently, there are 24 on staff including six estheticians. Hotel guests make up 20 per cent of their business, the rest local, and 25 per cent of the business is from men.

At the full-service spa, Milan uses Dr. Renaud and Guinot products from France in her treatments, as well as 24-karat gold flakes in the Royal Thai Gold Facial, which she discovered while in Thailand. Natural ingredients are also used at the spa, including honey from the hotel's rooftop garden, incorporated into the Honey and Milk Pedicure and the Honey and Milk Body Heaven – a body treatment that's out of this world. Milan also uses rich chocolate, which is a great antioxidant, in her signature Chocolate Body Indulgence treatment.

"Signature treatments build the business," says Milan. "When we started with our signature Chocolate Body Indulgence, all of a sudden body treatments became one of our biggest offerings. We research all our ingredients to make sure our treatments give results."

The Elizabeth Milan Premier Day Spa offers an array of packages, including the most popular Girl's Day Out and the Executive Spa Day, and four different packages for couples.

The Fairmont Royal York Hotel is just blocks from the theatre district, the CN Tower, the Rogers Centre, the Air Canada Centre and the St. Lawrence Market.

The beautifully renovated 28-storey landmark hotel was once the tallest building in the Commonwealth. The dog-friendly property has 1,365 guest rooms, including 191 suites and 82 Fairmont Gold rooms that mix Old World charm with modern conveniences. Among its many accolades, the hotel was listed on the National Geographic Traveler's "Stay List" in 2008.

The Elizabeth Milan Premier Day Spa. *[Kathryn Kates photos]*

The hotel's many amenities include a health club, a business centre and the Fairmont Gold Floor, where guests can enjoy complimentary continental breakfast in a private lounge and get on-floor check-in and private concierge service.

The hotel's concierge staff can arrange for coveted tickets to everything from sporting events to the theatre, including great seats to The Sound of Music at the Princess of Wales Theatre. They can even make sure you arrive in style by booking you a limo from Rosedale Livery.

The hotel has nine food outlets, including the Epic and Benihana Japanese Steakhouse. With advance notice, kosher meals can be ordered through the GMB Group and served to kosher guests in the hotel's restaurants.

The hotel offers a number of packages throughout 2009, including the Royal Sleepover, Love in the City and the All Inclusive Package. It includes one night of accommodation, full breakfast for two, and overnight valet parking, starting from $195. Guests can rejuvenate with the Royal Rejuvenation Package – one night of accommodation and a full breakfast for two and a $100 Elizabeth Milan Premier Day Spa certificate – from $349 per night. Special rates and discounts are being offered to Ontario and Quebec residents.

For an appointment at Elizabeth Milan Premier Day Spa, call 416-350-7500 or visit www.elizabethmilanspa.com. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-441-1414 or visit www.fairmont.com/royal.

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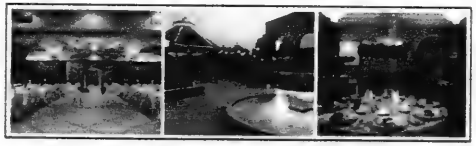

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WEDDINGS BAR/BAT MITZVAHS NAMINGS FUNERALS

The Perfect Dress for the Bride and her Guest

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

Searching for the perfect bridal or cocktail dress can be gruelling, but we are going to try and guide you to the right place.

Ritché (416-789-4378, www.ritchebridal.com) located at 1662 Avenue Rd., has been regarded as the name for wedding dresses for over 50 years.

"My father, Jack Ritché started the line soon after he moved to Toronto in 1952," said Vivian Prussy, who runs the boutique with her husband Arthur. "He was very popular with society women, who encouraged him to open his own store."

When Ritché was opened, Jack custom designed each dress, but since his retirement, the store moved to importing European and American labels such as Pronovias Manuel Mota, Enzoani, Marisa Bridal and Maggie Sotero.

As well, Ritché carries a number of quality Canadian labels such as Alfred Sung and Paloma Blanca. "We have daughters of previous clients coming in 30 or 40 years after their mothers bought their dresses. It's thrilling to see the regeneration of our fan base."

Since going online, Ritché's innovative and up-to-date website (including Prussy's bridal blog) has been able to reach new clients as well.

Ritché's 2000-sq.-ft. first floor holds one of the largest bridesmaid, mother-of-the-bride and evening dress selections in the city.

"We have over 600 bridesmaid dresses to choose from," said Prussy. "The entire bridal party can get dresses with us."

While dresses are displayed in one colour, each dress can be ordered in a variety of colours.

Bridesmaid dresses take approximately eight to 12 weeks to be ordered, said Prussy, but rush orders can be accommodated at an additional cost.

The Ritché bridal salon is located on the second floor of the boutique and works by appointment so that the bride has the complete focus of Ritché's consultants. "We like to get a feel for what the bride wants so that we only show her the dresses we think she will like," said Prussy.

"We won't stop showing her dresses until she finds the perfect one."

She recommends allowing between six months and one year when ordering a wedding dress, in order to allow for alterations and final fittings.

"A team of seamstresses makes sure that every bride looks just right walking down the aisle," said Prussy. "When the bride finally finds that dress and her parents start to get teary, that's the most thrilling moment for us."

If special occasion dressing is what you seek, look no further than Madeline's (416-789-4890). Located at 1841 Avenue Rd., Madeline's carries a wide range of ladies formalwear, from cocktail dresses to mother-of-the-bride and evening gowns. Imported from France, Italy, Spain, New York and Los Angeles, Madeline's carries all the leading names in the business today.

"We carry every size from 0-24 and can customize to fit as well," said Cerra. With a resident seamstress at the ready, as well as a selection of jewellery and accessories, Madeline's is truly a one-stop-shop.

The boutique, which has been going strong for over four years, is the brainchild of Madeline Cerra and her husband Nick. With Madeline's fashion knowledge (having studied fashion design at the International Academy) and Nick's business sense, the two make the perfect team.

"My husband and I are passionate about what we do, so combining our interests into opening the store was made to be," said Cerra.

While the boutique originally carried a small selection of custom wedding dresses designed by Madeline, the two decided to delve right into eveningwear earlier this year. "The most fun for us is dressing women for parties. They are coming in for happy occasions and so they are happy as well."

At Madeline's, you can be assured that you will never be pressured into buying a trendy dress. "We are completely honest with our customers. We don't try to sell our clients something unless we think they look gorgeous. We understand that it's hard to find the perfect dress, and we hope to put a smile on your face."

Photos supplied by Ritché

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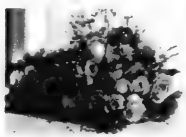

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Flowers and décor are the finishing touches for your wedding

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

Floral and set designs are integral in making your wedding a night to remember.

If anyone knows their lilies from lilacs, it's Fran Sackler (905 884-5848, www.fsflorals.com), who has been dreaming up floral arrangements for over 40 years.

Trained in London's west end, Sackler moved here and became the resident florist at William Ashley's Bloor Street location.

Wanting to pursue her passion on her own terms, Sackler decided to launch her company from her home and hasn't looked back since. Starting with just a few clients, she is now booked for over 70 events a year.

"I couldn't have been doing this for all these years if I didn't love what I do," she said. "It's the look on the bride's face when she sees what you've done – it just grabs your heart every time."

Sackler transforms your dreams into reality, every step of the way. Beginning with a complimentary consultation, she taps into your vision and personality so that your ideas are translated to the fullest while working within your budget.

"We don't believe in offering packaged deals because every bride wants something different."

From centrepieces to corsages and boutonnieres (the latter of which she includes for free), Sackler can do just about anything. "We even have our own outdoor chupah which we can redesign for each wedding."

Designs by Karen Baker

Sackler's services continue through the wedding day so she can transfer the arrangements from the ceremony to the dining room.

"We don't leave until the room looks perfect," she said.

At a recent wedding, the hall hadn't followed through on their decoration of the head table. "We were about to leave when I looked back and saw this sad looking table. I couldn't leave until it looked as beautiful as the rest of the room, so we decorated it as our special gift to the bride".

Trends come and go, said Sackler, but what really works the best is simple elegance."

While she cites exotic trims and feathers as being popular this year, Sackler notes that foliage is actually the most crucial factor in the mix. "While adding much needed natural definition to your arrangements, a touch of green goes a long way to cutting down your costs."

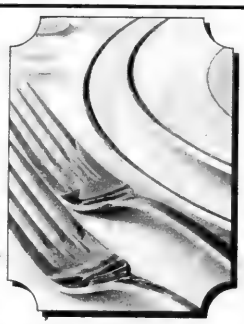
Sackler said that floral arrangements should compliment the event, rather than being its focus. "You don't need to spend a lot to achieve the look you want. Remember, you'll need the money for everything that follows the wedding day."

Once you've got your flowers covered, you'll need to get on with the rest of the room – and we've got just the expert for you. Designs by Karen Baker (905-886- 8100, www.designsbykarenbaker.com) is a virtual one-stop-shop for event room décor from props to lights to table settings and arrangements. For over 25 years, Baker has been transforming ordinary spaces into one-of-a-kind weddings, bat/bat mitzvahs, corporate parties and the like.

"I always had unique ideas as well as a strong sense of design," said Baker, about launching her own company. "Since then, I've done all sorts of parties for everyone from Barbra Streisand to Mats Sundin to the Blue Jays," said Baker.

Continued on page B33

Give your event an exclamation point with Elys Fine Foods



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Strong sense of design

Continued from page B32

Together with her team of professionals, Baker touches on every aspect of the event.

"We like to give you a completely customized look," she said, adding that furniture and custom artwork can be worked into the event.

"I don't like to repeat the same idea. It's always great to experiment with new ideas; our clients love that."

Such ideas include a recent Chef Challenge Indian themed dinner for the Food Network, and an Aspen Lodge themed party.

"We draped the entire room in chocolate chiffon and created mini forests throughout the room using real evergreens and birch trees, and fake snow," she said.

"The tables had ice sculptures in the shape of the Rockies, surrounded by moss and other outdoor and natural materials."

While the details usually take a few months to co-ordinate, Baker can easily fit in last minute events, such as baby-namings and brit milahs.

"I really like to cater to the individual. People want to feel like you are completely focused on their event, and when they've waited 13 years to make their son's bar mitzvah, it's really got to be special."

Baker attributes her success to her ability to give her clients exactly what they want, with patience and ease.

"Sometimes they aren't even sure how to describe it," she said. "When the least creative person in the room likes what you've done, you know you've done something right."

Fran Sackler: "Every bride wants something different."

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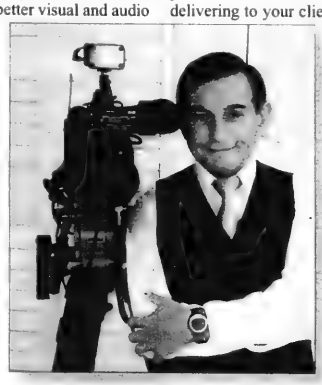
Professional videographers use the latest equipment

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Few industries have gone through as rapid a transition as the video industry. Except perhaps for computers, video technology has arguably the fastest growth rate of any commercial endeavour, with equipment formats that seem to upgrade every year, offering better visual and audio quality and more overall options for both professional and consumer use.

Josh Israel of Videos by Josh (905-709-9277; e-mail videoby-josh@hotmail.com) has been through countless technological upgrades and video formats during his 30-year career as a videographer for private and corporate events. His most recent transition has been to high-definition Blu-ray video, the next big thing to hit digital video after the DVD. Israel admits it's been difficult having to keep up with changing trends because the technology evolves so quickly, not to mention that it means major financial investment each time. But he stresses that it's a necessary step if you want to remain on the cutting edge.


Josh Israel of Videos by Josh

"A lot of clients don't realize how much is invested," he says, "and, of course, there's a learning curve every time technology changes [and] all of our equipment has to be sold. But every time there's a major leap in technology, I find our clients are looking for the latest and the best, and those are the clients we've been after – the ones who are really up-to-date and are aware of what's going on and know what they want."

Israel works out of his Thornhill, Ont., studio, where he encourages clients to make an appointment to drop by and preview the tools he works with, an important part of the process when deciding what is best suited for a client's specific needs. Israel wants customers to be familiar and comfortable with his approach to videography, as well as to know exactly what they're going to be getting for their money.

"The most satisfied customers, of course, come back for the next event, and that's been the big success with my business – repeat customers. I don't have to go out there and advertise too much or twist people's arms to get their business."

Rich Saunders of Redstone Pictures (416-256-4666) has been in the videography business for two decades. During that time, he's seen 26 different camera formats come and go, including Beta, VHS, 8-millimetre, 16-millimetre, DVX and DVC-Pro. He says he was also the first to embrace non-linear editing techniques that are now a staple of the industry.

"I think the latest round of changes are phenomenal" Saunders says. "The hi-def stuff just blows you away. What you can do, the flexibility you have, the quality that you're delivering to your client – it's just exceptional."

Saunders also agrees with Israel regarding the necessity of upgrading to high-definition video, which is, in his opinion, not only the most recent option, but also the most convenient and practical one.

"It's expensive, but it's faster, and you're not using tape, so in the long run, it becomes more economical."

These days, people with a bit of cash can get their hands on decent "prosumer" cameras that mimic the real deal and, with access to editing software, can post their creations on video sites such as YouTube and Flickr. Despite this, Israel believes there's still a demand for a professional touch that you can't get with a novice cameraman or filmmaker. Someone with a trained eye for quality can spot the difference between a professional job and a novice one, and he's convinced this sentiment extends to professional reliability as well.

"As far as quality competition goes, there's very little of it… a great many do not recognize video quality unless it's pointed out to them… [but] people are more concerned about overall reliability than they are about visual or audio quality."

Saunders takes this approach one step further, explaining that he embraces the competition because of the challenge it presents to him both as an artist and as a businessman.

"I always liked it when someone came along and tried to do what we were doing, because it made us work harder, it made us work smarter, it made us more creative… and what that means is better value for the clients."

With the current recession, economically conscious individuals tend to be a bit conservative when it comes to shelling out for unnecessary frills. Israel understands that money can sometimes be an issue, but still feels the need to stress the old adage that you get what you pay for, and this certainly extends to the world of corporate and private video. He says the price tag should come second when seeking the best product to suit the occasion.

"A lot of people who are first-timers, who have never done this before, all they look for is price, and a lot of people out there will give them that high price. But the final product won't always be equal to the price paid."

Other videographers advertising in this supplement are: D.M.S. Video Productions, 905-738-5510; Lisa Productions, 905-764-1033; Twins Photo & Video, 905-707-2385; Video Excellence, 905-731-4355.

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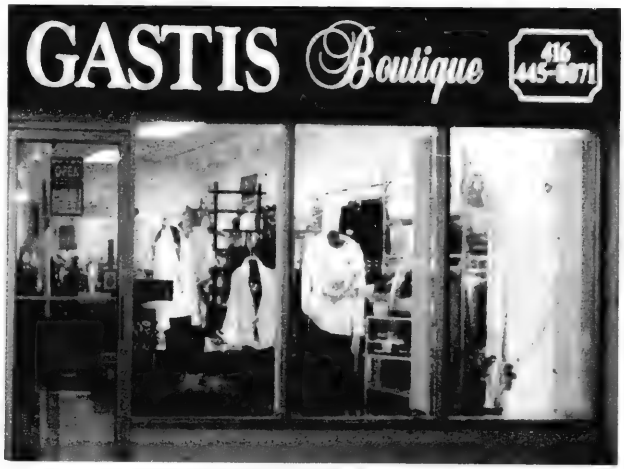

A simplified search for the perfect outfit

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

As we gird for a jammed-packed summer of simchahs, the most important question that comes to mind (okay, perhaps only for women) is "what am I going to wear?"

Since the search for a perfect outfit can be like finding a needle in a haystack, we've scouted two of the best boutiques in the city.

For more than 20 years, Gastis' Boutique (416-445-8071) has been giving women what they want, at the prices they want. Now located at 660 Finch Ave. E. in the Bayview Woods Plaza, Gastis' built its reputation at the prestigious Inn on the Park Hotel.

"When the hotel was closing, I found this plaza and went to ask HairAfter for information about the location," says Sam Srour, the boutique's owner. "When I walked into the salon, I started to see all of my clients, so the move was actually fate!"

Carrying all the hottest European and Canadian names in women's fashion, including Simon Chang, Spanner Ltd. and Mammoliti, Gastis' always offers its merchandise at a fraction of what it costs elsewhere. "What we save in rent, we give as discounts to our customers," says Srour. "That's what makes shopping with us so worthwhile – our clients know that they are getting a great deal."

An experience with Gastis' is seamless from start to finish. Carefully selected, the collections are offset by complementary accessories and jewelry. A new addition to the boutique's roster is Joseph Ribkoff, a line of dressy and casual suits and dresses.

Continued on page B36

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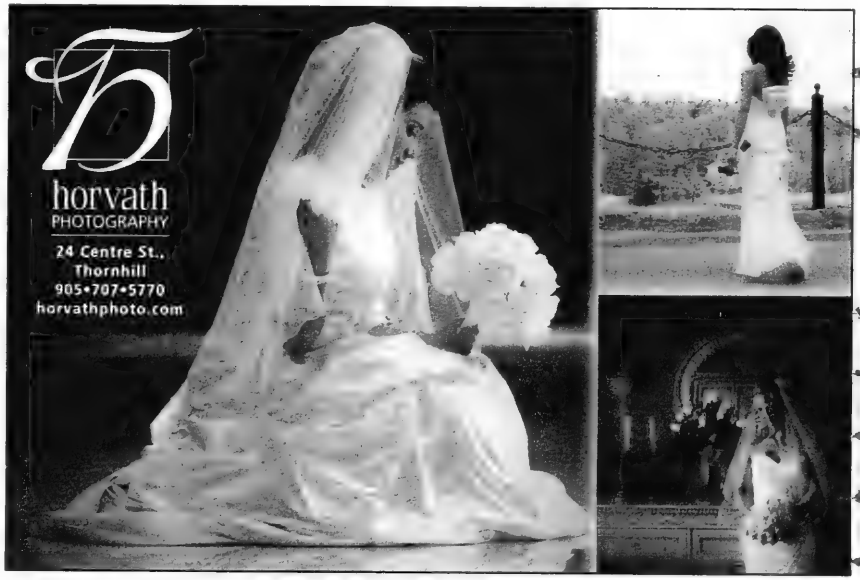

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Unique fashions for unique women

Continued from page B35

Because of Gastis' previous involvement with the travel industry, any size can be ordered in within 24 hours. The boutique is also staffed with a seamstress who can further customize your look.

The friendly in-store atmosphere is what Gastis' reputation has been built on. "It's important to us that our customers feel at home. We never pressure them into buying anything and so they respect our opinion", says Srour. "Through the years, our customers have become our family and friends."

No quest for the perfect outfit would be complete without a visit to K. Barketti (www.kbarketti.com). With locations at Bayview Village (416-225-6733) and Square One Shopping Centre (416- 896-3887), the boutique is a one-stop shop for special-occasion dressing, including mother-of-the-bride gowns, bar/bat mitzvah suits and cocktail dresses.

While the boutique's first inception on Bloor Street more than 30 years ago featured mainstream women's fashions, the majority of the clothing currently carried by K.Barketti is exclusively designed for the boutique by resident designer Velika Kosteski.

A graduate of fashion design at George Brown College, Kosteski worked under several designers before joining the Barketti team, where she has designed dresses for various Canadian celebrities, including singer Amy Sky.

"Our merchandise is so unique that we can guarantee that you will never come to a party and be wearing the same thing as someone else," says Terrie Walia, the boutique's owner.

Since the company operates as a boutique as well as a manufacturer, Kosteski also does custom work by appointment – creating your look from scratch. She works closely with your concept, you can pick the fabric and the styling can be adjusted to suit your fancy.

K.Barketti: Unique fashions, exclusively designed.

"We can translate your idea into reality, so you get exactly what you are dreaming of," says Walia. "The ability to offer that is very unique nowadays."

In store, K.Barketti carries sizes two to 26 – other sizes can easily be ordered by measurement.

"We take pride in the fact that we can accommodate women of any shape or size for any occasion," says Walia. "Shopping with us is a truly unique experience."

Other women's fashion places advertising in this supplement are: Deja Vu, 905-472-9566; Inspiration Fine Lingerie, 905-886-7361; Lampert & Associates, 416-576-3645; Tryst, 416-484-6678; Underwraps Lingerie, 416-782-5779.

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Longtime names in men's suits

By Randi Bergman
Special to The CJN

A quality suit says a lot about the man wearing it. Since locating such a suit can be a bit rough these days, we're going help you find it at two Toronto stores of long standing.

Lou Myles Disegnatore (905-738-6700, http://www.loumyles.ca) is one of the leading names in men's suits in Canada and across the globe.

Myles launched his Yonge Street store – now located at 380 Millway Ave. in Vaughan, Ont. – in 1961, and it quickly became the place to shop for fine quality men's clothes.

"I think most people in the business would agree that Lou changed the way men dressed," says his wife, Wendy Myles, who co-runs the business. "He was and still is tremendously influential."

Lou Myles and his wife, Wendy

In 1969, the Lou Myles look became official when the designer opened his own Toronto-based factory, which then shipped to retail giants across the United States including Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus.

"Our suits are handmade, hand -basted – no computerization involved," Wendy Myles says.

A rarity today, Lou Myles Disegnatore still upholds the traditional values of custom suit-making.

Wendy Myles breaks down the Lou Myles look into two categories. First, it's the distinct silhouette that sets the suits apart. "We can make a bad figure look good and a good figure look great!" she says. Then, the shoulder line must remain straight, regardless of trend. "The collar of a well-made suit always hugs the neck."

Tom Mihalik

"People come from all over to buy a Lou Myles Suit," she says. Recalling a radio broadcast reporting on an upcoming Yankees-Blue Jays game, she adds that "the Yankees were excited to come to Toronto just so they could shop at our store!"

Among Myles' distinguished clients over the years were Frank Sinatra, Mohammed Ali and former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, who wore a Lou Myles suit on the cover of Time magazine.

As well as the retail storefront, Myles runs a by-appointment-only private showroom in The Colonnade on Bloor, where suits and tuxedos are made to measure. One hundred per cent made in Canada, the suits take approximately four to six weeks to be finished.

"Trends come and go, but to us, that's mere decoration," Myles says. "A great suit is always going to be a great suit."

Anyone seeking quality on a budget need look no further than Tom's Place (416-596-0297, http://www.toms-place.com). Located at 190 Baldwin St. in Kensington Market, the store has been a Toronto institution since 1958.

"My father emigrated from Hungary to try and find a better life in Canada," says Tom Mihalik, the store's owner. "They gave us a chance back then and we're still here!"

With the addition of Mihalik's son, Tom Jr., to the team, Tom's Place is in its third generation of family management.

"It's a wonderful feeling to know that the people of Toronto have been so loyal to us," Mihalik says. "We like to cater to everyone – from the politician to the regular guy."

Tom's Place, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, is your destination for suits, shirts and ties, as well as discount women's designer labels, at one heck of a cost.

"Tom is my name, but it also stands for Take Off More!" Mihalik says with a chuckle. With no firm prices in the store, all merchandise is up for the haggle. "We appreciate that everybody wants a deal, and in this economy, they actually need it."

The store's first floor features an incredible five-for-one suit deal section that remains all year round. Dubbed "Fashion at the Top," the store's second floor features high-end designer labels, which are also offered at jaw-dropping prices.

"People are taking their jobs much more seriously lately, and it's important to them to dress appropriately," Mihalik says. "Dressing in a quality suit signifies that you are dressing for today and also for tomorrow."

Mihalik cites narrow lapels and shorter jackets as popular features. "Since the silhouette fits much closer to the body these days, you can really tell a well-tailored suit from a poorly made one."

Since experienced tailors are on the premises, a perfect fit is never impossible.

"It's rare to have such experienced tailors anymore, but it's so important," he says.

The Mihaliks' success can be attributed to their general passion for what they do, as well as a drive to succeed. "I think we have survived all these years because of our vision and hard work," Mihalik says. "We are very thankful to still be an integral part of the city's Jewish community – we need a voice now more than ever!"

Another men's fashion store advertising in this supplement is: Crawford Boys, 416-782-8137.

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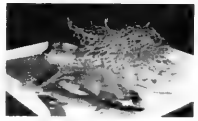
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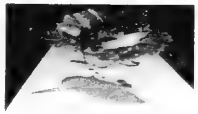
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Mint specializes in live entertainment and alternatives

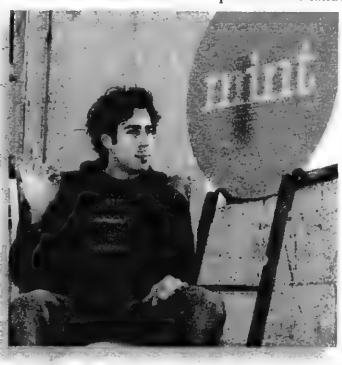
By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Mint brings a wide roster of services, including MCs, DJs and dance troupes.

"If you like to party and have a good time, you're in our demographic," says Jordan Fogle, owner of Mint Entertainment, a company that caters to the needs of those looking for a fresh approach to special events, whatever the occasion.

Mint (416-923-MINT (6468); www.mintevents.ca) specializes in bringing the client a wide roster of services, including music options such as live MCs, DJs, dance troupes and bands, as well as performance artists such as magicians and hypnotists. The company also excels in a host of live-event alternatives, everything and anything from lighting and video effects, customized stage props, casino programming, celebrity appearances and various game and carnival activities.

Mint is a relatively recent brand, having only been around for five years, but Fogle (jordan@mintevents.ca) already has his ambitions set high, dipping into a variety of different categories, including a youth division, focusing mainly on bar and bat mitzvahs, a wedding division for the college-age crowd, and a corporate division for a variety of business-related events.



Jordan Fogle: Not where he intended to be.

Fogle has rubbed some pretty impressive elbows in the past, notably at a Hollywood party last year for the première of the film The Wrestler, which saw the likes of actors Mickey Rourke, Jennifer Aniston, Sean Penn and Keira Knightley making appearances. This year, Fogle is planning a party series at the Hazelton Hotel in downtown Toronto, which hopefully will go off just as well.

Fogle never initially intended to end up where he is, however. In fact, in university he was majoring in political science and philosophy and was planning to go into law, but it was his minor in marketing that ended up taking him in a completely different direction. His exposure to the world of corporate event planning and advertising opened up a whole new range of possibilities, and he followed through on his goal of becoming the best in his field.

Fogle began his career in the entertainment industry working with Jared Florence of Entertainment Extreme, which later merged with Mandell Entertainment, a big wheel in the party business. Five years ago, Mint purchased Mandell Entertainment's private business division, specializing in weddings and bar mitzvahs, which, in Fogle's words, "gave us fuel to ignite our fire." Although his headquarters are in Toronto, Fogle doesn't limit himself to just one region. Mint has branched out all over North America, including most of Canada, as well as the United States, with events in New York, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Texas.

In addition to its entertainment and event-planning sector, Mint opened an agency division last year that specializes in licensing, branding, promotions, broadcasting and integrated marketing.

"Some of our direction now is going with marketing initiatives and PR and branding and on the other side, Mint events. It's flying away right now with the bar and bat mitzvahs and a lot more corporate work these days," Fogle says. "The direction is to just keep doing what we're doing but to really expand our corporate portfolio while servicing all of the private and social events."

It ain't a good party without the good eats

Lesley's Party Sandwiches

Continued from page B20

The truffles –chocolates with soft creamy centres encased in a chocolate shell – are all made from scratch on the premises. "We make truffles the old-fashioned way with a pot over the stove. We make a real *ganache*, a combination of chocolate and cream."

And there's no skimping on ingredients. "Our truffles are made with fresh cream and genuine liqueurs.

"We use a single-malt scotch in our Irish cream and real champagne in our champagne truffles. They are by far the most popular truffles in the shop," Levine says.

Smash cakes – they add an element of fun to bar and bat mitzvahs – the large hollow chocolate rectangular box-style cakes, have been in great demand since the late 1980s, says Levine.

"For the chocolate box, we use the same high-quality European chocolate. We decorate the cake with all kinds of shapes, and the names are all in chocolate.The letters stand up. We provide a mallet. You can't cut the cake. You have to smash it."

Chocolate Charm's huge variety of chocolate lollipops make great party favours, says Levine. "We have the largest collection of chocolate lollipops in the city. They come in all kinds of shapes."

And you can find the same variety in the chocolate novelty shapes that are used for greetings and gifts. They can be personalized and delivered. Levine recommends that customers give the store a day's notice for personalized items.

People love to get chocolate as gifts because it "is known to be the most universally loved flavour," he says, adding that the novelties are not something people buy for themselves. "It's more of a fun thing. It's nice to get the shape they like in chocolate."

Personalized chocolate champagne bottles are frequently requested as gifts for special occasions.

During the holidays, religious symbols are very common gifts, says Levine "People like to send chocolateshaped shofars at Rosh Hashanah and solid chocolate seder plates with the chocolate 10 plagues. We have a symbol for each plague."

He notes that chocolate flowers are a trend."Long-stem roses and daisies, and tulips and daffodils sent in clay pots make wonderful house-warming and holiday gifts. Our flowers don't wilt."

Chocolate Charm has a line of parve chocolates. Gianduja, which combines chocolate and hazelnut paste, "is "the closest you can get to something tasting like milk chocolate in a parve chocolate," says Levine.

While people are more health conscious, they still like to indulge in chocolate, so he offers some healthier options such as chocolate-covered nuts, dried fruit and almond bark. "The research shows that chocolate is actually good for you. Almond bark is a nice, healthy snack."

Chocolate Charm delivers across the Greater Toronto Area. "We get calls from all over the city," Levine says. "People want chocolate without milk because there are so many people who are lactose intolerant."

He says the packaging of the chocolates is attractive. "We use top-notch gold boxes with handmade bows."

"We ship across Canada. People tell us they have to have our chocolate."

Another specialty food advertising in this supplement is: Kosher 'N Natural — The Candyman, 416-789-7173.

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PARTY PLANNER

Entertainment kids won't soon forget

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Kids can be choosy when it comes to entertainment, but at least two local companies aim to give them an experience they won't soon forget.

Whimz (416-656-7894; e-mail: whimz@whimzonline.com), for example, is more than just a mobile zoo in that the staff members are committed to an interactive educational experience in which they teach understanding and respect for animals, as well as debunk the popular misconceptions associated with many of them.

The interactive aspect of seeing an animal up close, as opposed to simply reading about it in a textbook, is what owner Tracy Guerin believes makes the learning experience that much more indelible for both children and adults.

Animal and henna fun

"People are blown away by how soft a chinchilla is, or that snakes are not slimy, or how incredibly beautiful a red-eyed tree frog is… there are just so many opportunities," she says.

Whimz has 12 trained staff members working either full or part time. Some of them have used their experience at Whimz as credits toward their teaching degrees in biology and animal sciences. But, according to Guerin, having a strong academic background really comes as a secondary qualification.

"The first and foremost qualification here," she says, "is that you have to love working with children. The majority of our clients are children, and we're committed to their overall experience – that they have fun, that they learn something and that it's safe."

Guerin admits that caring for animals can be tricky, as they require constant attention, feeding and grooming. Some of the 23 available animals are purchased from pet stores, but most come from breeders, ensuring that Whimz has them from a very young age so they can be properly trained to interact with humans.

"We're very sensitive to the needs of the animals and that they're as happy as possible," Guerin says, "because if the animal's happy, then the client will be happy. If the animal's skittish and nervous and defending itself, where's the fun in that?"

Another important aspect of the business is reliability and professionalism, specifically that adults can be assured that their children will be taken care of for an hour and that staff will always show up for booked appointments.

Whimz also has programs for adults, seniors and special needs individuals that differ significantly from their children's programs. For instance, corporate events tend to lean toward team-building exercises in Fear Factor-style contests to overcome common phobias.

Fear is fostered through ignorance," Guerin says. "The more you understand, the more the fear diminishes. I know that because I was terrified of spiders before I started working with the tarantulas, and now I'm not afraid of them. I don't love them, but I'm not afraid of them."

Melanie Marcus got her introduction to henna art on a visit to Paris in 1998. While there, she saw a street performer doing henna tattoo art, and Marcus asked the woman to teach her the tricks of the trade. After a few pointers, Marcus bought some henna ink and Little Miss Henna (905-731-0067; e-mail: info@littlemisshenna.com) was born. Twelve years later, it's still as popular with the kids as ever.

Along with henna, Marcus does body-art tattoos, made of alcohol-based body paint. They glow in the dark, are multicoloured and last from five to seven days.

Marcus says that the great thing about henna and body-art tattoos is that they're temporary.

Tattoos are only the beginning for this brand, however. On Marcus' website (www.littlemisshenna.com), visitors can check out dozens of innovative ideas that can liven up any event.

I'm constantly travelling" she says, "and I'm always looking for innovative, new ideas for the Toronto market, for the bar and bat mitzvah circuit… it can be from airbrushing or garments like T-shirts and hats and pyjama bottoms. We actually airbrush designs on these items, and the kids get to choose from whichever ones they want."

It's also an interactive experience, since it's done on the spot by the staff and the options are open for kids to have their say.

"They get to participate as well," says Marcus. "It's not just something we've bought and are giving to them – they have their input and they get to choose what they would like on their T-shirt or their hat, and we actually sit there at their party and pain on these garments for the kids."

Little Miss Henna has a team of 30 workers and trains all its staff members – all of whom come from artistic backgrounds in airbrushing, hot pressing and body art.

"The staff that I hire are outgoing and personable," Marcus says, "whether we get them from OCAD [Ontario College of Art and Design] or they're just local artists around the area. They're always looking for something fresh and something fun to do."

Other entertainers advertising in this supplement are: Jet Entertainment, 905-305-1000; Mint Lifestyle Events, 416-923-6468; Superfly Entertainment, 416-901-0503; Swaye Entertainment, 416-545-074

PARTY PLANNER

Bringing the downtown spa treatment to you

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

Somewhere between calling the caterer and the florist and calling the shots, you have to carve out a little "me" time when you are planning your family simchah.

It's not as if you have to be reminded that you deserve it, but you do have to be told that it's OK! With all the stress that comes with planning an event, whether it's a simple birthday party or a formal wedding, taking a little spa time isn't a luxury, it's a necessity.

Our first suggestion doesn't even involve getting out of bed! Waxy Taxi (416-638-6149) is, as the name suggests, a full-service moving wax-mobile! Specializing in total waxing (that means anywhere, ladies!) as well as manicures, Lori Greenwood brings the spa to you.

"There is something really nice and intimate about having your treatments done in the comfort of your own home," she says. "There's no muss, no fuss, no pretence of a spa."

Equipped with her top-notch utensils and products, Greenwood travels across the greater Toronto area, including Thornhill and Richmond Hill. "I can even heat the wax from my car!" she says with a laugh.

Trained in esthetics more than 25 years ago, Greenwood moved from a salon to working from home so that she could raise her two young daughters. A true multitasker, she managed her in-house studio while teaching esthetics, waxing and manicuring.

A few years ago, Greenwood decided to take her show on the road and started Waxy Taxi. "When I was working from my home, I was able to work at something I loved while being around my family," she says. "Now I'm reversing that comfort for my clients."

Greenwood's flexibility makes for the ideal spa party at home – a perfect treat for the bridal party.

"I love to work with groups of girls and women, teaching them how to shape their eyebrows," she says.

Greenwood can travel to offices, nursing homes and schools. "It's a nice break for clients in the middle of a stressful work day, as well as for those young mothers or elderly people who can't leave the house."

Staying up to date on new techniques and hygiene are of the utmost importance to Greenwood. Waxing applicators are never reused, and utensils are always sanitized between uses.

"I always treat my clients exactly how I would want to be treated," she says. "It's important that they should be completely comfortable."

After so many years, Greenwood is as passionate about her job as ever. "I now have the pleasure of having my clients as my friends as well."

If you prefer to get out of the house, head on over to Uptown Spa (416-449-4044, www.uptownspa.com), at 801 York Mills Rd., Suite 311.

Dubbed the "neighbourhood spa," Uptown is a full-service, upscale day spa, without the stuffiness.

"We are very relaxed and friendly," says Anne Sorenson, the spa's owner. "We don't want anyone to feel like they don't belong here."

In the business for more than 28 years, Sorenson left her previous spa to launch Uptown 15 years ago, with her daughter Carrie Jenkins.

Since then, the spa has expanded to the 7,000-square-foot facility that it is today, offering every service from various body treatments to Botox and teeth whitening, as well as manicures and pedicures. Uptown also offers several customized services for men, such as therapeutic massage, reflexology and hand and foot care.

Uptown is known for its facials and massages, which are among its specialties. Massages includes hot stone treatment and private Whirlpool.

To usher in a season in the sun, Sorenson cites body treatments such as salt glow, moor mud wraps and body scrubs as the best way to get rid of dead skin and clear your body of the winter blues. And with the long winter finally over, the self-tanning facility will give you a head start on that summer glow you've been dreaming of.

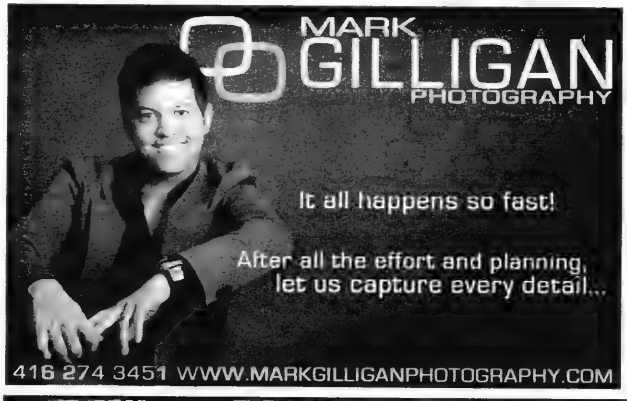
Uptown offers gift certificates as well as a number of pampering packages that are perfect for bridal parties.

"We love to celebrate with our clients," Sorenson says. "People bring in wine and food while we work away on relieving their stress!"

In order not to interfere with last minute details however, Sorenson suggests coming a few days prior to your event for longer, more relaxing services.

With its personal touch, Uptown Spa promises to make your experience as pleasurable as possible.

"Everyone in the area knows that we are the place to be!"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Party venues on Eglinton West and in Greektown

The Eglinton Grand.

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

You don't actually have to travel across the Mediterranean to feel like you're in Greece.

You can enjoy authentic Greek cuisine at the Palace (416-462-1166), located at 722 Pape Ave. in the heart of Greektown.

The Palace, which has a private room that can accommodate from 20 to 75 people with room for musicians, suits engagement, anniversary and graduation parties as well as bar and bat mitzvahs.

Eglinton Grand
- Fully Kosher Facility
- Separate Kosher Kitchen Available
- Kosher Event Catering Available
- Capacity up to 100 People
- 100-300 Person Capacity
- Over 300 Person Capacity
- Wheelchair Accessible

Open for lunch and dinner daily, the restaurant is known for its Mediterranean fare, says owner Peter Hadjis. "We make everything here."

And it's very much a family operation with his son, John, helping to run the business, while his wife, Stella, and his sister, Olga, prepare traditional recipes in the kitchen. "They make the best spanakopita." Spanakopita is a delicious phyllo pastry dish made with spinach and feta cheese.

Hadjis says that high quality and fresh ingredients are the key to the Palace's reputation for fine cuisine. "I go myself every day to get the fish. We never ask for the price just the quality."

He says the Palace offers the best and freshest fish, with such fish dishes as sea bass tilapia, halibut and salmon, he says.

Of course, the menu includes traditional Mediterranean fare like filet mignon, rib steak, rack of lamb, and chicken and lamb kebob, made fresh on the grill and accompanied by a crisp salad. "We make the best Greek salad. We use a homemade olive oil oregano dressing."

Other traditional Greek dishes on the menu include moussaka, a beef dish made with eggplant and potatoes, and roasted leg of lamb. Appetizers such as the popular lemon soup, tzatziki, hummus and eggplant salad are all made on the premises.

Hadjis, who emigrated from Greece in 1965, says, he had plenty of training at the finest hotels in both Athens and Toronto before opening the Palace in 1983."I worked at the best hotels and I learned from the best chefs."

For those people who love history and classic design, the Palace is a party venue that takes you back in time to the glamour of the Art Deco era.

The Eglinton Grand (416-485-5900) formerly the Eglinton Theatre (400 Eglinton Ave. W.) is a heritage building that has been restored to its original 1937 grandeur.

The elegance and sophistication of this facility, with its ballroom and balcony, is a venue well-suited for bar and bat mitzvahs and weddings, says Dino Lucchetto, marketing and sales manager. "The beauty is that you don't have to share the facility with another party. It's exclusively yours for the evening.

"The elegant décor, with its rich mahogany and ebony wood, and marble, and period furniture, does not require a lot of décor, says Lucchetto. "The room stunning as is."

He points out that the two statues in the main reception area are from the old Eglinton Theatre, as are the handrails and light fixtures.

The framing around the original screen, which is now a painted mural, makes a striking backdrop for the head table, says Lucchetto, noting that the balcony level is an ideal cocktail area. "It gives the party that wow effect."

He stresses that all meals are prepared fresh on site. "We always get great reviews for our food and service."

He adds that the kitchen can also be kashered. " We have a mashgiach on site, and Zuchter Berk does all our kosher catering."

Palace Restaurant
- Fully Kosher Facility
- Separate Kosher Kitchen Available
- Kosher Event Catering Available
- Capacity up to 100 People
- 100-300 Person Capacity
- Over 300 Person Capacity
- Wheelchair Accessible

The venue, which is owned by the Dynamic Hospitality and Entertainment Group, can accommodate sit-down dinners from 100 to 320 guests or 500 for a cocktail reception. An additional room with a capacity for 225 guests can be utilized for wedding ceremonies or bar or bat mitzvah services.

Non-kosher catering packages for a four-course meal on a Saturday evening start at $95 for a main course of chicken, veal, salmon, which includes a seven-hour open bar.

For an additional $10, the main course can be upgraded to a chicken combo with tenderloin and rack of lamb, and the meal will include a fresh fruit and pastry table, says Lucchetto. "It's our most popular package."

Kid-friendly meals like chicken fingers are offered at a reduced price.

The Palace on Pape Avenue in Toronto.

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This Week

National

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Buchenwald rebukes Holocaust deniers: Obama

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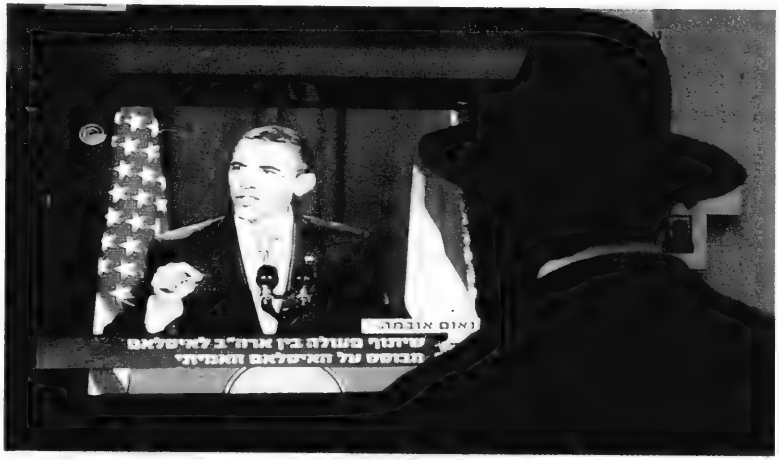
JERUSALEM — The Buchenwald concentration camp "is the ultimate rebuke" to those who deny the Holocaust, U.S. President Barack Obama said during his visit to the camp last Friday.

Obama toured the site with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, and they laid roses at a memorial there. An estimated 56,000 people, including some 11,000 Jews, perished at Buchenwald at the hands of the Nazis.

"To this day, there are those who insist the Holocaust never happened," Obama said. "This place is the ultimate rebuke to such thoughts, a reminder of our duty to confront those who would tell lies about our history."

It was a pointed message to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has expressed doubts that six million Jews died at the hands of the Nazis.

"He should make his own visit to Buchenwald," Obama told NBC in an interview prior to his visit. "I have no patience for people who would deny history."



An Israeli in a Jerusalem electronics store watches U.S. President Barack Obama deliver his speech in Cairo last week. The text on the screen says: "Partnership between the United States and Islam must be based on authentic Islam." After Cairo, Obama travelled to Germany. *[Photo by Flash90]*

At the camp, a sombre Obama told reporters that his great-uncle had helped liberate a nearby satellite camp, Ohrdruf, just days before other U.S. army units overran Buchenwald. His great-uncle returned from war and was unable to speak of the horrible scene, Obama said.

He added that both the victims and the perpetrators at the camp alike were humans, and everyone must stand guard against a repeat.

Continued on page 27

Jews fight anti-Israel messaging at Pride Parade

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Jewish gays and lesbians are mobilizing against plans by anti-Israel gay activists to try to turn Toronto's 2009 Pride Parade into a public forum for bashing Israel.

One of the Canadian gay community's most celebrated events, the annual Toronto Pride Parade and Pride Week – scheduled this year to run from June 19 to June 28 – is supposed to showcase the community's commitment to "equality, human rights, respect, diversity, honour, love and acceptance," according to Pride Toronto's website.

However, members of the Jewish gay communities in both Toronto and Montreal have voiced concerns over the increasing presence of virulent, anti-Israel political messaging that has sprouted up at the parade since the middle part of the decade.

Tracey Sandilands

In recent years, anti-Israel groups in Toronto have slipped into the parade without permission from organizers, their members bearing signs denouncing Israel as an apartheid state.

But one of those groups, calling itself Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA), will be officially welcomed by Pride Toronto as a participant this year.

Last week, Tracey Sandilands, executive director of Pride Toronto, confirmed that QuAIA's application has "been accepted" and the group will participate in the 2009 Toronto parade.

Word of the news spread quickly to Montreal's Jewish gay community, with some members afraid that Montreal Pride week

Continued on page 20

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Western-oriented coalition wins Lebanon election – see page 27

The News in Brief

CANADA

Firms Get Grant

TORONTO — Two firms, one Israeli and one Canadian, have received a grant from the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF) to create products to assess the risk of pre-eclampsia, a potentially fatal condition for women and fetuses during pregnancy. Diagnostic Technologies Ltd., which makes diagnostic devices for high-risk pregnancies, and Canadian partner Miraculins Inc. got $782,000 for their $1.6-million joint project, the firms said last month. The CIIRDF was formed in 1994 to promote research and development between Israeli and Canadian companies.

News Head Hopeful

TORONTO — The managing director of Al Jazeera English told the Toronto Star last week that he's hopeful the news channel will be approved for broadcast in Canada. Tony Burman, a former senior CBC news executive, said the Qatar-based network could air on Canadian cable and satellite carriers as early as the fall if the channel gets regulatory approval this month or next. He made the comments ahead of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's June 8 deadline for written comments on Al Jazeera's application. After objections by Jewish groups to an application by its Arabic parent channel, the latter was approved for broadcast in 2004 on the condition that carriers censor hate speech, but they said the condition was too onerous.

JFS Receives Funds

OTTAWA — Ottawa's Jewish Family Services (JFS) received a $266,649 grant from the province's Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) on May 27. Ontario's minister of citizenship and immigration, Michael Chan, and local MPP Jim Watson were on hand to present the grant and tour JFS facilities. The NSP funds community-based, not-for-profit organizations that help immigrants.

Zareinu Snags Cash

TORONTO — Zareinu Educational Centre of Metropolitan Toronto has received a grant of $276,000 over five years from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to raise its profile in the community and provide more hands-on programs and services to children with special needs, Zareinu said last week. The grant from the provincial body is the largest in Zareinu's history, the 19-year-old Jewish agency said.

WORLD

New German Rabbis

BERLIN — The first two graduates of a new Orthodox seminary in Berlin were ordained June 2 as rabbis in a ceremony broadcast live on German TV from Munich's new synagogue. Zsolt Balla, 30, and Avraham Radbill, 25, graduated from the Rabbinerseminar zu Berlin and are the first Orthodox rabbis to be ordained in Germany in more than 70 years.

Court OKs Pensions

BERLIN — A German court ruled last week that two men forced to work for the Nazis during World War II are entitled to a pension. The precedent-setting ruling could affect thousands of survivors who could finally get German social security payments, Gideon Taylor, executive vice-president of the Claims Conference, said. It will particularly affect survivors who applied for German social security pensions and were rejected, unable to show they had worked for remuneration. Taylor said more than 90 per cent of 70,000 ghetto labourers who applied in the past were rejected. Those deemed eligible may receive up to $214 per month, plus back payments based on when they first applied. The court accepted the argument of the two survivors of ghettos in Poland that they qualified because they were compensated for work in the form of food and other amenities.

2 Jews Died in Crash

NEW YORK — Two Jews were aboard Air France Flight 447, Chabad.org reported. French businessman Serge Anidjar was travelling home from a business trip to Brazil. No information was available about a second Jew on board. The flight from Brazil to France went missing June 1 over the Atlantic Ocean after leaving Rio de Janeiro.

Cash For Security

NEW YORK — The two Bronx shuls targeted in a planned terror attack were each awarded $25,000 (US) by New York Governor David Paterson May 31 to beef up security with alarms and surveillance equipment. Four men were arrested May 20 for planting what they thought were bombs outside the Orthodox Jewish Center of Riverdale and the nearby Reform Riverdale Temple in an FBI sting operation, but the FBI had sold the men non-functioning explosives. The money will come from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Academic Union Votes For Boycott – Again

LONDON — Britain's main academic union voted overwhelmingly to boycott Israeli universities and colleges.

The University and College Union passed the boycott resolution at its annual meeting last week. It's the fourth year in a row that the union has passed a resolution condemning Israel and supporting the boycott of Israeli academics and academic institutions.

The key resolution calls on UCU branches to discuss boycotting Israel, and commits the union to organize a pro-boycott conference for other trade unions to attend. The vote was then declared invalid after union attorneys said that a boycott of that kind could trigger legal action against the union. Union General Secretary Sally Hunt said she "formally and personally commended" the union for holding the debate, the Guardian reported.

The Anti-Defamation League called the move "a shameful exercise to demonize Israel and Israeli academics."

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PM backs suicide bombing bill

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Since it was introduced in 2005, five past prime ministers have signed on to Senator Jerry Grafstein's bill that would explicitly add suicide bombings to the Criminal Code definition of terrorism.

Recently, the current prime minister, Stephen Harper, told a supporter of the bill that his government also backs the bill, but with minor modifications.

Reuben Bromstein, president of Canadians Against Suicide Bombing, said he met Harper at a function recently and the prime minister told him the government "would support the bill with amendments."

Last week, the amended Bill S-205 passed unanimously through the Senate's constitutional and legal affairs committee after Tory senators added the amendments. It now awaits third reading in the upper chamber. Grafstein said he expects the bill to easily pass third reading and be referred to the House, where MP Bob Rae will take on his role of advocating for it.

Jerry Grafstein

"I'm delighted" by passage of the bill, Grafstein said. "This is a gigantic step forward."

Grafstein said the proposed amendments "in no way hamper or diminish what we are doing."

One of the amendments would specify that suicide bombings are a terrorist act only if done for terrorist purposes. That would exclude an individual act of murder if not done to pursue a political agenda, Grafstein said.

The other amendment would see the bill come into force when proclaimed by cabinet, as opposed to when it receives royal assent. Grafstein said that this will allow the government to enact the bill as part of a public education campaign.

Grafstein first introduced the bill in 2005, and it received third reading in May 2008. It proceeded to the House of Commons, where it died on the order paper when the chamber was prorogued. Grafstein was forced to reintroduce the bill in the Senate.

Stephen Harper

With the Tories and Liberals now on board, Grafstein hopes to convince the New Democrats and the Bloc Québécois to lend their support to the bill as well.

"I'm looking for all-party support," he said.

The bill, once passed, would be a made-in-Canada solution to an act that is plaguing many societies. "We're trying to say this weapon of choice is not acceptable, since it targets innocent people. The purpose of criminal law is to prevent against conduct that falls below community standards."

"This is not just a Jewish community issue," he continued, pointing to support he had received from other ethnic and religious communities.

Bromstein, a former judge of the Ontario Supreme Court, noted that a roster of prominent Canadians support the bill, including former prime ministers Joe Clark, Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, Kim Campbell and John Turner.

Other supporters include Al-Hassani Haithem, representative of the Canadian-Iraqi Coordination Committee; former NDP leader Ed Broadbent; Tarek Fatah, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, and former Ontario premier David Peterson.

In testimony at the Senate, the RCMP and the Canadian Council of Criminal Defence Lawyers also supported the proposed legislation.

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Thoughts on a Cairo moment

From the editor's desk...

The photo inset into this column has been around for many years. It made a reappearance recently, speeding through countless Internet connections in advance of the visit last month by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington.

The message intended by the mapmaker is quite unsubtle, as is the message intended by the people who sent it: to point out the stark contrast between the extent of the territory of the only sovereign Jewish state on Earth with the territory of the states that surround it in the rather overwhelmingly Muslim milieu of the Middle East.

The map therefore is quite useful and instructive for its own sake, because there are so many people who are simply unaware of Israel's geographic size in relation to the size of its neighbours. In light of the obsession with the Jewish state in so many parts of the world and the frequent distortion of the news about Israel in those same parts of the world, this number is likely very large.

The heading on the map, "End the unjust Jewish occupation of Arab land," is intended to be sarcastic precisely because of the gross asymmetry between the Jewish and Muslim territory in the Middle East.

The heading does indeed score a bull's-eye in accurately framing the dimension of the geo-political situation of that region of the world.

But sarcasm is a poor weapon for Israel's advocates, even if emotionally gratifying.

Moreover, even as gratification, it is a short-lived reward because the heading is inaccurate: the non-Jewish countries in the region – that is, *all* of them except Israel – are indeed Muslim, but not all Arab.

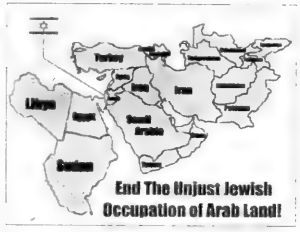
Israel's advocates must always be accurate in their advocacy. The facts of Israel's case are the facts of history.

Far worse, however, is the fact that the sarcasm is irrelevant to the main argument of the anti-Israel advocates. The Arab land that they say Israel occupies is the land that belonged to the Palestinians. By Arab land, some people mean the West Bank; others mean all of Mandatory Palestine (that is, the Israel of today).

Israel's advocates must always be pertinent in their advocacy. The relevance of Israel's case is the relevance of truth over falsehood.

It is therefore, with these Israel- advocacy rules in mind – accuracy and relevance – that U.S. President Barack Obama's historic speech in Cairo last week must be measured.

To be sure, the content of Obama's speech ranged more widely than Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. In, by now, trademark eloquence he outlined broad principles on seven discrete issues, only one of which dealt specifically with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But it was his remarks on this issue more than the others that undoubtedly held the Muslim world's attention most closely.



There is no denying that Obama earnestly and fervently wishes to bring about a permanent peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The thrust of his remarks was to demonstrate friendship to the Muslim world and sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians, while insisting that "Israel's legitimacy" be recognized by the Arab states and by all factions of Palestinians, including Hamas.

He has made it clear time and again that he considers Israel an ally. Indeed he affirmed at the very outset that America's bond with Israel "is unbreakable."

But the president's grasp of the justice of Israel's case appears dangerously lacking in the relevant facts of history, ancient and modern.

"The aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied. Around the world the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries and anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust."

In his speech, Obama anchored the Jews' claim to sovereign statehood in the shallow waters of anti-Semitism. By referencing Europe and the Holocaust, he vindicated the non-Holocaust denial aspect of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's argument that Muslims should not pay the price for Christian misbehaviour and Christian guilt.

Unfortunately, the president failed to anchor the Jewish claim to rightful existence in the Land of Israel in the deep seas of Jewish and world history.

As Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler has said, the Jewish people are aboriginal to the land that is the subject of the dispute with the Palestinians.

It was the Romans who adopted the name Palestina after they conquered the land and exiled the Jews. They obliterated the name Judea from the map. They could not, however, obliterate Judea from the hearts of the Jews who carried the name and the hope of return in every place and in every generation of their dispersion.

It would have been good if the president had explained on this basis to his Muslim audience the Jewish claim to rightful sovereignty in the State of Israel.

— MBD

SeeJN

ISRAEL DAY FESTIVAL: Students from Bialik Hebrew Day School and United Synagogue Day School choirs performed at Sunday's Israel Day Festival, held at Mel Lastman Square. The event was sponsored by Na'amat Canada, Toronto and the Canadian Zionist Federation, and was held under the auspices of the Israeli Consulate. [Rachel Singer photo]

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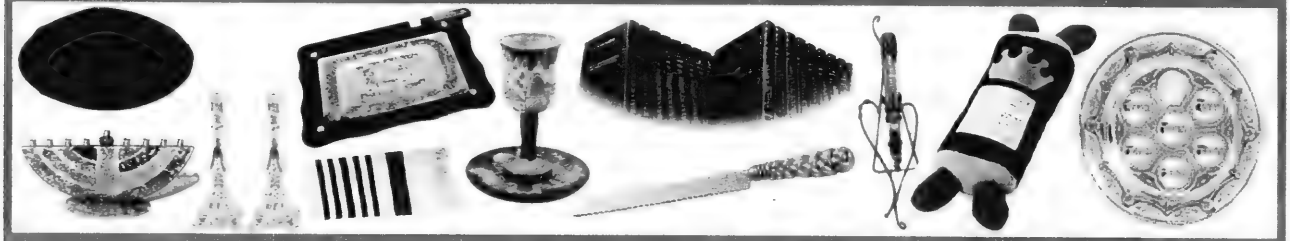

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Ottawa pledges $1M for anti-Semitism task force

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

The Canadian government, in partnership with B'nai Brith Canada, will invest nearly $1 million on a national task force to combat anti-Semitism, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney said last week.

Jason Kenney

The June 1 announcement was made at the Sutton Place Hotel at a conference titled "The St. Louis Era: Looking Back, Moving Forward."

The task force, which will promote further Holocaust education and research over the course of three years, was announced on the 70th anniversary of the voyage of the St. Louis, a German ocean liner carrying Jewish refugees that was turned away from the U.S. and Canadian coasts in June 1939.

Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president, spoke of the verbal and physical attacks perpetrated against Jewish and pro-Zionist students at university campuses across Canada over the past year.

It seems unthinkable, he mused, that in this day and age, "Canadian universities would be the hotbed of anti-Semitism, disguised as anti-Zionism."

Dimant went on to praise Canada's boycott of the United Nations recent followup to its 2001 anti-racism conference, as well as Kenney's role as a supporter of the Jewish community.

"Your government has been a trailblazer… [and] we are proud to call Canada a friend and ally," Dimant said.

Kenney made reference to the book One Is Too Many, co-authored by Irving Abella and Harold Troper, which states that Canada accepted fewer Jewish immigrants during the period of 1933 to 1948 than any other western country. The book indicts the Mackenzie King government – and specifically its head of immigration, Frederick Charles Blair – for actively limiting the number of refugees attempting to immigrate to Canada. The book's title refers to a quote from an unnamed immigration officer who was asked how many Jews would be allowed into Canada after the war.

Kenney spoke of the St. Louis as "a symbol of anti-Semitism" that acts as a reminder of Canada's past to future generations in the hope that such an event won't happen again.

"Conferences like this are essential," Kenney said. "This must be the learning of [our] entire society… gatherings such as this demonstrate that there is a way to stamp out [anti-Semitism]."

In his speech, Kenney also mentioned his visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Israel last month, and he drew comparisons between the tragedy of the Holocaust and present-day genocide in places such as Rwanda.

Kenney also noted that he would be visiting Oslo and Prague next month, the former being where Israelis and Palestinians negotiated peace accords in 1993, and the latter being near the former Terezin concentration camp, which held more than 55,000 Jews at the height of World War II.

B'nai Brith president Joe Bogoroch, presented Kenney with a commemorative plaque, which Bogoroch hoped would "honour the memory of [Holocaust] victims and ensure their legacy lives on through the ages."

"The exclusion of the St. Louis has to be seen as the first stage on the road to the Holocaust," said Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler, who spoke following Kenney. "It is the responsibility of the government to protect those who cannot be protected."

Cotler said the St. Louis incident was made possible because of the "de-legitimization" of the Jewish people.

Panel explores need to fight terrorism

There is nothing Israel wants more than to live in peace with its neighbours, including the Palestinians, said Rabbi Marvin Hier.

Rabbi Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, was one of the speakers at the fifth annual Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Spirit of Hope Benefit at Roy Thomson Hall on May 31.

Although his speech was infused with a sense of hope, Rabbi Hier warned the audience of about 2,000 against the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran, a danger not just to Israel but to the entire world. He compared the delayed response of the Allied forces to the Holocaust during World War II to the current lack of response to Iran's nuclear ambitions, and speculated on the consequences this could have for Israel's existence.

"There is no doubt on which side the western allies would come down if Iran ever attacked Israel," he said. "But by that time, despite all good intentions, it just might be again too late to save the Jews."

Earlier in the program, Prime Minister Stephen Harper was honoured with the Simon Wiesenthal International Leadership Award for his work in the field of justice and human rights, including the fight against anti-Semitism.

"Anti-Semitism is a threat to us all," Harper said in accepting the award from real estate mogul Philip Reichmann. Harper spoke of Canada's unwavering support for Israel, reflected in its withdrawal from Durban II, the review conference in April to follow up on the 2001 anti-racism conference held in Durban, South Africa. Harper described Durban II as a "hate-fest masquerading as a conference against racism."

The event wrapped up with a panel hosted by journalist Linda Frum, who interviewed former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, former U.S. secretary of homeland security Michael Chertoff and former Australian prime minister John W. Howard about national security in the United States.

On the issue of border security, Frum asked how much current airport security measures actually accomplish.

Chertoff responded that "there is no one measure that will absolutely guarantee defence against terrorist attacks."

The panel agreed, however, that we are still not doing enough to protect our borders from terrorism. Although there have been many complaints from passengers since 9-11 about invasion of privacy at customs and security posts, Chertoff said that this view doesn't take into consideration the full scope of the problem. He stressed that by lowering our security measures, we would be "encouraging vulnerability" to terrorist attacks and that such measures should be supported by the American public to help ensure its safety.

Considering the question from another perspective, Frum asked the panellists about media criticism of the George W. Bush administration's policies, such as the use of waterboarding as an interrogation method and the holding of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay.

Howard said he felt much of the criticism has been unfounded, especially toward the former U.S. president's handling of the 9-11 attacks.

"It is important to focus on the U.S. mindset back in 2001," he said. "Methods were used to protect a country from another attack.

"He did his job," Howard continued. "He protected his country. That should be the verdict regarding what is right."

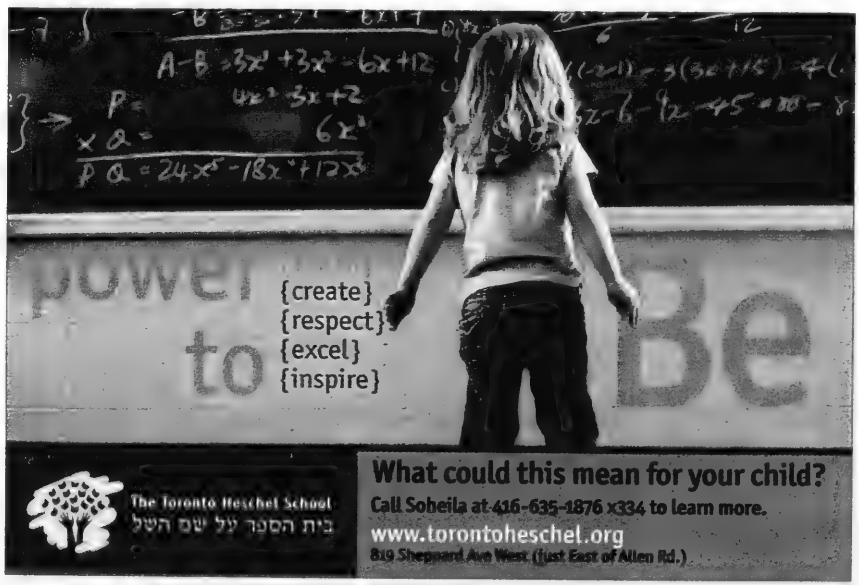
In looking at the issue of post-9/11 world diplomacy, Frum asked about the possible impact of President Barack Obama's upcoming June 4 speech in Cairo reaching out to the Muslim world.

Howard said he supports the president's decision to address the Muslim world, adding, "I encourage anything that helps promote moderate Islam."

As Rabbi Hier had done earlier, Bolton responded by again referring to the danger posed by Iran. Given the opportunity, he said, he would tell the president to support an Israeli strike against Iran, since the alternative would be that the world would have to contend with a dangerous nuclear nation.

"Not every problem can be solved by diplomacy," he said.

— S.S.F.



Greater Toronto Area

U.S. can break political impasse, Israeli col. says

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The current political impasse between Israel and the mainstream Palestinian leadership won't be broken unless the United States intervenes and presents its own peace proposals, a retired Israeli army colonel said last week.

Shaul Arieli

"I don't believe the gaps can be breached unless the United States becomes involved," Shaul Arieli, a former commander of the Israel Defence Forces' Northern Brigade in the Gaza Strip, told a Temple Sinai forum sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now.

Arieli said that U.S. proposals should resemble the Arab League plan, which was first presented in 2002 and then resubmitted two years ago.

Under the Arab plan, Israel would pull out of territories captured in the Six Day War in exchange for recognition from, and full normalization with, Arab League members.

As part of the plan, the Palestinian refugee problem would be resolved by mutual consent.

Arieli is a member of Israel's Council for Peace and Security, a non-partisan group that considers peace a necessary component of Israel's national security.

In a critique of Israel's present government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Arieli suggested that it prefers the status quo to settling the long-running dispute with the Palestinians through a two-state solution.

Nor is Netanyahu particularly interested in coming to terms with Syria, he added. "Israel is in no hurry to negotiate with Syria."

According to Arieli, the gaps that separate Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, are greater than those that existed between Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, and his Palestinian counterpart.

Charging that Netanyahu is exploiting the threat posed by Iran's budding nuclear program to keep the West Bank in Israeli hands, Arieli also noted that he is using the Fatah-Hamas split to claim that Israel has no Palestinian negotiating partner.

In outlining the parameters of a final status peace agreement, Arieli cited several points.

- Israel should withdraw to its pre-1967 borders and a demilitarized Palestinian state should be established.
- There should be territorial swaps on a one-to-one ratio.
- Jerusalem should be divided and serve as the capital of both states.
- Palestinian refugees should be resettled in the new Palestinian state.
- The Palestinians should agree to a complete cessation of terrorism and violence.

In a survey of Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank, Arieli said that 475,000 Israelis live there at present. The figure includes eastern Jerusalem, he noted.

Arieli said that 70 per cent of Jewish settlers live on one per cent of the land in the West Bank.

Israel's separation barrier, as envisioned by former prime minister Ariel Sharon, was to have cut into 17 per cent of the West Bank, he said. But due to U.S. and international pressure, and Israeli Supreme Court rulings, Sharon changed the route of the fence to include only five per cent of the West Bank.

Olmert increased the proportion to eight per cent, he added.

Arieli believes that Israel will eventually retain 3.5 per cent of the West Bank, with 77 per cent of the settlers, in an accord with the Palestinians.

On cjnews.com

There's no Palestinian peace partner, Israeli-Arab reporter says

Advisory committee launched

Compiled by CJN Staff

An advisory committee formed by the Canadian government last month will develop monuments, exhibits and other educational material to recognize the history of the Jewish community in Canada.

The Jewish-Canadian advisory committee will be part of the Community Historical Recognition Program – a grants and contributions program for community-based commemorative projects related to past immigration and wartime restrictions applied in Canada.

The committee, which includes Toni Silberman as chair, Franklin Bialystok and David Demian, will have access to $2.5 million to develop projects that honour the Canadian-Jewish community.

"This government believes it is important for all Canadians to understand our history, including those unfortunate events that are inconsistent with the values of Canadians today," said Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney.

"These important projects enable the communities affected to undertake meaningful commemorative and educational activities to ensure that their experiences are shared with others."

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A rare moment

U.S.President Barack Obama deserves credit for trying to change the paradigm of foreign relations with the Muslim world. "I have come here to seek a new beginning," he told an audience at Al-Azhar University in Cairo last week, intending his words to reach far wider and far deeper into the Muslim psyche.

The very fact that he travelled to Egypt to make his points was noteworthy. One can even add, without fawning, that it was a rare moment in modern diplomacy.

There is no denying that the entire world would benefit were the American-Muslim (perhaps more accurately, Arab) paradigm to shift toward greater mutual understanding and respect. Whether it does will be seen only in the months and years to come.

But what will be required to cause leaders in the Muslim (read Arab) world to embrace the idea of a shift will become more readily apparent in the days and weeks to come.

what the leaders of the Arab world will require subordinating the needs of the Jewish state to achieve that new beginning. Parsing the president's Al-Azhar speech to find clues yields only partial comfort, despite the firm declaration that the "American bond with Israel is unbreakable."

Among the many principles that Obama articulated was this attractive statement: "But if we see the conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth." The truth that he was referring to in this specific case was the need for two states "where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security."

Most Israelis are reconciled to, and support, a two-state solution. The Oslo process of 1993 proved that. The formation of the Kadima party to continue with Oslo-envisioned policies proved that further. The earnest, but failed, efforts by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert to reach an agreement with the Palestinians proves this beyond doubt.

But are Palestinians in favour of two states? The war of terror this decade, the violence unleashed from Gaza after Israel unilaterally withdrew from there and the refusal by current "moderate" leaders to say that Israel can be the state for the Jews suggest they are not.

An historic day

Last week, 65 years ago on June 6, some 155,000 Allied forces from Canada, the United States and Great Britain stormed the beaches of Normandy and attested to a truth that changed the course of modern history: the brutal, racist, murderous fascism of the Nazis and the Axis powers had to be defeated at all costs. There was then only one side from which to see the conflict. Not all sides in a conflict, it must be remembered, carry equal moral weight. There does come a point, it must be emphasized, when one side must take a stand. Ignoring *that* truth can also make us blind. We owe that recognition and much, much more to the soldiers of D-Day.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir proposed that troops from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) be deployed as a buffer between Israeli and Syrian forces in the Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon, despite saying he had no great expectations about the UN's role in the Middle East.

Editorials & Letters

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Obama's Cairo speech (1)

Let us clearly understand the significance of Barack Obama's speech in Cairo last week on the subject of Jewish settlements in the West Bank – the U.S. president had to travel to Egypt (Mitzrayim) to utter the same words as Pharoah: "No more Jewish children!"

Harold Medjuck
Toronto

* * *

Obama's Cairo speech (2)

U.S. President Barack Obama chose the failed route of "two states for two Peoples" in his Cairo speech last week, which can only bring the same results as past attempts. No state can exist by declaration only. It needs an economy, a functioning government and stability. None of that exists for the Palestinians in the disputed territories. Numerous past declarations and photo-ops did not create a functioning entity.

JEWISH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH
OKAY PEOPLE - KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR BURGLARY, VIOLENCE...
WHAT ABOUT ASSIMILATION?
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Also, Obama's insistence that settlements are the main obstacle to peace, while not saying a word about Palestinian terror and hate – the main reason for the current stalemate – is puzzling, to say the least.

Since 1993 and the signing of the Oslo accords, no progress toward peace has been made on the Palestinian side. Israel gave the Palestinians arms and control over most of the disputed territories and received terror in return, the clear message being the war will intensify until Israel is eliminated.

Is Obama unaware of recent history? Are settlements the main obstacle? UN Security Council Resolution 242, which stipulates Israel's "right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries," has been all but forgotten.

Sadly, Obama is taking the wrong path and not tackling the real issues in the Middle East.

Ramy Dishy
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem

The nations of the world are obsessed that Israel relinquish its sovereignty over all of Jerusalem ("Partition of Jerusalem guarantees chaos," CJN Toronto, May 28). Have they not an iota of decency? I can't think of a more fundamental ethic than recognizing and appreciating the good someone does to you (*Hakarat Hatov*) and, by extension, thanking the Creator for His beneficence.

The Hebrew Bible, in contrast to the New Testament and Qur'an, is unique in stressing this ethic. Christians and Muslims – whose religions, particularly Islam, are indebted to the mother religion, Judaism – begrudge Jews sovereignty over Jerusalem when they have their holy cities of Rome and Mecca. Just as the more than 100 countries whose official or dominant religions are Christianity or Islam are irrationally preoccupied with the borders of the tiny Jewish state.

Jacob Mendlovic
Toronto

* * *

WWII documentaries focus on Canadians

June 6 marked the 65th anniversary of D-Day – the greatest Allied battle of World War II.

Three important documentaries tell of the sacrifice and heroism of Canadians on D-Day. The War Amps Military Heritage Series D-Day: The Story of the Canadian Assault Troops, tells of the achievements of Canadians who got farther inland on D-Day than any of the other forces in Normandy; Operation Charnwood: The Canadian Battle for Caen details the Canadian advance inland following the D-Day invasion; and Take No Prisoners: The Nazi SS in Normandy is a chilling account of the execution of more than 130 Canadian soldiers by the Nazi SS following the Normandy invasion.

To commemorate this anniversary, members of War Amps Operation Legacy have donated these documentaries to libraries across Canada. They are also available at a cost-recovery price from the War Amps. For more information, visit www.waramps.ca.

Jennifer Fredenburgh
War Amps Operation Legacy member
Brantford, Ont.

* * *

Seeking Auschwitz survivors

A film crew that is making a documentary to be broadcast next year by Radio Canada is seeking former female forced labourers who worked in the Auschwitz Union Metallindustrie munitions factory. The women were part of the Union kommando in December 1944.

On Dec. 12, 1944, they created a booklet in the shape of a heart for the 20th birthday of their workmate, Fania Landau. They each signed the booklet and wrote birthday messages to her. At the time, the women would have been known by the following first names or nicknames: Berta; Cesia; Eva; Fela; Giza (or Gizela); Gûsia (or Guta); Hanka; Halinka; Hélène; Irena; Mala; Mira; Mina; Rachela; Ruth; and Tania (or Tonia).

Further information about these women and our film can be found at http://heart-of-auschwitz.blogspot.com or by calling Ad Hoc Films at 514-529-2198, or e-mailing adhocfilms@gmail.com.

Catherine Pelchat
Ad Hoc Films
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Perspectives

Obama's speech marks a strategic revolution for Israel

By ALUF BENN

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U.S. President Barack Obama is a rock star. He has total confidence in his powers of persuasion – if he can just have access to a platform, two teleprompters and airtime. Let him speak to the audience, any audience, and he'll sell them a new, friendly, considerate America. Obama's meteoric rise to the presidency and his massive popularity just go to show that his self-confidence is well founded.

Israel has had just one leader who rose to power and governed by virtue of his oratory, and that was prime minister Menachem Begin. But Obama is no Begin, who moved the masses with his fiery tone and impassioned rhetoric: the current American president wins his audience over with the inner calm that he projects, and with his ability to sound candid and spontaneous, even when reading a speech that has undergone dozens of drafts, and in which every sentence has been carefully weighed – and then weighed again.

Last week, Obama took the stage at Cairo University to deliver his most important speech since taking office. Obama met the oratorical challenge he set for himself: he did not sound insincere or hypocritical when paying homage to Muslim culture and its achievements, nor did he sound apologetic or self-righteous when speaking about the disputes of the past and the need to turn over a new leaf. Obama ascribed the mistakes of his predecessor, George Bush, to the trauma of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Less than eight years after Sept. 11, the Oval Office is now occupied by a president who was raised and schooled in a Muslim country, and who is trying to convince Muslims and Arabs that the United States is not the enemy, but rather a legitimate partner to their interests and aspirations. A president who came to Cairo to promise that from now on, America will treat Islam nicely and that Bush's "crusade" – and attempt to dictate to the Arabs how to behave and how to govern – has come to an end.

For Israel, Obama's "Cairo speech" marks nothing less than a strategic revolution. During the Bush era, Israel was America's friendliest partner in the war on terror, and enjoyed military freedom of operation against the Palestinians, Hezbollah and Syria, for which it in return withdrew from the Gaza settlements. With Obama, Israel has to undergo a re-education, and will have to once again pass a test of its dedication to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Until yesterday, Obama discussed the Israeli-Arab conflict in terms of interests, and refrained from speaking about values and ethics. But in Cairo, he used the vocabulary and narrative of the American liberal left, whence he came. He spoke unwaveringly about "the occupation" and about the "Palestinians aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own," and promised that the United States would not turn its back on the Palestinians. He called on Hamas to show responsibility and to recognize Israel's right to exist; he did not call it a terror organization, but a movement that enjoys some popular support.

In addressing the Palestinians, Obama urged that they wage their war without violence, and he compared it to the struggle of black slaves in America to be freed from white domination, to the struggle of the blacks in South Africa, and to the struggles of other nations in South Asia and eastern Europe.

This is not an easy comparison for Israeli ears: in Obama's view, the Palestinians are waging a just struggle for national liberation, which reminds him of past efforts to break free of colonialism and Soviet tyranny. In the same breath, he called upon the Arab world to acknowledge the history of Jewish persecution and the Holocaust, and to understand that Arab anti-Semitism only exacerbates the Israelis' trauma, just as Israel's behaviour exacerbates the Palestinian trauma of expulsion.

Obama knows what the solution is: the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. He is not prepared to hear any other ideas. He demands that Israel stop expanding the settlements: "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements," he said, adding that this phenomenon violates previous agreements and undermines peace efforts.

Having proclaimed this loud and clear, there is no way that Obama can still agree to "natural growth" and other tricks designed to increase construction in the settlements. Now his credibility is on the line. It's his word against Israel's resolve to keep building. And this means that if Obama does exhibit the patience with which he promised to deal with the conflict, Israel will be facing a political crisis and a serious internal rift.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is on the wrong side of Obama's speech, with his refusal to endorse a Palestinian state and his insistence on "natural growth" in the settlements. He might have been able to soften the blow a bit had he formed a coalition with Tzipi Livni on the basis of the two-state solution. Or if, during his White House visit, he had announced that he was embracing the "road map" peace plan. But that's of no importance now.

Before long, Netanyahu will have to deliver a speech in response to Obama, and to declare a historic change in his ideology and policy. Until then, he'll go on hoping for a miracle that will wipe the "Cairo speech" off the agenda and make it disappear into the swirling sands of Middle East diplomacy.

Following is an excerpt from U.S. President Barack Obama's speech at Al-Azhar University in Cairo on June 4.

The second major source of tension that we need to discuss is the situation between Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab world.

America's strong bonds with Israel are well-known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied.

Around the world, the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries, and anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust. Tomorrow, I will visit Buchenwald, which was part of a network of camps where Jews were enslaved, tortured, shot and gassed to death by the Third Reich. Six million Jews were killed – more than the entire Jewish population of Israel today. Denying that fact is baseless, ignorant and hateful. Threatening Israel with destruction – or repeating vile stereotypes about Jews – is deeply wrong, and only serves to evoke in the minds of Israelis this most painful of memories while preventing the peace that the people of this region deserve.

On the other hand, it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people – Muslims and Christians – have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years, they have endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighbouring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead. They endure the daily humiliations – large and small – that come with occupation. So let there be no doubt: the situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own.

For decades, there has been a stalemate: two peoples with legitimate aspirations, each with a painful history that makes compromise elusive. It is easy to point fingers – for Palestinians to point to the displacement brought by Israel's founding, and for Israelis to point to the constant hostility and attacks throughout its history from within its borders as well as beyond. But if we see this conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth: the only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security.

That is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest. That is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience that the task requires. The obligations that the parties have agreed to under the "road map" [peace plan] are clear. For peace to come, it is time for them – and all of us – to live up to our responsibilities.

Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and does not succeed. For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the centre of America's founding. This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from eastern Europe to Indonesia. It's a story with a simple truth: that violence is a dead end. It is a sign of neither courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old women on a bus. That is not how moral authority is claimed; that is how it is surrendered.

Now is the time for Palestinians to focus on what they can build. The Palestinian Authority must develop its capacity to govern, with institutions that serve the needs of its people. Hamas does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have responsibilities. To play a role in fulfilling Palestinian aspirations, and to unify the Palestinian people, Hamas must put an end to violence, recognize past agreements and recognize Israel's right to exist.

At the same time, Israelis must acknowledge that just as Israel's right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's. The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop.

Israel must also live up to its obligations to ensure that Palestinians can live, and work, and develop their society. And just as it devastates Palestinian families, the continuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza does not serve Israel's security; neither does the continuing lack of opportunity in the West Bank. Progress in the daily lives of the Palestinian people must be part of a road to peace, and Israel must take concrete steps to enable such progress.

Finally, the Arab states must recognize that the Arab Peace Initiative was an important beginning, but not the end of their responsibilities. The Arab-Israeli conflict should no longer be used to distract the people of Arab nations from other problems. Instead, it must be a cause for action to help the Palestinian people develop the institutions that will sustain their state; to recognize Israel's legitimacy; and to choose progress over a self-defeating focus on the past.

America will align our policies with those who pursue peace, and say in public what we say in private to Israelis and Palestinians and Arabs. We cannot impose peace. But privately, many Muslims recognize that Israel will not go away. Likewise, many Israelis recognize the need for a Palestinian state. It is time for us to act on what everyone knows to be true.

Too many tears have flowed. Too much blood has been shed. All of us have a responsibility to work for the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear; when the Holy Land of three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra, when Moses, Jesus and Mohammed (peace be upon them) joined in prayer.

Opinions

From Moriah to Masada

The biblical Abraham took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah on a journey with a happy ending. But some Jewish parents nowadays take their children to the fortress of Masada, which tells a tragic story.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

Rabbis who perform bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies there and in other tourist spots will be very busy over the summer. One I know of gets so many requests that he has to outsource some.

He has his own Torah scroll, but subcontractors must find their own, which can be borrowed for a fee. The officiating rabbi then meets with the family to make sure that the ceremony is according to its specification. For this is about customer service. The pay is handsome, but after deductions for rental and commission to the main contractor, there isn't that much left.

Though I've never officiated at such an event – and I pray I never will – I've attended a few. Those I witnessed reflected things I've always been opposed to:

- There's no education required: the child learns by rote the blessings and a few verses of Hebrew text. As the ceremonies are usually held on Mondays and Thursdays, there's no Haftorah.
- There's a callous disregard for prayer for the sake of brevity. All that the people seem to want is a beautiful performance, however poor in content, allowing plenty of time for the meal.
- They feature a distorted expression of Zionism, improbably but piously suggesting that it's love for the Land of Israel that brought the family to the place where some Jews chose martyrdom almost two millennia ago.

When I was a congregational rabbi, I pleaded with families to celebrate bar and bat mitzvahs in and with the congregation, not far away from home. When I wrote about it, some travel agents protested that I interfered with their business. I comforted them with the assurance that people usually ignore what I write.

In any case, many of those who go to Masada are unaffiliated. They try to avoid synagogues, rabbis and Jewish education. A bar or bat mitzvah in Israel is their alibi.

Spending time in Israel is one of the most important ways that we can bind our children to the faith, People and Land of Israel. But not when they're 12 or 13! You've got to be older to benefit.

The bar and bat mitzvah symbolism at Masada is frightening. Moriah tells us that Isaac survived despite his father's readiness to sacrifice him. Masada is about unwarranted martyrdom. We must celebrate our children where there's life – in shul, however modest – not in a burial place, however trendy.

Lessons learned in Istanbul

I recently travelled to Istanbul for a trip I have wanted to make for many years. The first author to inspire me to visit the city was Shai Agnon. When I read his Bilvav Yamim (In the Heart of the Seas) in my youth, I was taken by this novella about a group of religious pilgrims on their journey of aliyah. Their last taste of land and of the Diaspora was Constantinople (Istanbul), and Agnon paints a humorous picture of the place – fantastic, whimsical, and as upside-down as the Diaspora was for these proto-Zionists. Since then, Istanbul kept appearing in books I was reading, fiction and non-fiction.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

After a while, I felt the need to explore the city and its rich history first hand. I wasn't disappointed, and I was greatly assisted by reading *in situ* authors such as Orhan Pamuk, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 2006, and Irfan Orga.

Strangely, except for a visit to the Jewish museum and to a kosher butcher, I didn't have contact with the Jewish community, due to an innocent failure in logistics, but my visit had other purposes.

What overwhelmed me were the remnants of past civilizations that, in their time, were as advanced in their engineering and as sophisticated in their esthetics as we can imagine. The huge fifth-century water cistern of Justinian, with its perfect geometry and state-of-the-art construction techniques, make our Blackberries pale in comparison. The storytelling beauty of the mosaic palace floor compares favourably with any art produced since. In fact, the upside-down Medusa in the cistern is pre-Picasso Picasso!

Yes, we can compare our scientific progress and our esthetic development to that of past cultures, but the one area in which we have not progressed at all is in the domain of human values. The Byzantines, the Ottomans and even Mustafa Kemal Ataturk all adopted and adapted values that were originally taught at Sinai. (You didn't think I had forgotten my Jewish agenda?) They refracted them through the various prisms of Christianity, Islam and the modern nation state, and yet there has been no progress at all in this life-critical realm.

Indeed, some would argue that we have regressed in all realms because of the amorality of human history (see Ronald Wright's brilliant essay A Short History of Progress, which was based on the 2004 CBC Massey Lectures). The technology of the 20th century made it the bloodiest yet. The start of the 21st gives us little hope.

While we can't neglect our constant scientific searching and the poetry that makes life worthwhile, education must take a radical turn to give human values their proper curricular due. If that is true in the big wide world, how much more demanding is it in the tiny sliver that we inhabit as the Jewish People.

During the recent festival of Shavuot, we celebrated the second cosmic moment of our history, the Revelation at Sinai, where we took on the responsibility to act as values-mentors to the world. But with all of the sophisticated educational techniques we have mastered, are we, in fact, teaching those values to our very own children? Can we identify them and reveal their beauty in the old books and their relevance to new dilemmas? Do we know how to transmit them so that they pass from generation to generation?

My voyage to Istanbul converged with some thinking I have been engaged in lately regarding the teaching of Jewish values as a primary curricular concern rather than a by-product of other Jewish teaching. It all seems rather obvious, and yet, it wouldn't shock me to find that most educational settings (especially schools) teach texts, language, and history as primary subjects with the hope that values will come through somehow. What often shocks parents is my assertion that the Jewish studies curriculum in a day school (if taught well) is more important than the general studies domain, since the former has the potential for teaching values, an area in which humanity has not progressed at all.

Perhaps that bit of Diaspora soil in Istanbul has hidden lessons that Agnon was all too aware of.

The future of Holocaust memory

Of the difficulty in writing about the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel once observed, "Whoever has not lived through the event can never know it. And whoever has lived through it can never fully reveal it."

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

And yet, beginning immediately after and continuing into the present, survivors of the genocide launched against the Jews of Europe plunge into the depths of memory, determined to leave a tangible record of the past for future generations. The written, oral and videotaped recollections retrieve not only a large, collective history but also personal, individual stories.

There is, however, a disturbing countertrend: the growing list of memoir hoaxes. These books, purporting to be autobiographies by Holocaust survivors, are in actuality falsified memories, put forth by people who are not what they claim to be. Whether the product of delusion or of cool calculation, more than 60 years after the end of World War II, such claims of victimization and survival threaten to blur the boundary between historical truth and fantasy. Left unchallenged, falsified memoirs can threaten the public perception of the credibility of Holocaust memoirs more generally.

Perhaps the most widely known case is that of Binjamin Wilkomirski, whose slender volume, Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood, claimed to be the impressionistic but vivid memories of a very young Jewish child who survived several concentration camps after witnessing the murder of his father. First published in 1995, Fragments met with great acclaim, and garnered major literary awards. By 2000, the book was proven to be false, its author a Swiss, non-Jewish man raised by adoptive parents after his single mother relinquished him to an orphanage. In archival videotaped testimony, Wilkomirski appears convinced of the truth of his fabricated past. Some researchers conjecture that his invented memories are metaphors for his inner state, either by deliberate choice or delusion.

More recently, a memoir by Misha Defonseca, first released in 1997, was proven to be fraudulent. Published under the titles Misha: A Memoire of the Holocaust Years and Surviving with Wolves, the book relates the story of a young Belgian Jewish girl whose parents were deported to Auschwitz. Determined to be reunited with them, she walks across war-torn Europe, reaching as far as Ukraine and back again. Along the way, she is adopted by a family of wolves, nurtured by the mother wolf and accepted by the cubs as one of their own. In an interesting twist, before the book was exposed as a hoax, the author sued her U.S. publisher for not sufficiently publicizing the book and was awarded more than $22 million.

Several scholars of Holocaust studies noted the unlikeliness of either of these memoirs being authentic; some even warned the publisher prior to publication. And yet a large segment of the reading public seized upon these works, embracing them as moving and revealing records of a past that their authors, in actuality, had never experienced.

The falsification of Holocaust memory is different from Holocaust fiction – different, that is, from works that deliberately and openly employ the artistic licence, devices and resources of literature to reflect upon and represent the past. Holocaust literature can illuminate our understanding of the past and our relationship to it. False memoirs muddy the waters. And, as the war years recede further into the past, our culture will become more vulnerable to such hoaxes.

All the more reason, then, to read and to recommend memoirs by authors whose truth contract with readers and with the past is upheld. Memoirs by Holocaust survivors – such as the series published this month by Azrieli Foundation in partnership with York University's Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies – provide a counterweight to the more sensational, scandalous cases. The details of memory etch the catastrophe into the historical record. Just as importantly, they illuminate the richness of everyday life and Jewish culture before and after the war, and the resonances of the past in our own lives.

Taken together, the shards of individual memory work to reconstruct a sense of the past that, as Wiesel notes, of necessity remains incomplete, never fully knowable.

The Kirshner File

The Madoff fiasco

Novelist Elie Wiesel, broadcaster Larry King, film director Steven Spielberg, World Trade Center developer Larry Silverstein and Hall of Fame baseball pitcher Sandy Koufax all have something in common apart from being Jewish.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

They are among thousands of investors who lost tons of money in an amazingly elaborate Ponzi pyramid scheme hatched and administered by rogue New York financier Bernard Madoff, who was arrested last December after telling two senior employees, his sons Andrew and Mark, and FBI agents that he had defrauded individual investors and Jewish charities.

By all accounts, his company, Bernard L. Madoff Securities, swindled clients of $65 billion (US), a world record.

On March 12, in a federal courtroom in Manhattan, Madoff admitted his guilt for the first time in public and apologized to his victims. "I knew what I was doing was wrong, indeed criminal," he said. "As the years went by, I realized this day, and my arrest, would inevitably come."

Acknowledging that he had "deeply hurt" many people, he added, "I cannot adequately express how sorry I am for what I have done."

Madoff, 70, was charged with 11 counts of fraud, money laundering, perjury and theft, which carry maximum terms totalling 150 years. Shortly after he pleaded guilty, a federal appeals judge denied a request by his lawyer that he be released from the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan and allowed to return to his multimillion-dollar penthouse apartment.

Scheduled to be sentenced later this month, he will probably spend the rest of his days in prison.

The fate he so richly deserves may mollify his victims to some degree. Yet the vast majority are not ever likely to recover their funds. Irving Picard, a court-appointed trustee, has so far identified about $1 billion in assets so that a financial settlement can be reached. Yet there may be more assets out there. Newly filed court documents show that Madoff and his wife, Ruth, have a personal net worth of $823 million, which includes real estate in New York, Florida and France, jewelry, artwork, furniture, automobiles and a yacht.

In the meantime, Madoff's victims stew in anger and disbelief. Wiesel, who lost his life savings, told the New York Times, "This man knew what he was doing. I would simply call him thief, scoundrel, criminal. Psychopath – it's too nice a word for him."

Wiesel's disclaimer notwithstanding, Madoff shares most of the traits typically associated with a psychopath. A charlatan of epic proportions, he is a liar and manipulator, and possesses an ability to deceive and behave callously.

Who could have known?

Known as a charismatic, amiable man who supposedly treated his employees like family, Madoff exuded a mesmerizing effect.

"What is lost amid the fury of some of those who handed their money over to him is that theirs was a voluntary – nay, eager – association," writes novelist Daphne Merkin, whose brother, Ezra, a prominent financier and philanthropist, steered more than $2 billion of his clients' money into Madoff's fund. "No one was holding a gun to anyone's head, saying sign up with Mr. Madoff or else. Far from it: people scrambled to find a home within his financial orbit, auditioning for the role of Madoff client… nudging connections to put in a good word, calling in favours to get in on a piece of the Madoff action."

In her view, Madoff fooled investors by conveying "a sense of mishpachah" and humanizing the cold, heartless, anonymous world of investment by giving it an avuncular face.

As she puts it, "He was the quintessential nice guy… He looked trustworthy."

In his courtroom appearance, Madoff claimed that he tried to "extricate" himself and his clients from disaster, but found it "impossible" to devise a successful exit strategy.

It may be true.

Madoff had an abiding and compelling interest in saving himself and staving off disgrace and ignominy. But like all Ponzi schemes, this one was also doomed to implode, since the American economy had shuddered into the gravest recession since the Great Depression.

Madoff, the former chair of Nasdaq, a major stock exchange, lured investors by pledging extraordinarily high returns.

For a while, he made good on his promise. But according to prosecutors, he directed his inexperienced and badly trained staff to generate false and fraudulent documents, told lies, generated phony records and funnelled hundreds of millions of dollars from bank to bank to foster an illusion of active trading.

Discredited financier Bernard Madoff heads into court in Manhattan.

The Madoff magic worked, thanks to laxness on the part of the Security and Exchange Commission – a federal government regulatory body – and of fund managers who ignored warning signs.

Aside from duping individuals such as Montreal-born New York developer and newspaper proprietor Mortimer Zuckerman and Quebec ski resort operator Phil Robinson, Madoff also cheated banks (including the Royal Bank of Canada), Yeshiva University, and Jewish charitable organizations from the American Jewish Congress to Hadassah-WIZO.

Several of these groups have been so grievously harmed that Mark Charendoff of the Jewish Funders Network has described the debacle as "an atomic bomb in Jewish philanthropy."

Madoff has cost Wiesel's foundation $15 million, Yeshiva University $110 million and the American Jewish Congress roughly $21 million of its $24 million endowment fund. "It's a serious blow," said its acting co-executive director, Marc Stern.

Hadassah was fleeced of a reported $90 million.

In Israel, the impact has been felt profoundly as well.

Yad Sarah, a volunteer organization created by the former mayor of Jerusalem, Uri Lupolianski, and admired for its assistance to sick, disabled and elderly Israelis, lost approximately $1.5 million.

Youth in Distress, which helps homeless and neglected Jewish and Arab youth, invested $850,000 with Madoff, all of which has disappeared. The American-Israel Cultural Foundation, which has supported musicians such as Daniel Barenboim and Itzhak Perlman, has been hit hard, too. At least two foundations, the Chais Family Foundation and the Yeshaya Horowitz Association, have been forced to close or freeze operations.

Letters and e-mail messages released by the United States Attorney's office for the southern district of New York attest to the fact that many of the victims were not just rich and famous but ordinary middle-class people who assumed that they were placing their hard-earned savings into a safe and conservative fund.

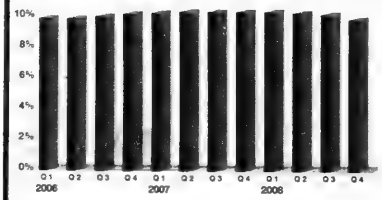
"I liken this situation to a domestic holocaust," wrote a New Jersey construction worker. "Mr. Madoff took my hopes, dreams and self-esteem," lamented a divorced elderly woman. "I am at my wits' end."

Sadly but inevitably, Madoff's machinations have played into the hands of anti-Semitic stereotypes and myths.

In a statement, the Anti-Defamation League said that his arrest had prompted an outpouring of derogatory comments on anti-Jewish websites.

Lest it be forgotten, there are rotten apples in every barrel. Many of the investors who took Madoff at his word and trusted him to safeguard their precious assets are Jewish. Madoff could not have cared less.

Be cautious. Be wise. Invest prudently.



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Leo Baeck launches new siddur

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

It's no fluke that Leo Baeck Day School administrators chose the morning of Erev Shavuot – the eve of the holiday that celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai – to launch its new siddur, according to Eric Petersiel.

The driving force behind the siddur's creation, Petersiel is principal of Leo Baeck's south campus, housed at Holy Blossom Temple. He will become head of school in September.

At the siddur launch, held at Holy Blossom May 28, Petersiel said, "We hope it will be the bridge that will lead students to a life of Jewish experience."

The attractive, hard-cover siddur is a slim, user-friendly volume that includes the Shacharit service, Kabbalat Shabbat, the core of the Minchah service, prayers said in the home, Zmirot, and accompanying commentary by Baruch Sienna, who edited the book.

A second volume for students in grades 1 through 4 is being planned to supplement the new one, which is for grades 5 to 8.

According to a news release, Leo Baeck is, to the best of anyone's knowledge there, the only school in Canada to create and produce its own siddur.

Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld, chair of the school's board of directors, said the siddur is "a watershed" for the school, and marks its coming of age.

When Leo Baeck was established some 36 years ago, he recalled, there were fewer than 40 students and teachers housed in cramped classrooms at Temple Emanu-El, where Rabbi Bielfeld is rabbi emeritus.

Today, the school has a total of more than 900 students and faculty on two campuses.

The siddur's text not only reflects rabbinic wisdom, but "invites young inquiring minds to ponder, and even challenge, the wisdom of the rabbis," Rabbi Bielfeld said.

He praised its "economy of words, and a language that speaks to the heart as well as to the intellect." As well, he spoke of the design of the siddur's pages, which "delight the eye with their imaginative drawings," done by students at the school.

The rabbi also noted the siddur's "embrace of rituals that were once abandoned and disregarded by some of our former generations of Reform Jews.

"And yet," he continued, "it is unapologetic in affirming the unique contribution of the Reform movement to the liturgy of our people."

The project, which Petersiel conceived of about six years ago, brought the school community closer together, said Brian Simon, president of Leo Baeck's board.

After being on hold for a few years, the siddur project was adopted by the school's Nachas Club, made up of grandparents of students. As well, the school's parents' association assisted in funding it, Simon said.

The objective, he added, "was to create a professional and high quality book that would serve as a symbol of the school's culture and character and that would meet our students' needs."

Students and teachers from both Leo Baeck campuses, school founders, supporters and alumni gathered for a song-filled siddur launch led by Grade 8 students at the school's Holy Blossom campus. Pictured, from left, are music teacher Randy Starr, supporter Leslie Dan, school alumna Hannah Davis reading Torah, and south campus principal Eric Petersiel. **[Rebecca Ansel photo]**

SKYPING AT BAYCREST

Andy Engel, an 87-year-old resident at Baycrest's Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, enjoys a morning visit with his son, Paul, who lives in California. Baycrest is testing a new program – using the Internet, Skype software and webcams – that aims to give all residents a chance to have virtual visits with family anywhere in the world. It's seeking people to help out. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 to volunteer.

[Kelly Connelly photo]

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Holocaust Memoir Series set for June 15

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

When Nechama Tec was told Daniel Craig would play the role of wartime partisan Tuvia Bielsky in the movie Defiance, her initial reaction was to ask, "Daniel who?"

Nechama Tec

She was quite familiar with the Bielsky part of the equation, having based her book, Defiance, on his story and those of the Jews he saved during the Holocaust.

But Craig?

Tec, a sociologist by profession and a Holocaust survivor herself, was unfamiliar with Craig, who gained international acclaim as the latest James Bond. Nevertheless, she's "extremely happy" with the way the film turned out, including, no doubt, Craig's performance.

Tec, who is currently working on a book that will contrast Jewish and non-Jewish resistance to the Nazis in eastern Europe, will be in Toronto next week to address the Holocaust Survivor Memoir Series, a free event that will be held at the Winter Garden Theatre.

Sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation, the June 15 event will see the launch of eight new paperback memoirs of Holocaust survivors, published by the foundation. The survivors, their children or grandchildren will read from the books.

Defiance, which Tec completed in 1993, is a scholarly work and "rarely" does such a work become a popular movie. Not only does it tell the story of how Bielsky and his brothers saved Jews, it instructs the wider world in a reality that is all too often ignored – that Jews were not all passive victims of the Nazis, she said.

"There were lots of instances in communities where there was resistance."

Allied armies took years to defeat the Hitler war machine, so Jewish resistance "couldn't succeed, but if it occurred in any way, it was a miracle," she said.

The 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising might be the most well-known act of resistance, but there were other revolts in ghettoes, concentration camps, and the death camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibor.

Though there was no chance of defeating the Nazis, "there was a decision, a need to retain some of their human autonomy, their Jewish selfhood. They wanted to make a statement," she said.

Tec said she came to the Bielsky story almost by accident. She had been interviewing survivor Oswald Rufeisen for another book, In The Lion's Den. During the war, Rufeisen passed as a half-German, half-Polish member of the German gendarmerie, where he used his position to help Jews in trouble.

Eventually he had to flee – after helping 305 Jews escape a ghetto – and he eventually became a partisan under Bielsky. When Tec interviewed Bielsky to corroborate that story, she learned that while Rufeisen had saved 305 Jews, Bielsky had saved 1,200.

Fascinated by the Bielsky story, she interviewed him several times and after close to 10 years, she published Defiance. (Her books often take eight to 10 years to write, as she has several projects on the go at any one time.)

Tec is pleased the Azrieli Foundation is choosing to highlight the memoirs of Holocaust survivors. "It promotes and increases our knowledge of the history of that period," she said.

Naomi Azrieli, chair and executive director of the foundation, which is named for her father, developer David Azrieli, said that in recent years it has invested substantial sums and efforts to gather and publish the memoirs of Holocaust survivors.

Since 2005, when the foundation began soliciting manuscripts, it has gathered some 170 memoirs, ranging from 20 pages in length to more than 900 pages. They are accepted "as is." Some were written in Yiddish, some in Romanian, Hungarian and other languages.

Each year, the foundation publishes seven to 10 books. They're translated and edited "very lightly" to ensure the writer's "voice" is retained while ensuring the writing remains "clear and accessible," Azrieli said.

"They are more than a historical record," she said. "The memoirs are personal recollections. Sometimes they are not a perfect chronology [of events], but they contain the personal recollection of important stories."

Six thousand copies of each book are printed and a digital file of each is posted on the Internet for free downloading (www.azrielifoundation.org).

About 3,000 of the books are distributed free of charge to public libraries across Canada, and they're also offered to schools. "Our aim is to have these stories known, particularly in upper high school and colleges, and in book clubs," Azrieli said.

So far, the feedback about the program has been excellent,. "You get the sense of the person's life and how they experienced it, and how they remember," Azrieli said.

The stories possess a universal message that appeals beyond the Jewish community. They have particular resonance in immigrant groups who fled political strife before starting new lives in Canada, she added.

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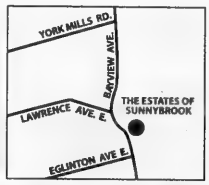

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Water can be found in unexpected places, prof says

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Hydrology is an area that has the scientific community's attention, specifically regarding methods of water treatment, Brian Berkowitz says.

Even with the $400 billion that have been invested in water treatments, there are two questions we still need to ask ourselves, he said: first, do we know how to protect ourselves, and second, do we know what to look for?

A professor at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, Berkowitz said that since the hydrological cycle is a closed system – meaning there is no beginning or end to it – we are never in danger of completely running out of water, as there are always places where it can be accessed, besides obvious ones like lakes and rivers.

"The vast majority of the world's water is underground, stored in the pores and cracks of rocks," he said.

The key problem is water quality, he said. There are thousands of potentially hazardous contaminants that end up in our water supply as waste by-products, including industrial substances, agrochemicals, domestic products, heavy metals and biological elements. These products often don't get broken down, making them difficult to manage, he said at a lecture on "Water, Energy and the Environment: Science and Sustainability," sponsored by Weizmann Science Canada and the Israel Chamber of Commerce.

In the presentation at the Park Hyatt Hotel last month, Berkowitz referred to the give and take nature of the various water treatment methods used as a "zero-sum game… [that is] sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose," he said.

In speaking of water and the environment with respect to water flow and precipitation, he illustrated in his presentation that Israel tries to incorporate a prevention and mediation technique that involves predicting contaminant transport patterns through lab analysis of water movement.

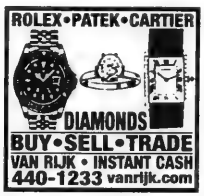
Several desalination methods have been tried with varying degrees of success. Hadera, a city in southern Israel, is home to the world's largest desalination plant, built in 2005. Berkowitz said desalination, which involves the removal of salt and harmful minerals from water, is the best method of water treatment available today.

One desalination technique used is in-situ/ex-situ pump treatment, involving the excavation of water from wells for purification. This gets rid of chlorine molecules in the water so that the contaminants can degrade at a faster rate.

Other methods include the oxidation of industrial effluents, which "is considered extremely cost efficient… and yields excellent results"; air injection, which "causes significant reduction of hydraulic conductivity and volumetric fluid flow"; and Poleris carbon sequestration, which "turns carbon dioxide into rock."

In a news report illustrating Israel's leadership in this area, shown prior to Berkowitz's presentation, American news broadcaster Dan Rather spoke of the booming Israeli scientific community. Israel has more scientists and researchers per capita than any other country in the world, Rather said, and since its inception in 1934, the Weizmann Institute of Science has earned over 200 patents and $100 million for discoveries involving high-tech security and medicine.

Despite the progress that has been made, Berkowitz said that Israel "has no choice but to build more desalination plants."



EMUNAH AWARDS: At its recent Family-in-Israel Dinner, Emunah Women of Toronto presented awards to students with outstanding extra-curricular and community service involvement who will be studying in seminaries in Israel next year. Pictured, from left are Joyce Rifkind, award committee co-chair; Ulpanat Orot graduates and award winners Tikva Shore, Sarah Malka Berger and Estie Roz, and Bonnie Silver, award committee co-chair. [Rebecca Ansel photo]

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Settlements aren't the obstacle to peace

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Since the White House meeting on May 18 between U.S President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, there has been intense media focus on their disagreement over the issue of settlements. While accepting a halt to new settlement construction, Netanyahu has rejected Obama's opposition to "natural growth" of existing settlements. Nevertheless, several Israeli analysts have pointed out that although contentious, the issue of settlements is not, contrary to popular misconception, *the* major stumbling block to a possible peace deal.

For one thing, the settlement matter, though undeniably a complicating factor on which even Israeli opinion is divided, is resolvable. In fact, at the Camp David and Taba negotiations (in 2000-01), there was general agreement that a very small percentage of the western part of the West Bank, where about 75 per cent of the settlers live in blocs around Jerusalem, would be incorporated into Israel in exchange for Israeli land that would be transferred to the Palestinians. (It's important to remember that these negotiations foundered not on settlements, but on then-Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat's refusal to recognize any Jewish claim to Jerusalem.)

Barack Obama

In his May 28 Globe and Mail article, "The politics behind the West Bank settlement fight," Patrick Martin correctly noted the compromise involving the settlement blocs, but incorrectly wrote that Obama (along with PA President Mahmoud Abbas) said that settlements "are the biggest single obstacle to peace." In fact, Obama, consistent with the policy of several previous U.S. administrations, maintains only that settlements are *an* obstacle to peace. But, again, this is something that is resolvable and, indeed, had moved to resolution several years ago.

What are far greater obstacles to peace, though they receive relatively scant media attention, are the Palestinians' refusal to recognize Jewish sovereign legitimacy (the source of Arafat's rejection of the Jewish historical and religious attachment to Jerusalem, and, arguably, Abbas' refusal to acknowledge Israel as the Jewish state), and their insistence on the "right of return" of Palestinian refugees to present-day Israel.

In a rare but exceptionally revealing look at Abbas' rigidity, the Washington Post's Jackson Diehl ("Abbas's waiting game" May 29), noted the onus that Obama has placed on Netanyahu regarding the settlement issue and the explicit endorsement of a "two-state" solution – long accepted in principle by the majority of Israelis. However, Diehl then wrote the following about the Palestinian leader:

"But Palestinians remain a long way from swallowing reality as well. Setting aside Hamas and its insistence that Israel must be liquidated, Abbas – usually described as the most moderate of Palestinian leaders – last year helped doom Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, by rejecting a generous outline for Palestinian statehood."

Diehl added that, in an interview with the Post, "Abbas acknowledged that Olmert had shown him a map proposing a Palestinian state on 97 per cent of the West Bank – though he complained that the Israeli leader refused to give him a copy of the plan. He confirmed that Olmert 'accepted the principle' of the 'right of return' of Palestinian refugees – something no previous Israeli prime minister had done – and offered to resettle thousands in Israel. In all, Olmert's peace offer was more generous to the Palestinians than either that of [former U.S. presidents George W.] Bush or Bill Clinton; it's almost impossible to imagine Obama, or any Israeli government, going further.

"Abbas turned it down. 'The gaps were wide,' he said."

(It should be noted that while Olmert's offers to Abbas were indeed generous, he did not accept a "right of return" as a principle – that would be an impossible demand for any Israeli leader.)

Shedding more light on the issue, Abbas' chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, told Al Jazeera TV (March 27) that when Olmert raised the Jewish claim to the Temple Mount, Abbas, (like Arafat almost a decade ago) defiantly uttered "I am not in the marketplace or bazaar. I came to demarcate the borders of Palestine – the June 4, 1967 borders [when the Old City including the Temple Mount and the Western Wall were under exclusive Jordanian control] – without detracting a single inch, and without detracting a single stone from Jérusalem, or from the holy Christian and Muslim places." Erekat added: "This is why the Palestinian negotiators did not sign."

This hardline, rejectionist Palestinian attitude is why Obama's confrontation with Netanyahu over settlements will almost certainly have no effect in addressing the real obstacles to peace.

* * *

This column was written before U.S. President's Barack Obama's speech last week in Cairo. Watch for analysis of media reaction next week.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Jewish Life

Wedding customs can vary widely

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

For different reasons, the month of June is known as wedding month for Jews and non-Jews alike.

In a Jewish wedding ceremony, there are literally dozens of minhagim (customs).

Sephardi and Ashkenazi weddings have the same essential components: a chupah, the first blessings with wine, the giving of an item of value by the groom to the bride, the ketubah (the marital agreement), the *Sheva Brachot* (the seven blessings) and the shattering of a glass at some point.

Beyond the basics, local custom comes into play.

The first item that comes to mind is the very location where weddings take place. Ashkenazi custom suggests that they take place under open sky, whereas Sephardi custom expects the ceremony to take place in a synagogue. In fact, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the bride and groom are called upon to stand before the open Ark and offer their personal prayers for their future together.

One reason for this difference is that Sephardi Jews lived in countries where Islam prevailed, whereas Ashkenazi Jews' host countries were mostly Christian. Getting married in a house of worship was, therefore, deemed "churchy" and shunned altogether infavour of the outdoors and open sky. In Muslim lands, no such statement of differentiation was necessary.

The ketubah itself, a legally binding document, has many variances. The Ashkenazi monetary value of the ketubah remains numerically as it was since its inception in talmudic times, at 200 or 100 zuzim for first and subsequent matrimonies, respectively. The monetary figure of the Sephardi ketubah is in the prevailing currency and usually in multiples of Chai (18), or of five, such as 55,555, since in numeric mythology, the number five – as in "hamsa" – has inherent energy to overcome the evil eye of jealousy.

Another noteworthy difference in the Sephardi ketubah is the stipulation that the groom agrees to marry one wife only. Here again, the reason is geographic. Polygamy, of course, is wholly condoned in biblical Judaism. But, as previously noted, Ashkenazi Jews lived in Christian societies, which viewed polygamy very negatively and would have characterized Jews and Judaism as primitive, base and contemptible if they persisted in practising it. Rabenu Gershon, in 10th century Germany, thus disallowed the practice of being married to more than one wife simultaneously.

In contrast, for Sephardi Jews living in Islamic lands and among men for whom multiple wives are commonplace to this very day, no such taboo presented itself. Hence, couples would voluntarily stipulate that they would remain just that – a couple.

Other differences: women in Sephardi weddings don't begin the ceremony by circling the groom three or seven times. As well, the chupah itself differs from community to community. In Yemenite weddings, it's essentially non-existent. The groom wears a tallit and simply spreads it over the head of his bride, which then serves as a chupah. The custom of the eastern Sephardim and communities of Spanish and Portuguese Jews is that the bride and the mothers sit enthroned under the chupah while the men stand before them during the ceremony.

In Jewish marriages, distinct roles are allocated to men and women, something that's perhaps not easily accepted among people with contemporary attitudes. The running of the home and the family are the purview of the wife, whereas the religious/spiritual direction and pace is the man's department. To affirm this division of roles, it's the Sephardi custom that during the wedding itself, the groom symbolically and ever so slightly steps over the foot of the bride.

I will always warmly remember my beloved rebbe, Rabbi Tzvi Pruzansky of blessed memory – a man who proudly and staunchly upheld Ashkenazi custom, particularly that of the venerated Litvak tradition – quietly leaning over my shoulder as my own chupah was about to begin and instructing me to slightly step over the foot of my bride.

"It is a good thing to do," he said.

Apparently, with or without our realization, while our respective customs may differ, we have more in common than we give ourselves credit for.

Students flock to support Israel

The sight of Israeli flags and pro-Israel signs around Toronto on May 24 was awe-inspiring. They were everywhere. Students of all ages, from grade school to university, and from across Canada, joined forces with their fellow Jews to walk in support of Israel.

ON CAMPUS
By Justin Dahan

The annual, community-wide Walk With Israel is organized by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. This year, it collected donations in support of Bat Yam's Ethioplan-Israeli community. The money will help the Ethiopians integrate into the community and hopefully have a better life. In the end, some $400,000 was raised in support of this noble cause.

AEPi, the Jewish fraternity, didn't have an official role in the walk, but unofficially, members of AEPi from the University of Toronto, York University, McMaster University, the University of Guelph, Queen's University, the University of Ottawa and others were a strong presence and collected numerous donations.

Through this event, the federation was able to show how many supporters there are of Israel. The walk gave people who may not be very involved in the Jewish community an opportunity to support their beliefs and feel like they're part of something. No matter the age, everyone was unified, walking together for a common cause.

Jewish students at York have spent the year facing anti-Zionist rallies and demonstrations. At times, they've felt intimidated and isolated as a result. There is strong Jewish leadership at York. Ilan Mann, president of York's AEPi chapter, and Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York, have spent many hours and the majority of the year trying to combat the hostile environment at their school.

York students were able to see first-hand how many people beyond their campus feel the same way they do. This event helped to strengthen the Jewish community as well as raise money. It was a huge success in both respects.

The walk was not all positive. A few protesters met them along the way. Not in Our Name is a Jewish group that protests against Israel and Zionism. As it does every year, the group tried to disrupt the walk by holding signs opposing the walk's message. A few examples of the signs were as follows: "Jews in Solidarity with Gaza," "Jewish Voices Opposing Zionism," and, "Canada, Stop Funding Israel's War Machine."

Despite this attempt to sour the day, the event went off without a hitch. The protesters proved that although we have our detractors, we can still band together to overcome the challenges they present. The fact the protesters were outmatched is a testament to the fact that when we come together, our collective voice cannot be defeated.

Jewish Life

We're just doing what's required

CLASS ACT
By Daniel Held

It's graduation season. In the coming weeks tens of thousands of college, high school and even kindergarten students will march down the aisle with Pomp and Circumstance playing in the background.

Proud parents and grandparents, accompanied by bored siblings, will look on with pride as their loved ones receive a diploma with the left hand and shake with the right. Pictures will be taken, flowers will be given and caps will be tossed in the air.

What is the value of a diploma?

A university degree was once a symbol of a quality education. Attending university meant devoting four years to learning, reading, growing. It meant entrenching oneself in academia, spending quality time with professors, debating with peers and developing critical thinking.

Today, we have commodified education. Tuition is seen as an investment that will pay off with higher salaries and better jobs. The average college graduate will, over his lifetime, earn double the salary of a peer with only a high school diploma.

At the same time, the academic challenge of university has changed. As graduate students take on a larger portion of the teaching load, professors are becoming less available to students. With rising tuition fees, more students are forced to take on part-time jobs at the sacrifice of hours spent studying.

It is now nearly a universal norm that high school will end after Grade 12 and a university degree will be awarded after four years of study. Policies such as the American "no child left behind" only reinforce the mechanical nature of our educational system that is designed toward credentialing rather than educating.

Our Jewish system has undergone similar changes.

Becoming a bar mitzvah was once a demarcation of maturity and ability. No matter what age, after a child learned sufficient text, the rabbi of a community would assess the child's suitability to become a bar mitzvah – a son of the commandments. If the child was ready – both in terms of content knowledge and maturity – at the age of 10, he would take on the responsibilities of an adult at that age. If it wasn't felt he was suitably prepared until he reached 14, he would wait until the right time. This system challenged youths to learn and grow while making the bar mitzvah more than a birthday celebration, but rather a celebration of maturity.

A similar phenomena took place with smichah, rabbinic ordination. Preparation to become a rabbi was once a journey rather than a track. Students would begin learning under the tutelage of a specific rabbi. After years of study, the rabbi would (or would not) decide that the student was ready to receive the title rabbi and the authority and responsibility that comes along with it.

Recognizing the challenge of subjectivity associated with this form of personalized ordination, rabbinical schools today have a set curriculum of four or five years. Pending successful completion of this curriculum, without the other factors that once went into ordination, a student will "graduate" and earn the title rabbi.

I am not arguing for teachers to begin assigning F's or for bar mitzvah celebrations to be moved away from the 13th birthday. I am, however, suggesting that we have to see graduations and bar mitzvahs as more than simply the successful completion of a list of requirements.

I yearn for the day when students will sit down for a cup of coffee with a teacher to learn from them, rather than to squabble over a mark. I dream of students reading books on the "suggested" reading list distributed at the beginning of a semester, rather than simply skimming the articles on the "required" list.

The place for our community to start is the bar mitzvah. We have to transform the event from a perfunctory birthday celebration, which often marks the end of Hebrew school, into a rite of initiation marking the beginning of an active, individualized Jewish life.

Baseball and Judaism

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Question: What is God's favourite sport?

Answer: Baseball. Because the first words of the Bible are: "In the Big Inning." **[tinyurl.com/bsbll01]**

Although Judaism may be a bit older than baseball, the religion and the sport seem to have much in common.

Rabbi (and Red Sox fan) Mitchell Hurvitz writes that "to the uninformed eye, Jewish rituals or the rules of baseball would seem strange. Within both venues, there are rules for when to stand, touch your heart, and remove or place back your head covering. The rabbi interprets the Torah, and the umpire interprets the rules of baseball. Judaism wants you to walk God's path, without getting out of line, and the same is true for running the bases toward 'home.'" **[tinyurl.com/bsbll02]**

Rabbi Richard Angler of Boca Raton's Congregation B'nai Israel sees many parallels between Judaism and baseball. Both are firmly rooted in history, for instance. Just as "every baseball game is part of every other baseball game that has ever been played… We say that when a Jew is born we are already 4,000 years old… Judaism, like baseball, like family, like everything of value in life works best when we make the long-term commitment to it." **[tinyurl.com/bsbll03]**

For Neil Rubin, the timing of the start of the baseball season says it all. "Funny how it always coincides with Passover, which is about our birth as a nation with one focus – reaching the Promised Land (the World Series), and about coming from the evils of Egypt (a dark, wet winter)." And then there are the personal memories of Baltimore's Memorial Stadium. While everyone else is feasting on soft pretzels and Coke, Neil munched on matzah, macaroons and Passover soda. "If you can keep the faith on opening day, we all agreed, you can be a Jew anywhere, anytime." **[tinyurl.com/bsbll04]**

Half a century ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe asked a visiting bar mitzvah boy about his favourite game. When he responded "baseball," the Rebbe explained the special lesson to a boy coming of age. "In your heart, you have a big field. The two sides are the *yetzer tov* – the good inclination – and the *yetzer hara* – the negative drives. Until now they played kids' stuff, but from now on the game's for real. Remember, just as in baseball, the side which plays best will win. If you only want to, you can always overcome your *yetzer hara*." **[tinyurl.com/bsbll05]**

Although Sandy Koufax famously sat out pitching on Yom Kippur, let's say the temptation was too great for Phillies fan David Bedein. In 1964, he took an afternoon detour on the second day of Rosh Hashanah to take in a game at Connie Mack Stadium. There was no joy in Philly that year, and David has always felt responsible. **[tinyurl.com/bsbll06]**

I'm not sure the mystics of Safed had baseball in mind when they compiled their esoteric teachings in the 16th century. (Or for that matter, there are no reports of Abner Doubleday dabbling in the Zohar.) But that hasn't stopped Reuven Goldfarb from writing his Baseball Kabbalah. In it, he provides indisputable parallels between the two mystical activities.

- The 10 players (nine plus batter) on the field correspond to the number of Sefirot (divine emanations) that constitute the kabbalistic tree of life.
- "What about the umpires? Easy. They're Dayanim (rabbinical judges). That's why they wear dark colors. Managers? Rebbes. Coaches? Gabbais."
- "And you've heard of the seventh inning stretch? Does that sound like Shabbat to you?" **[tinyurl.com/bsbll07]**

Now let's return to Rabbi Hurvitz for a few last thoughts. Something does perplex the rabbi. "For some, strange and unfathomable reason" his son roots for the Baltimore Orioles. He writes in the Greenwich Citizen, "When I go with my son to Camden Yards, and daven Minchah with him, I think I'll add a private prayer to my silent devotion time: 'God, thank you for the joys of life and the wisdom to create balance between body and spirit. Thank you for granting me a child who loves his Judaism as much as he loves his games. Thank you for allowing us the blessings of America, and each and every day. And God, please whisper in my son's ear to reconsider rooting for my Red Sox.'"

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Parliamentary coalition formed to fight anti-Semitism

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — A coalition of parliamentarians from all parties has been formed to conduct a national inquiry into anti-Semitism in Canada.

The group, known as the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA,) includes 21 members of Parliament and is divided into a steering committee chaired by Conservative MP Scott Reid and an inquiry panel chaired by Liberal MP Mario Silva.

Details of the CPCCA were unveiled at a June 2 press conference on Parliament Hill attended by many of its members as well as interested representatives of various Jewish group.

Liberal MP and noted human rights advocate Irwin Cotler introduced the CPCCA, providing background on how and why it was formed. He prefaced his remarks by quoting Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's recent remarks about his fears of the resurgence of global anti-Semitism: "I must confess to you, I have not felt the way I feel now since 1945. I feel there are reasons for us to be concerned, even afraid… now is the time to mobilize the efforts of all humanity."

Cotler added his own endorsement of the need for the CPCCA.

"Silence is not an option. The time has come not only to sound the alarm, but to act. For as history has taught us only too well [that] while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews," he said.

Reid echoed the sentiment, adding that "anti-Semitism is an affront to Canadian values." He read from the mission statement of the CPCCA, which "recognizes that anti-Semitism by its nature is fundamentally opposed to the multicultural identity of Canada and to the Canadian values of Human Rights and Human Dignity. It harnesses the goodwill of parliamentarians in all parties… in the struggle against this oldest and most enduring of hatreds."

Pictured from left are MPs Anita Neville, Raymonde Folco, Mario Silva, Irwin Cotler, Joyce Murray, James Lunney, Scott Reid and Judy Wasylycia-Leis. Partially obscured are Tim Uppal, David Sweet, Lois Brown and Senator Jerry Grafstein.

The inquiry panel will include seven members from the Liberal party, seven members from the Conservative party; and two each from the Bloc Québecois and the NDP, Silva said.

"Our Canadian values are eroded when people are unable to live without fear," he said.

The CPCCA is an independent body and will not be funded by the government, NGOs or Jewish organizations. It will only accept funding that won't compromise its mandate. It has applied for various grants and will disclose funding sources when they come through.

It is associated with the Interparliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, an international steering committee that organized a conference in London earlier this year.

The Canadian delegation was the largest single group, with 12 parliamentarians attending the London conference.

From now until the end of July, the CPCCA is inviting written submissions from individuals, groups or organizations on the subject of anti-Semitism in Canada.

Beginning this fall, committee members are hoping to travel to regions across the country to hear witness testimonies. The number and location of these meetings will depend on the committee's budget, which has yet to be determined. The public will be informed, however, when the schedule becomes available, and the hearings will be open to the public.

Following the hearings, a report will be drafted and submitted to the government of Canada.

In a statement, Mark Freiman, new president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, said it was "sad" that such a committee had to be formed and lamented that the lessons learned from the Holocaust seemed to be fading.

Congress said it will work with the coalition to combat anti-Semitism.

In a separate statement, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center's president and CEO Avi Benlolo hailed the formation of the coalition and said his organization would "support this inquiry and provide any required resources at its disposal."

Information regarding submission of evidence can be found at www.cpcca.ca

— With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

Baycrest Enriching Care
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Notice of Annual Meeting

Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
The Baycrest Day Care Centre
Baycrest Hospital
The Jewish Home for the Aged
and
The Baycrest Centre Foundation

Winter Garden, Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged
3560 Bathurst Street, Toronto

June 18, 2009 **RSVP:**
3 p.m. to 5 p.m. **416 785-2500, ext. 6303**

The following by-laws will be presented for approval:

Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care	By-law No. 3 - 2009
The Baycrest Day Care Centre	By-law No. 3 - 2009
Baycrest Hospital	By-law No. 3 - 2009
The Jewish Home for the Aged	By-law No. 3 - 2009

Each By-law No. 3 - 2009 of the above corporations enables only elected directors to vote at future meetings of the members. This is in keeping with recommendations of the Auditor General of Ontario regarding hospital governance. *By-law No. 3 preserves governors as members but removes their voting power as of July 1, 2009.* The quorum required to convene annual meetings is reduced to six voting members. By-law No. 3 confirms that the Investment Committee for each corporation is a joint committee of the corporation and The Baycrest Centre Foundation and that The Baycrest Centre Foundation determines the Investment Committee Chair.

The Baycrest Centre Foundation By-law No. 17

By-law No. 17 replaces the previous Foundation By-law and includes the following changes. References to the Men's Service Group and the Leadership Development Group have been repealed since these groups are now inactive. The composition of the Executive Committee has been expanded to include standing committee Chairs, the President of the Women's Auxiliary, and the Chair of Baycrest. An independent Finance Committee and an independent Audit Committee replace the former Finance and Audit Committee which was joint with Baycrest. The Investment Committee remains a joint committee with a majority of members and its Chair appointed by the Foundation. A new Fundraising Cabinet will report to the Chair of the Donor Development Committee. Board members may now serve an unlimited number of three-year terms in office, subject to nomination by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

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Govt., opposition craft their own bills for terror victims

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Canada now has two competing legislative initiatives to help victims of terror sue terror groups and states that sponsor them – one put forward by the government, the other by members of the opposition.

At the 29th plenary of Canadian Jewish Congress earlier this month, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that his government is tabling new legislation to allow Canadian victims of terrorism to sue for redress.

Last week, Liberal MPs Irwin Cotler and Bob Rae announced that they have drafted a similar bill that contrasts with the government's Justice for Victims of Terrorism act, which they contend "does not adequately protect the rights of victims."

The government's legislation, Bill C-35, went through first reading in the House of Commons on June 2.

Cotler's opposing legislation was tabled June 4.

The government bill is intended to "allow any person who can demonstrate a real and substantial connection between their cause of action and Canada to sue in a Canadian court the foreign states that perpetrate and support terrorism. Plaintiffs can seek redress for terrorist acts committed anywhere in the world on, or after, 1 January 1985," according to the Ministry of Public Safety's website.

In its current form, Bill C-35 would allow victims who win their cases to "request assistance from the ministers of foreign affairs and finance to identify and locate the [defendant's] assets under Canadian jurisdiction of the state."

Failure to comply with a verdict could "expose the defendant to seizure of assets and property."

Bernie Farber

But the government cautions plaintiffs that if defendants have assets located in jurisdictions other than Canada, plaintiffs would have to "follow the process of the foreign state for recognition of the judgment and subsequently take necessary measures to execute the judgment in that country."

Bill C-35 would amend the current State Immunity Act by lifting immunity for states listed by Canada as "supporters of terrorism."

The Cotler and Rae legislation, tabled as Bill C-408, features most of the same legal measures as Bill C-35, but "does not shield itself behind an escape clause that renders it completely ineffective until foreign states are named on a case-by-case basis. Such an approach politicizes justice," Cotler told the House in introducing his bill last week, referring to the government's proposed legislation.

When asked to clarify the major difference between the bills, a spokesperson for Cotler told The CJN that the Liberal initiative would not require the government to name a foreign state to have its immunity from Canadian prosecution lifted. Rather, it could be lifted during a plaintiff's court proceedings, freeing the government from the potential politically messy act of calling out other states as sponsors of terror.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber praised both the government and the Cotler-Rae legal initiatives as being devices that would provide "self empowerment" to Canadians victimized by "the sad reality" of terrorism.

"We have been very supportive of this [legal] concept for a long time," Farber told The CJN. "We have here a situation where all [parties] are embracing the concept of this legislation."

He added that regardless of which bill becomes law, "at the very least we're going to have a situation where Canadians can take personal action, and I think that's good."

Court to decide if Montreal builders can be sued for W. Bank construction

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A Quebec court will decide whether a lawsuit against two Canadian-based companies that are alleged to have illegally constructed residential buildings for Jewish settlers on disputed land in the West Bank can be heard here.

On June 22, 23 and 25, Quebec Superior Court is scheduled to hear a motion from the firms' lawyer to dismiss the case.

The lawsuit, filed last July by the municipal council of the Palestinian village of Bil'in and one of its residents, claims that the companies, Green Mount International and Green Park International, which are registered in Quebec, are violating international and Canadian law.

If the motions to dismiss are rejected, it would be the first time that any foreign court has agreed to hear a suit against a corporation for construction of Jewish settlements on territory under dispute between Palestinians and Israelis.

Lawsuit filed by Palestinian village and one of its residents

The companies' lawyer, Ronald Levy, denounced the suit as "a media exercise intended to besmirch Israel; they don't care if they win or not, they just want attention. We consider this an abusive action."

Levy has filed three motions outlining why a Quebec court shouldn't hear the case. The first main argument is that Israeli courts have determined that the individual plaintiff, Ahmed Issa Abdallah Yassin, was not the owner of the land on which the companies built. Yassin, who was head of the village council, died this year and his heirs are now named. In addition, Levy said the village itself can't be a plaintiff, only its residents.

The second argument is that because this is a civil matter, it's justiciable only where the alleged grievance happened, and the third, closely related, is that there is no aspect of this case that places it under the jurisdiction of a Canadian court.

"The fact that the companies are registered in Quebec is irrelevant," Levy said.

Emily Schaeffer, the Israeli lawyer representing the plaintiffs, held a press conference outside the Montreal courthouse on June 4 to outline the arguments she, with Canadian lead lawyer Mark Arnold of Toronto, will be making.

Their case is based primarily on Canada's 2000 Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, which ratified its obligations under the Rome Statutes of the International Criminal Court. They include a prohibition against an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into territory occupied as a result of war, which is also contained in the Geneva Conventions.

She said that while the case was lost in Israel, an argument based on international humanitarian law was not made "because Israeli courts never consider violations of international law" in such cases. "The Israeli government holds that this is state land, and that it has legitimate title… [Any contestation of that] is considered a political discussion and not for legal debate."

The U.S.-born Schaeffer said there's a precedent for a foreign court deciding it has jurisdiction to hear a lawsuit against a company from its country involving territory disputed by Israel and the Palestinians. The French company Veolia was sued in a French court for its construction of a tram line between west and east Jerusalem, she said, although that is now being appealed.

Montreal was the first stop on an 11-city cross-Canada tour that Schaeffer was scheduled to make leading up to June 22. She is publicizing the plight of the residents of Bil'in, a village of about 1,800 west of Ramallah near the Israeli security barrier.

For the past four years, Bil'in and its international supporters have been contesting the loss of part of its land due to the erection of the security barrier. In 2007, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled the adjacent Jewish settlement of Modi'in Illit could expand onto that land.

The Bil'in plaintiffs are asking for three things in the lawsuit: a declaration that the companies' construction is illegal under Canadian and international law; the demolition of the buildings and restoration of the land to the way it was, and $2 million in punitive damages from the companies, as well as $25,000 from their sole known officer and director, Annette Laroche, a resident of Deux-Montagnes.

Jewish gays to march with Israeli flags at Pride Parade

Continued from page 1

could suffer a similar fate in the future. So far, however, there has been no such messaging at Montreal Pride, according to Joey Waknin, president of Ga'ava, the fledgling non-profit group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) Jews in Montreal.

The Toronto situation has also prompted the creation of a new group called Holy Queer – a Montreal-based, national Zionist queer group promoting gay life in Israel through political activism. It emerged last week on Facebook and Twitter, seeking representatives across the country to counter fallacies about gay rights in Israel.

"We are still formulating our response to both Toronto's decision and potentially Montreal. We do plan to respond in one way or another," said Josh Fagan, vice-president of Holy Queer.

Although QuAIA sparked controversy among Jewish participants over its appearance at the 2008 Toronto Pride Parade, for Pride organizers, the controversy wasn't due to the group's political message, Sandilands said. Rather, as an unregistered group, it posed an "insurance liability."

Asked whether she felt her organization has now opened itself up to the potential for hateful messages in the parade and the usurpation of Pride's traditionally peaceful, inclusive vibe, Sandilands told The CJN that security will be augmented this year.

"We have no intention of allowing anyone to be harassed at any point and have every intention of ensuring the safety of all participants in any aspect of the festival," she said.

Sandilands said the number of parade marshals has been increased from 25 to 80 this year and that any unregistered marchers trying to sneak in will be "removed."

Martin Gladstone, a Toronto-based Jewish gay lawyer who has witnessed the anti-Israel messaging in past parades, implored Pride organizers to remain apolitical, arguing that allowing any group with a political mandate to march in the parade is contrary to Pride's non-profit "LGBT human rights mandate," and that "gay pride has nothing to do with anti-Israel advocacy."

Gladstone said he feared that the rise of anti-Israel, "and by extension anti-Jewish," political messaging could threaten Pride's existence and funding if legally challenged.

"The law is clear," he wrote to the Pride council this year. "You cannot allow a non-profit corporation to facilitate political advocacy unrelated to its charter."

Sandilands countered, telling The CJN that "allowing all sides in any political debate to be part of our parade demonstrates the non-partisan nature of our event."

She added: "If we allowed QuAIA but refused another that represented a pro-Israeli position without good reason, that would be taking a partisan position. Even then, such a move would not threaten our non-profit status. There are no restrictions on political activity by non-profits. Only those entries that actively contravene the hate crimes laws of the country or our anti-discrimination policies will be removed."

But current Jewish registrants and some potential parade attendees remained fearful for their safety, as well as disappointed and skeptical of Pride's decision last week to allow QuAIA to participate.

Wendy Lampert, Canadian Jewish Congress' director of community relations, said she hoped the Pride organizers understand the potential "discomfort" they would cause Jewish community members by including the group.

Justine Apple, executive director of Kulanu, a Jewish LGBT social group affiliated with Hillel of Greater Toronto, said her 300-member organization sought a meeting with Sandilands and the Pride executive prior to this year's celebrations to explain their concerns and requested that their parade position be moved "far away" from QuAIA's.

Sandilands has agreed to meet with Kulanu, but a date had not been set as of The CJN's deadline.

"We decided that for the first time, this year, we will march and hold Israeli flags… to show our pride as Jews, gay Jews and in solidarity with Israel," Apple said, acknowledging that while not normally a political one, her organization reluctantly decided to counter QuAIA's political message with one of their own.

As of last week, Kulanu was the sole Jewish group registered to march in the parade, although representatives of Jewish Family and Child will be marching with group members.

But Apple said Sandilands offered to "open up" the registration process beyond the official application deadline if other Jewish organizations decide they want to participate.

Adding to the concerns of Jewish community members is the fact that the parade's grand marshal, El-Farouk Khaki – a Toronto lawyer and political activist – is an outspoken critic of Israel.

When questioned about the choice of Khaki as grand marshal, Sandilands said Khaki has assured Pride Toronto that he won't deliver anti-Israel messages while in his Pride role.

Last month, QuAIA convened a meeting at a Toronto theatre titled "Coming OUT Against Apartheid: 20 Years of Queer Resistance from South Africa to Palestine."

The event's stated aim was to encourage members and like-minded individuals to turn out for Pride week and "reignite Toronto's queer community in the fight against [Israeli] apartheid" according to an online flyer for the event.

Khaki was scheduled to deliver the opening remarks at the meeting and his organization, Salaam – a Muslim gay community support group – co-sponsored the meeting along with the University of Toronto chapter of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG).

OPIRG has 10 other chapters across the province and has refused to work with Jewish campus groups in the past, because it doesn't believe Zionism fits within its social justice and human rights mandates.

Israel is the only country in the Middle East with gay rights enshrined in state law, but QuAIA and OPIRG claim that "Israel has now begun to frame itself as a tolerant, queer-positive democracy. This can never be reality under occupation."

Jake Peters, a Jewish AIDS activist, attended the QuAIA meeting and said he was stunned at the "one-sided… hypocritical attacks on Israel" and the calls for protests and boycotts against the Jewish state that were made at the event.

"I think that people who wish to demonstrate against Israel have every right to do so, but not in the Pride Parade. I don't think they should be allowed to manipulate Pride in this way, to turn it into an ugly, scapegoating spectacle," Peters said.

In addition to corporate sponsorship, Pride Week 2008 received public funding in excess of $450,000 – $300,000 from the province of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, $119,000 from the City of Toronto and another $35,000 from Heritage Canada.

It will receive no funding from Heritage Canada this year, but only because Pride didn't apply for funding in time, a Heritage Canada spokesperson said.

Ontario has once again given $300,000 to Pride this year.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism said the ministry had "been assured that [anti-Israel messaging at the parade] last year was an isolated incident and understand from Pride Toronto that they have mitigation plans in place for this year."

Attempts by The CJN to speak with a representative of the City of Toronto were unsuccessful.

Amy Hanen, senior manager of community relations for TD Canada Trust, one of the major sponsors of Pride Week, said the bank was aware of the political nature of some of the parade's participants, but said that "TD would not be associated with any event or initiative with an agenda founded on racism or anti-Semitism."

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Junior Set

This 8-year-old is a born fundraiser

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

As Noa Wolfe, 8, the inventor of Spring-a-Majiggers, sets up her display table on her front lawn, a young family passing by inquires about purchasing one of her colourful handmade toys, a pompom head on a spring that bounces into a cup.

Although she's not really set up for business, Noa is not one to turn down a sale, not when 50 per cent of the money will be going toward the Children's Wish Foundation, a charity that attempts to fulfil the wishes of children afflicted with a high-risk or life-threatening illness.

Noa has sold the Spring-a-Majiggers outside of a Starbucks on Eglinton Avenue in Toronto and at school fairs.

On this sunny morning, she is selling a $2 Spring-a-Majigger to Jordane Frankel and Josh Picov. Their 13-month-old daughter, Ella, may not yet be old enough to play with this toy, but she happily waddles over to Noa to check out her wares.

But there is actually another child who is going to benefit more directly from this sale than young Ella. The money Noa is raising through the Children's Wish Foundation is designated for Jonah, a five- year-old boy with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. He has wished for a trip to Disney World with his family, which will take place later this year.

Noa likes the idea of knowing who the money will be going to, says her mother, speech pathologist Karen Halpern.

She describes her daughter as a born fundraiser. She has previously sold lemonade, bookmarks and jewelry for various children charities, and she has even donated her birthday money.

So far, sales of Spring-a-Majiggers have brought in more than $300 for the Children's Wish Foundation, Halpern says.

Last year, the Fieldstone Day School second-grader gave up nine inches of her hair to Panteen Beautiful Lengths, a program connected to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Halpern describes her daughter as a creative child, explaining that Noa designed the toy, which can spring into a cup or sit on the end of a pencil. "John Bead, an arts and crafts company, donated one round of pompoms and wooden bases to us," Halpern says.

Noa also paints the bases with inspirational messages such as "Think Big" or "Be You," and she uses hot glue to attach the beads and spring to the pompom.

Halpern says her daughter likes to call everything a "thing-a-majigger," and that's how she came up with the name Spring-a-Majiggers.

And her sales pitch also has some punch: "A cute buddy to put a spring into your day."

For more information about Spring-a-Majiggers, contact Halpern at 416-787-2882 or karen.halpern@rogers.com

Noa Wolfe, 8, the inventor of Spring-a-Majiggers, is selling toys to raise funds for the Children's Wish Foundation. [Barbara Silverstein photo]

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov Sara & Harold Margolese of Montreal on celebrating their 75th wedding anniversary on June 17. To a wonderful couple and the best parents.

Mazel tov to Dennis & Cheryl Graff on their 40th anniversary! Love, from Samantha, Glenn & Tracie, Colby & Carey, Amanda, Marci, Jordan, Jackson and Blake.

Happy birthday to Romi and Shai Zachar of Aventura, Fla. who will be turning 11 and 8 in June, while visiting family in Toronto.

Mazel tov to Lauren Nightingale & Matthew Ginsburg on your recent engagement! Proud parents, Karen & Benny Nightingale and Karen & Jon Ginsburg.

Happy first birthday Adam David Isaac! With love, mommy, daddy and all your family.

Julie Sternberg & Michael Ezri would like to wish their daughter Stephanie Ezri a very happy first birthday.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Have you seen it lately?
www.cjnews.com
• Columnists • eCJN
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• Past Issues and much more!

What's New Deadlines: Monday, June 8, is the deadline for the June 18 issue, and Monday, June 15, is the deadline for the June 25 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Thursday, June 11

EDOYR GAMES NIGHT

Eating Disorders of York Region first annual Play Your Games Event. Bridge, Scrabble, euchre, Texas Hold'em, mah-jong, buffet dinner, cash bar, door prizes, raffle, boutique mall. Admission $65. Dinner 6:30, games 8 p.m. Cedarbrae Golf and Country Club, 55 Mac Frost Way, Scarborough. Phone 905-886-6632, fax 905-907-6516.

Friday, June 12

EREV SHABBAT CHOIRS

Choirs from Temple Emanu-El and Congregation Shaarei Beth El, Oakville, present music from Handel's Judas Maccabaeus. Temple Emanu-El, 8 p.m. **Randi Feldman**, 416-449-3880, ext. 14, or randi@templeemanuel.ca.

Saturday, June 13

DAVEN WITH PRIDE

Congregation Shir Libeynu presents its third annual inclusive Shabbat service, featuring innovative liturgy for gay Jews and their loved ones. Everyone welcome. 10:30 a.m., Michael Bernstein Chapel, Miles Nadal JCC. Kiddush and light lunch following. Sponsored in memory of **Rita Friendly Kaufman**. Call 416-465-6488 or e-mail shirlibeynu@yahoo.ca.

SHABBATON

The Thornhill Community Shul, 949 Clark Ave., presents author **Dr. David Lieberman** as its scholar-in residence. Lieberman infuses Torah wisdom into the psychological process. He will give three lectures during Shabbat. For times and topics, contact theshul@aish.com or thornhillshul.com.

Sunday, June 14

ZAREINU MOVEATHON

Moveathon festival, Downsview Park (main entrance, John Drury Dr. and Sheppard), 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Rides, food pavilion, pony rides, petting zoo. Also 3-km walk, 5-km and 10-km run, 20-km family ride. Contact www.moveathon.com for fundraising requirements.

INTERFAITH EVENING

Beth Emeth and Initiatives of Change present the film The Imam and the Pastor, about Nigerian **Imam Muhammad Ashafa** and **Pastor James Wuye**, who work together for peace and reconciliation. Keynote speakers from Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other faith communities. No charge. Beth Emeth, 8 p.m. Contact **Andrea Levine**, 416-633-3838, or www.beby.org.

HAIRCUTS FOR SICKKIDS

Paisley Spa is giving free haircuts from 9 a.m. all day in support of the Hospital for Sick Children. In lieu of payment, cash donation in any amount. Event approved by SickKids Foundation. Contact **Nancy Sarmento**, 416-644-1422, or paisleyspa@yahoo.ca

Monday, June 15

OPEN HOUSE

Na'amat Toronto Club Aliza open house/orientation night, for a Hebrew-speaking women's club. Light refreshments. Borochov Centre, 7:30 p.m. Call 416-636-5425.

WALK INTO HEALTH

Barbara Frum Branch, Toronto Public Library, welcomes the community to a 30-min. neighbourhood walk, led by a City of Toronto public health nurse. Learn the benefits of being physically active. Prizes. No pets. Meet in the Browsery, 7 p.m.

SURVIVOR MEMOIRS

Official launch of the Azrieli Foundation's second Holocaust

Continued on page 23

Shmuel Zahavy
Cheder Chabad
20th Tribute Dinner & Draw
Honouring
Leslie & Anna Dan
George & Judy Frankfort
Guest Speaker
Rabbi Yossi Chazan
Rabbi of Holy Law and South Broughton Hebrew Congregation, Manchester, England and International Speaker
Featuring
Dinner, Silent Auction, Entertainment and a Draw for $18,000
Tuesday, June 16, 2009
At Terrace Banquet Centre
1680 Creditstone Road, Vaughan
Please visit our website at www.ChederChabad.com/Dinner
For further information on sponsorship opportunities please contact Rabbi Yona Shur, Executive Director at 416-638-7222 or Gary Valkenier, CHRL Campaign Coordinator at 416-830-4313 or e-mail gary.valkenier@sympatico.ca

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Father's Day Celebration
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What's New

Continued from page 22

Survivor Memoirs. Readings by the authors and their loved ones, narrated and presented by CBC journalist **Joe Schlesinger**. Keynote address by **Nechama Tec**, author of Defiance, the book and the screenplay. Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., 7:30 p.m, followed by dessert reception. Register for free 416-223-0003, or e-mail toronto.launch@azrieli.ca.

Tuesday, June 16

CHUG HATANACH

Rabbi Pinchas Brumer leads a discussion on Zecharia, Chapter 8. Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m. Final program of the season.

Wednesday, June 17

COUNTRY HOEDOWN

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Club Someach BBQ and country hoedown. Square dancing with experienced callers **Grant** and **Ann Logan**. Down-home food. 6:30 p.m. at the shul. Club Someach and BEBY members $15, guests $18. Tickets from shul office, 416-633-3838, e-mail temaw@rogers.com.

JERUSALEM SOVEREIGNTY

Speakers Action Group business lunch lecture. International lawyer and scholar **Dr. Jacques Gauthier** on "Jerusalem's Sovereignty – Myth to Fact." Bennett Jones LLP, One First Canadian Place, 100 King St. W., 34th floor, 12 noon. Lunch $20, kashrut observed. To reserve, 416-966-0722 or www.speakersaction.com.

Other News

MUSICAL LEGACY SERIES

Temple Sinai Congregation presents jazz artist **Ron Davis** featured in the Anne Strom Memorial Concert-in-the-Round. Part of Temple Sinai's Musical Legacy Series. June 19, 8 p.m. Call 416-487-4161, ext. 334, or e-mail ruthe@templesinai.net.

ORT TORONTO

35th annual ORT Golden Circle Luncheon honours **Rose Reisman**, who will speak on "Healthy Longevity." Raffle includes a trip for two to Chicago. Proceeds to scholarships for disadvantaged students in Toronto and ORT schools worldwide. Granite Club, 2350 Bayview, 11:30 a.m. June 18. Tickets $180. Reservations 416-787-0339.

BOOK OF SAMUEL

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler discusses The Book of Samuel, Shaarei Shomayim, Monday mornings, 9:30 a.m. June 15 and 22, and Tuesday evenings, 7 p.m. June 16 and 23.

TEMPLE HAR ZION

Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada, CEO of the Institute for International Affairs and League for Human Rights, lectures at the closing event of this year's speaker series. Temple Har Zion, June 18, 1 p.m. Refreshments. Non-temple members, $5.

TRACING JEWISH ROOTS

An exhibit of selections from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) Library on display at the Barbara Frum District Library, 20 Covington Rd. Until July 31. Includes photographs of life in the European shtetl, texts describing the building of Jewish settlements across Canada, scenes of Jewish immigrant culture in early Toronto and statistical records from the Holocaust.

CIRCLE OF CARE

Volunteer drivers for Kosher Meals on Wheels and Jewish hospice volunteers, volunteers to be escorts for medical appointments and friendly visitors needed. Professional training and orientation provided. **Penny**, 416-636-2860, ext. 462 or e-mail pedwards@circleofcare.com.

EMUNAH SHABBAT

Emunah Women of Toronto 13th annual city-wide seudah shlishit program. June 13. BAYT, 5:30 p.m., **Esther Libman**; B'Nai Torah, 6:15, **Judy Snowbell-Diamond**; Beth Jacob V'anshe Dridz, 5:30, **Anna Klein**; Shaarei Shomayim, 6 p.m., **Devorah Vale**; Shaarei Tefillah, 5:30, **Yettie Schochet**; Yeshivat Or Chaim, 5:30, **Malka Adatto**. Couvert $18. For information, 416-636-0036.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors. Seniors program consultation and planning. Share ideas, make suggestions for future program development. Light lunch. June 18, 1 p.m. Miles Nadal JCC. Ext. 155.

Bernard Betel Centre seeks friendly visitors. 1-2 hours a week. Choose the best day.

Earl Bales in the Park. Lunch and Laughter group, June 18, noon. Sunday dance, June 21, 7-10 p.m. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. Mah-jong, Tuesdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

BJCC Seniors Online Courses. "Getting Started on Your Computer," Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. "Using the Internet," Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. Each course $55 members, $70 non-members. Contact **Eran Barlev**, 416-636-1880, ext. 464.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Outdoor pool officially opens June 21. Call ext. 291 for membership information.

My Hebrew Picnic. Share Hebrew with your child through music, puppets and games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers. Ages newborn-4 years, with an adult. Ext. 390.

Shabbat Club. Children 3-5 years join peers to sing songs, tell stories, make challah, play games and do crafts. Fridays 9:45-11:15 a.m. Ext. 390.

Youths ages 13-16, learn about Maccabi Games. Contact **Grant** at gsmith.bjcc.ca, or ext. 257.

JVIAnetwork connects active, vision-impaired Jewish adults. The hope is to establish a recreational and phys-ed program, and plan outings and activities that allow for socialization and networking. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

Conversation Café, a joint program with JIAS, offers newcomers a chance to practise their English in a social environment. Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m.

KOFFLER CENTRE

Koffler Centre of the Arts. 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880. www.kofflerarts.org.

The Wrecking Ball: An art party to say farewell to the Koffler Gallery as the Koffler Centre prepares to build a state-of-the-art facility for presenting and teaching art. Features artists **Isaac Applebaum, Blue Republic, Simon Frank, Andrew Moore, Cyril Reade, Judith Schwartz, Brian Smith** and **Akira Yishikawa**. Also unique installations by artists who have exhibited in the Koffler Gallery, silent art auction, construction-themed cocktails, demolition-inspired desserts and entertainment, art on the spot. Tickets $50 in advance, $65 at the door, $250 VIP reception, 6:30 p.m. Tickets www.ticketweb.ca.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

13th annual Festival on Bloor. Sunday, June 14, noon to 6 p.m., Bloor St. from Bathurst to Spadina. Live music at the Tranzac Mainstage. Theatre at the Fringe Stage. Activities for kids of all ages and more than 70 craft and specialty food vendors. Ext. 0, or www.mnjcc.org.

Get Inked: Explore the ancient art of henna with expert **Noam Sienna**. Contact **Shira** at swebber@ujafed.org.

The exhibition Mircea Popescu: Foreign & Familiar continues to June 15. Call ext. 133 or visualarts@mnjcc.org.

Pride @ the J: Play reading of Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath by **Phil Pivnick**. Directed by **David Gale**. With **Cayle Chernin, Sascha Cole, Jack Newman, Jordan Pettle, Gerry Salsberg,** and **David Tomlinson**. June 25, 7:30 p.m. Al Green Theatre. Suggested donation $8. Ext. 606 or esthera@mnjcc.org.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

NETIVOT TURNS 25: Children of Netivot HaTorah Hebrew Day School's past presidents honoured their parents by reciting passages from the Torah at the school's 25th anniversary celebration. From left, standing, are Aviva Fink Krygier, Rebecca Winter, Talya Shumacher, Amanda Lax, Nediva Koschitzky and Gavriella Reiss. Seated are Rena Kesten Markus and Zev Lewis. [Avraham A. Witty photo]

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 26

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Pollock, Ethel	May 20/09	Private
Albright, Ida Ruth	May 20/09	3560 Bathurst St
Benguaich, Isaac	May 22/09	7 Townsgate Dr
Feldman, Murray	May 22/09	25 Gracey Blvd
Rosen, Beverley	May 22/09	1 Benvenuto Place
Ramer, Blanka	May 23/09	155 Marlee Ave
Stern, Aranka	May 24/09	7601 Bathurst St
Hirshberg, Regina	May 25/09	Private
Frenkel, Michael	May 25/09	Private
Brody, Bernard	May 25/09	6 Charlton Ave
Sherman, Daniel	May 25/09	Private
Parker, Ben	May 25/09	19 Sandale Gardens
Pisarek, Harry	May 26/09	170 Red Maple Rd
Zaltzman, Meir Shlomo	May 25/09	120 Green Bush
Shroitman, Reuven	May 27/09	15 Torresdale Ave
Griver, Dennis	May 27/09	
Goldman, Jeanie	May 27/09	
Benzaquen, Salomon	May 27/09	
Diament, Henna Ann	May 27/09	
Lazar, Jacob	May 28/09	

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Rose Tarshis	May 26/09	55 Ameer Avenue, # 410
Harold Landis	May 26/09	1 Clark Street West, # 808
Lori Beatty (Rafelman)	May 24/09	8 Blackstone Court
Hilda Kurin	May 26/09	866 Sheppard Ave W, #310
Dvora Szmeiser	May 26/09	2 Covington Road, # 403
Gaston Marx	May 26/09	154 Shaftesbury Street
Charles Dalfen	May 26/09	
Rita Capland	May 26/09	25 Canyon Avenue, # 103
Raisa Gudelman	May 29/09	15 Maffy Crescent
Sonia Ginsberg	May 27/09	42 Kirkwood Court
Elynne Goldkind	May 28/09	18 Lower Village Gate #305a
Cyril Loomer	May 29/09	3560 Bathurst St.

HEDREW BASIC

Yankel Liberman	May 20/09	4459 Bathurst Street

Lisa: It's so hard to believe that 5 years have passed since we saw your beautiful face and held your hand. There are no words to describe how much you are missed, and we hope that you're proud of the way we've tried to live our lives in your honour.

Many exciting things have happened over the past 5 years and we have often wondered, "what would Lisa be thinking?". We know you'd be crazy about your beautiful nieces and amazed at how much Becky reminds us of you. We're sure you'd be proud (and scratching your head) that Jen is going to med school; that you'd be overjoyed by Mikey's recent marriage, and would be best friends with your new sister Ilana. You would be beaming with pride at your beautiful sister Katie, and so happy that she shares your love of writing and creating. You would be inspired by Jackie's work in Africa, and thrilled for Robin as she begins her new family. You would be so touched by "Lisa's tree" that grows in Dad and Olivia's yard, as a living tribute to your strength and kindness.

Most of all, you would be amazed at how we've pulled together, sharing birthdays and laughs and celebrating your precious memory. You continue to inspire everyone who loves you, and you've had a lasting impact on so many lives.

We love you with all our hearts!

P.S. Hartsee says you'd be ecstatic that he finally got that hole in one.

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
CARA RUTH FELDMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 14th at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Adath Israel Section
Relatives and friends are Invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
Morton Mayer Cohen ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 14th 11:30 a.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
986 Wilson Ave.
TIBA Section
Relatives & friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ROSA ZAREK ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 14th at 12:30 p.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst south of Steeles
Chenstochover Society Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling

SHULMAN: Monty H. at Grand River Hospital, K-W Health Care Centre on Thursday, May 28th, 2009, peacefully surrounded by his loving family.

Monty Shulman aged 88 years.

Monty was a good and faithful member of Beth Jacob Synagogue and prior to moving to Kitchener had been very active with the B'nai Israel Congregation in Cambridge until 1974, and had served proudly with the British Army in the Second World War. Loving father to Elliott of Toronto and Ben of Waterloo, dear Zaidy to Asa, David, and Michael, brother to Myra and her husband Bert Shinwell of Toronto, also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Pre-deceased by his parents Solomon Shulman and Rena Franklin, his beloved wife Lee in November of last year and one sister, Ethel. A funeral service was held on May 31st from Beth Jacob Synagogue at 12 noon with Rabbi Yosil Rosenzweig officiating. Donations may be made to the charity of your choice as expressions of sympathy though the Ratz-Bechtel Funeral Home, 519-745-9495. Shiva was observed at the family residence, 175 Queen St. N., Apt. #1703 in Kitchener.

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On Campus

Prof explores journey of Dead Sea Scrolls

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Israeli archeologist and professor Dan Bahat was in Toronto last week to share his extensive knowledge about the history and content of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Dan Bahat

Sporting a mustache that hockey legend Lanny McDonald would approve of, Bahat, a lecturer in the Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology department at Bar-Ilan University and the former district archeologist for Jerusalem, addressed hundreds who gathered at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on June 3.

The event, sponsored by Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University and Beth Tikvah, was the second part of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Memorial lecture series. Bahat spoke in advance of the launch of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum which runs from June 27 to Jan 7.

Although it is widely known that the scrolls were discovered by a Bedouin shepherd in 1947, buried in a cave in Qumran in the Judean Desert, Bahat went into great detail describing when and how the scrolls were found, what they reveal about Jewish history and how Israel came to possess them.

"When I speak about the caves in the Judean desert where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, actually, all the scrolls we're talking about come from 11 caves only," Bahat said.

He said the discovery of the first scrolls in 1947 was made on Nov. 29 – the day the United Nations adopted the Partition Plan for Palestine.

He said that of the discoveries made since then by Arab and Israeli scholars in the Judean desert – which was divided until 1967, with the northern part belonging to Jordan and the southern part belonging to Israel – all that was yielded were 900 scrolls, of which 20 are practically intact while all the others are fragments.

When the first discovery was made, three scrolls were brought to a famous antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, Bahat said.

An Israeli professor made an inexpensive deal to purchase the three scrolls from the antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, but four other scrolls ended up with another dealer at the Syrian Jacobite Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem.

Bahat said that those in possession of the four scrolls were urged to send the scrolls abroad for fear that they would not be safe in war-torn Jerusalem.

When they were sent to an antiquities dealer in New York, former Israel Defence Forces chief of staff and archeologist Yigael Yadin, who was Bahat's professor, learned that the scrolls were for sale.

In 1954, Yadin purchased the scrolls for $250,000 through intermediaries because "no one would sell them to the Israelis," Bahat said.

"The first seven Dead Sea Scrolls, all of them, are property of Israel and Hebrew University [in Jerusalem where they are housed in a museum called the Shrine of the Book]."

Bahat explained that the scrolls come from two distinct periods – from the Second Temple period that ended in 70 CE, and from the era of Bar Kochba, the Jewish leader who led a revolt against the Roman Empire to establish a Jewish state, around 135 CE.

He said some of the scrolls were found in the Qumran caves and some were found at Masada.

"The discovery at Masada is more important from the point of view of dating than any other because the ones that came from the caves, some argue that they are not from the Second Temple period, that they are medieval, but when the same scrolls are being found at Masada… there is no more question. It's from 70 CE and that's the end," Bahat said.

"The important thing is that we know that [Bar Kochba's] main headquarters was in Herodion. During our excavations in Herodion, we found very considerable remains from Bar Kochba's time."

He said it's important to differentiate between the scrolls from the Second Temple period and the scrolls from Bar Kochba's time because those from Bar Kochba's time are not really scrolls, they are contracts and agreements written on papyrus.

"All of the documents are written in a very interesting way. They write beautifully and then they roll it and seal it and they put a thread through it so that no one will be able to open it," Bahat said.

"On each contract there is a continuation, which is open to view. This is written in quite a coarse way. It is a copy of the document which is sealed. Part is rolled, part is opened."

He said that other scrolls helped them learn about "the Dead Sea Scrolls people," that there was a war between those who were considered the "Sons of Light" and those who were considered the "Sons of Darkness."

While the scrolls have to be stored very carefully in order to preserve them, he said he is excited that they will be on display in Toronto.

"It has to be exactly like the conditions in the desert, which means completely dry, the same temperature all the time. You can imagine that bringing them to Toronto, for some of them, it is a great sacrifice, but the value of having them here is very important."

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Father of Gavriel Holtzberg

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Dana Levenson, CTV News Toronto
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Health & Lifestyles

Resource centre helps parents counter family isolation

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Parents, grandparents and caregivers of young children can reach out to their counterparts at the Family Resource Centre, located in the Promenade Mall in Thornhill.

A joint program of Jewish Family & Child, the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the centre runs on a drop-in basis, and children up to age five can take part in story time, music, and art and crafts.

Fran Chodak, a social worker who has supervised the centre for 10 years, said it gives parents a chance to talk to other parents and share ideas and concerns. "It helps them feel less isolated when they see there are other parents out there facing the same issues."

The centre also offers programs that include workshops for parents and caregivers in collaboration with Ontario Early Years, as well as a conversation cafe in partnership with JIAS, an after-school homework club, and dental screening.

A unique workshop is available to caregivers living and working in Jewish homes, Chodak said. "We teach them about keeping kosher, the holidays and Jewish traditions. We recognize that caregivers have needs, and we want them to know what to expect in a Jewish home."

In another workshop, parents talk about preserving their native language while the family learns English. "We had about 20 people at this workshop who spoke about seven or eight languages. It was a cross section of the Jewish community. It is rare to have that in one room."

A favourite weekly event is the Shabbat program, Chodak said. "We spend about 30 minutes in a circle singing songs and celebrating Shabbat."

Supported by the Trillium Foundation – the FRC has received three back-to-back grants – as well as United Way and York Region, the centre is also a source of information and referrals for a network of family services in York Region and the Greater Toronto Area, she said.

During these difficult economic times, the FRC has seen an increase in families using it, Chodak said, because "we charge a nominal fee, and many see it as an alternative to pre-school."

She called the FRC "a beautiful model that we would love to see duplicated. Instead of responding to a crisis, we are putting together programs that build a healthy community and reduce isolation. We've had a big impact on so many people."

To contact the centre, call 905-882-8509.

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JERUSALEM'S SOVEREIGNTY . . .MYTH TO FACT
DR. JACQUES P. GAUTHIER, distinguished international lawyer and scholar, has written a definitive doctoral thesis, based on 20 years of research into the history of Jerusalem's Old City, that clearly documents the legal status and right of the Jewish people to claim its sovereignty.
Dr. Gauthier has been legal counsel to the governments of many countries, and is currently Vice-Chair, Board of Directors, for Canada's International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development.
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Amanda Belzowski, third from left, with mother Lisa, brother Joshua and councillor Howard Moscoe.

Amanda raises $22,118

Compiled by CJN Staff

Eleven-year-old Amanda Belzowski, along with her brother, Joshua, 3, and their family, raised $22,118.36 on May 31 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's annual Becel Heart & Stroke Ride for Heart with her lemonade stand and his cookie counter.

Since 1999, Amanda's lemonade stand has raised more than $102,000 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. This year's funds bring her total to $124,118.36. Amanda's whole family also takes part each year in the Ride for Heart.

ש'שאר י'נ'נו

גידי קורן וחברים

סרטים שחובה

על פי דרכי אני מבקש לשתף אתכם בחוויה של סרטים טובים. מעוררי מחשבה ששווה לראות. לפעמים שואלים אותי איך זה שכל הסרטים שאני מציג כאן זוכים לציונים כל כך גבוהים- זה מאוד פשוט: את הגריועים אני פשוט חוסך מיכם. אבל ברמה קצת יותר רציונית-אם אתם רוצים לדעת אם סרט שווה משהו- חפשו באינטרנט את אתר metacritic.com ושם תמצאו לא רק את תוכן הסרט, אלא גם את הציון הממוצע שנתנו לו מבקרי הסרטים של כל העתונים הגדולים של צפון אמריקה. אם סרט קיבל ממוצע של מעל לשמונים אחוז-חזקה עליכם שהוא לא דרעק. שם למשל קיבל "הואלס שלי עם באשיר" ציון ממוצע מדהים של תשעים ושניים אחוז. ועוד יתרון-יש גם את הציונים שנתנו לסרט הצופים שנכנסו לאתר-וכך אפשר בקלות לראות אם הסרט הוא גם מהנה ברמה של הקהל.

ADORATION הוא סרטו החדש של אטום אגויאן, גדול במאי הסרטים בקנדה. אני מחכה בכליון עיניים לכל סרט חדש של אגויאן, שאהוד מאוד וזוכה לכבוד מלכים בישראל. גבור הסרט הוא נער בית ספר תיכון שבמסגרת תרגיל ספרותי בבית הספר מדדה עם בנו של טרוריסט פלשתינאי, ששלח את אימו של הילד עם פצצה למטוס של אל על. הספור מבוסס על מקרה אמיתי שקרה באירופה בשנות השמונים, כשמאבטחי אל על זיהו אשה אירלית שנשלחה לבית לחם על ידי בעלה הפלשתינאי עם פצצה במטען שלה. תפקיד הנער מגולם בצורה מרשימה, והפנטזיה שלו מעורבת בסיפור חייו האמיתי בסרט, שבה איבד את אימו ואביו.

אופייני לאטום אגויאן-מתנהלות בסרט מספר עלילות במקביל, ובסוף מתברר לך שכולם מחוברים לכולם. תשע בסולם קורן.

TWO LOVERS הוא סרט נהדר למרות שמו השאבלוני, וגם בו יש נקודה ישראלית בדמותו של מוני מרשונוב שלנו, שממלא תפקיד משני די מרכזי, כאביו הישראלי של הגיבור.

זהו סיפורו של בחור יהודי צעיר רב קסם אבל עם בעיות נפשיות קשות, שפוגש יום אחרי שניסה להתאבד את נערת החלומות-נערה יהודיה יפה, רגישה ומדליקה, שמוכנה לקבל אותו כמו שהוא, מה גם שהיא ביתו של שותפו העתידי של האב (מוני מרשונוב) בביזנס. אלא מה-באותו שבוע ממש הוא פוגש דוגמנית-נערת זוהר שגרה בבניין שלו (גווינס פאלטרו), שחיה מ"תרומתיו" של שוגאר דדי שמבוגר ממנה בשנים רבות, והבחור שלנו מתאהב בה נואשות למרות שברור שטוב לא ייצא מזה.

נו, מה אני אגיד לכם-סרט שיכול היה להיות חלום הבלהות של כל הורה יהודי באשר הוא, אלא שיש לסרט הזה סוף טוב, אחרי שעתיים של דרמה מצויינת. לא כדאי להחמיץ-תשע בסולם קורן.

DEPARTURES הוא שמו של הסרט היפאני שזכה באוסקר לסרט הזר השנה כשהוא גובר על "באשיר" שלנו. מטבע העניין מאוד עניין אותי מה מיוחד בסרט שגבר על הסרט הישראלי המצליח ביותר בהסטוריה. מה אומר לכם-הסרט היפאני הוא פשוט יצירה מושלמת, במישב המסורת היפנית המהוללת של קוראסווה ורשומון. זהו ספורו של נגן צ'לו שמאבד את מקום עבודתו, ועובר לעבור בבית לוויות, שם הוא מכין מתים לקבורתם. אל נא תיבהלו מן הנושא המורבידי-זהו סרט מדהים ומרתק על התמודדותו של אדם עם המוות, עם זכרונות בית אבא, עם דיעות קדומות. רווח לי ש"באשיר" לא הפסיד מסיבות פוליטיות, אלא פשוט עמד מול סרט מושלם, שאי אפשר לעשות טוב ממנו. עשר בסולם קורן.

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Western-backed majority wins Lebanese election

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JERUSALEM — Lebanon's pro-western coalition declared victory early Monday, as local television stations covering Sunday's election reported that the group had successfully fended off a serious challenge by the Shiite militant group Hezbollah and its allies to grab the majority in parliament.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said following release of preliminary results that it was "incumbent upon any government that is formed in Beirut to ensure that Lebanon will not be used as a base for violence against the State of Israel and against Israelis... Israel considers the Lebanese government responsible for any military or other hostile activity that emanates from its territory."

Official election results were confirmed later Monday.

The election was seen as an early test of U.S. President Barack Obama's efforts to forge Middle East peace. A win by Hezbollah would have boosted the influence of its backers Iran and Syria and risked pushing one of the region's most volatile nations into international isolation, and possibly into more conflict with Israel.

"I present this victory to Lebanon," Prime Minister Fuad Siniora said on television after stations projected his pro-western coalition was winning. "It is an exceptional day for democracy in Lebanon."

OTV, the television station of one of Hezbollah's key Christian allies, former army chief Michel Aoun, conceded that the party's candidates who challenged their pro-western counterparts in several Christian districts had been defeated, preventing a victory for the Hezbollah coalition. But Aoun was able to hang on to his representation in other districts.

The pro-western coalition won 68 seats in the next parliament; Hezbollah and its allies won 57 seats; independents won three.

That would almost replicate the deadlock that existed in the outgoing parliament, in which the pro-western bloc had 70 seats and an alliance of Hezbollah and other Shiite and Christian factions had 58.

The leader of the largest bloc in the pro-western coalition, Saad Hariri, said early Monday in a televised speech that he extends his hand to the losing side to work together and seriously for the sake of Lebanon. He urged supporters to celebrate without provoking opponents.

But despite the conciliatory tone, Lebanon is at risk of again sliding into a political crisis over formation of the next government similar to the one that has buffeted the country for most of the last four years.

Hezbollah had gained veto power in Siniora's cabinet for the last year, after provoking the worst street clashes since the 1975-1990 civil war. The pro-western coalition had vowed not to give Hezbollah and its allies a blocking minority in the new government if they won.

The battle in Christian districts was the decisive factor. Lebanese generally vote along sectarian and family loyalty lines, with seats for Sunnis and Shiites in the half-Christian, half-Muslim, 128-member parliament already locked up even before the voting started.

Christians in the pro-western coalition warned that Hezbollah would bring the influence of Shiite Iran to Lebanon, threatening the country's Arab identity and its existence as a state.

Sunnis were also driven to vote for the pro-western coalition to get back at Shiite Hezbollah gunmen for seizing the streets in Beirut from pro-government supporters last year.

After polls closed, the interior ministry reported that the turnout nationwide was about 52.3 per cent, an increase over the 2005 figure of 45.8 per cent.

The race for the parliament is the first major event in the Middle East since Obama reached out to the Arab and Islamic worlds last week in his speech in Cairo, calling for a new beginning between the United States and Muslims.

Hezbollah, which the United States considers a terrorist organization, has been one of the staunchest opponents of U.S. policy in the Middle East and a sworn enemy of Israel. It fought Israel in southern Lebanon in 2006 in a devastating war and has tried to smuggle weapons to the Palestinian group Hamas in Gaza through Egypt.

Hezbollah will still rule

By AVI ISSACHAROFF

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Analysis

The victory of Lebanon's western-backed 14 March alliance in Sunday's elections essentially signifies the victory of sensible Lebanon, a state keen on ensuring its sovereignty and keeping distance from the long arm of Syria and Iran.

The moderate alliance made some impressive achievements during this election (like winning all seven seats in Zahle region, an opposition stronghold), but before we begin hailing a new chapter in Middle East politics, we should bear in mind that very little will change in Lebanon.

The White House will not even waste its time with attributing the results to President Barack Obama's foreign policy overtures. The victory of 14 March is far from overwhelming – initial results show that it won 68 seats in parliament, compared to 70 in the previous elections.

Lebanon is likely to remain a deeply divided country, overridden by regional powers, election results aside.

For the duration of their next term in power, Prime Minister Fuad Siniora's cabinet and majority leader Saad Hariri's coalition will be dependent on Hezbollah's goodwill. With last summer's violent showdown between Hezbollah and its supporters and pro-western demonstrators, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah made absolutely clear who is in charge.

Maybe that's why during his victory speech, Hariri extended his hand to the defeated opposition, and gave his blessing to "everyone who voted for the rival parties."

The pro-western camp will seek to stay away from confrontation and will probably refrain from asking Hezbollah to disarm.

Israel, meanwhile, must continue to strike a delicate balance in its dealings with Lebanon, a country ruled in practice by a terror group while its government enjoys overarching U.S. support.

Hezbollah will undoubtedly protest alleged electoral fraud and fabrications, and blame the "unfavourable" election system. They may be right about the system, but it didn't stop short of bribing voters either.

But it's time Hezbollah draws the necessary conclusions from these elections results. In the 1996 elections, the organization lost 25 per cent of its power in parliament, which was seen by commentators as expressing voters' dismay at its provoking Israel into retaliating with Operation Accountability in 1993 and Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996.

Hezbollah's hopes that standing up to Israel will translate into political gains turned out to be unfounded. "God's victory," the name it gave the Second Lebanon War, didn't make it to the polls.

Vigilant against evil

Continued from page 1

"We must reject the false comfort of the belief that others' suffering is not our problem," he continued.

Wiesel later echoed this sentiment, saying that he was not convinced that the world had learned the lesson of the Holocaust, because if it had, the atrocities in Rwanda, Cambodia and Bosnia would not have been allowed to happen.

"This place teaches us that we must be ever vigilant about the spread of evil in our own time," Obama said.

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*only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

Israeli gov't hopes Obama's Cairo speech heralds new era

By BARAK RAVID
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — The Israeli government praised U.S. President Barack Obama's speech to the Muslim world last Thursday, saying it shared his hopes for Middle East peace, but stressed that Israel's security interests remained paramount.

"We share President Obama's hope that the American effort heralds the opening of a new era that will bring an end to the conflict and to general Arab recognition of Israel as the nation of the Jewish people that lives in security and peace in the Middle East," an official statement said after Obama's address in Cairo.

The statement made no mention of settlements, which Obama said should not be expanded, nor Palestinian statehood.

At odds with Obama, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that construction would continue in existing settlements in the West Bank and he has not publicly endorsed a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Netanyahu's bureau also released a statement last Thursday affirming Israel's desire to pursue peace, but in accordance with its national interests.

"Israel is committed to peace and will do all it can to expand the circle of peace while considering its national interests, first and foremost being security," the statement said.

Later Thursday, Defence Minster Ehud Barak echoed the comments in welcoming Obama's address and reiterated Israel's desire to pursue peace talks.

"In the speech there is reinforcement and encouragement for moderate elements and supporters of peace. There is also outspoken criticism of terrorism and [its] origins of violence and extremism that are threatening the stability of our region and the entire world," said Barak in a statement.

He added that Israel lauded Obama's commitment to its existence and security, and his calls for the country's integration in the Middle East.

"Israel is committed to advancing negotiations with the Palestinians, based on agreements that have previously been committed to," he said. "We hope that the Arab world will heed the calls of President Obama to put an end to terror and violence and forge peaceful relations with Israel."

Earlier in the day, Daniel Hershkowitz, chairman of the rightist Habayit Hayehudi party, said that Obama ignored the fact that the Palestinians have yet to renounce terror.

"The Israeli government is not an American surplus," he said during a tour of Hebron. "Our relations are based on friendship, not domination, and we've got to draw a line when it comes to natural growth in the settlements."

Kadima Knesset member Ze'ev Boim said that "Obama's speech is yet another proof that Netanyahu miscalculated the foreign policy of the new American administration."

"The president's take on the Palestinian question is similar to Kadima's, and it's a shame that narrow political considerations prevented the Israeli government from espousing the two-state solution, which is the only one that can ensure a Jewish and democratic existence in Israel."

Kadima MK Yohanan Plesner said that "Israel could benefit from the America's improved image in the Arab world and leverage it to forge a regional coalition, together with the moderate Arab countries, to counter Iran, but instead the government is engaged in marginal debates on outposts."

Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman (Labor) said that Obama was right that the world's common enemy is extremism and that finding a common strategy is the way to defeat it.

"We should adopt a similar strategy in Jewish-Arab and religious-secular relations, as well as vis-a-vis the Palestinians," Braverman said. "We are committed to the two-state solution."

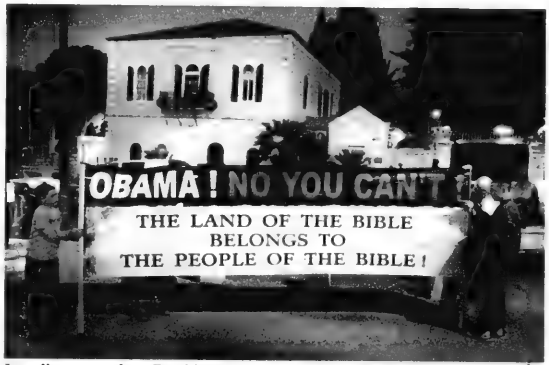
Meretz leader Haim Oron, for his part, welcomed Obama's speech. He said it was filled with inspiration, optimism and vision.

"The speech is the feat of enlightenment," he said.

An Israeli settler spokesperson dismissed Obama's speech in Cairo as naive and out of touch with reality.

Aliza Herbst, a resident of the Ofra settlement, said modern history has shown that the Muslim world is at war with the West. She added that Obama's vision of peace sounded nice but was not realistic.

President Shimon Peres praised Obama's Mideast speech as a historic opportunity in a guest column in the Times.



Israelis opposed to President Obama's policies demonstrate outside the American consulate in Jerusalem. **[Flash 90 photo]**

Obama's journey to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Peres wrote, "reflects both the need for an historic change in the Middle East and a unique chance of achieving it."

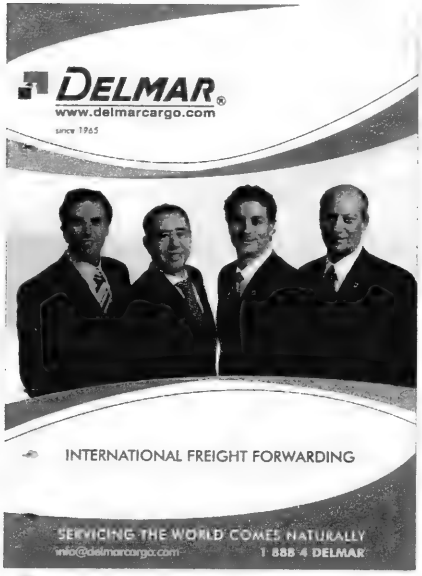
Peres said that the international options that are being discussed – the Saudi peace initiative as well as the so-called "57-state solution" proposed by King Abdullah of Jordan – could create a favourable momentum that would lead to the resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

He called on Arab countries to engage in bilateral negotiations with Israel while espousing a regional process of normalization.

"Support from the entire Arab world will provide legitimacy for the Palestinian Authority as it approaches the difficult task of making and then implementing historic compromises. At the same time, it may reassure Israel that the painful concessions it will make will be rewarded by a broader, more enduring comprehensive peace across the region," Peres wrote.

Peres said Obama's fervent commitment to changing American foreign policy in the Middle East is a rare opportunity.

"The regional leaders have to treat these options seriously – not as another photo opportunity but in a substantive discussion aimed at opening the door towards comprehensive peace and regional economic development," he said.



Palestinians must work too

JTA

BERLIN — U.S. President Barack Obama emphasized that he expects the Palestinians to live up to their commitments.

A day after his speech to the Muslim world in Cairo, Obama addressed what he said was the abundance of attention paid to his demands of Israel in advancing the peace process.

"What's been interesting is that less attention has been focused on the insistence on my part that the Palestinians and the Arab states have to take very concrete actions," Obama said in Germany before touring the Buchenwald concentration camp and Dresden, a city levelled by the Allies toward the end of World War II.

"When it comes to the Palestinians, we know what they're supposed to be doing. They have to continue to make progress on security in the West Bank. They have to deal with incitement issues. There's still a tendency, even… among Palestinians who say they are interested in peace with Israel, to engage in statements that… incite a hatred of Israel or are not constructive to the peace process."

Obama credited Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president, with progress "but not enough. We still have not seen a firm commitment from the Palestinian Authority that they can control some of the border areas that Israel is going to be very concerned about if there were to be a two-state solution. There are still problems of corruption and mismanagement within the Authority that have to be addressed."

If the issues are not addressed, "Israelis are going to have trouble moving forward," Obama said.

Obama's remarks implied a rebuke of Abbas who, subsequent to his meeting with Obama last month, said that he won't fulfil his obligations until Israel freezes settlements.

In his Cairo speech, Obama said he expected Israel to freeze West Bank settlement, to facilitate movement for Palestinians, and to allow more humanitarian assistance to reach the Gaza Strip, where the Hamas terrorist group is in control.

Obama, Israel and Iran

Israeli press reported that a senior Iranian ayatollah said that the United States must change its policies toward Israel to improve ties with Iran. "Whatever the U.S. president says about forgetting the past and starting a new phase of relations with Iran, the first condition should be a policy change toward Israel," Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said at Friday prayers in Tehran. The ayatollah was referring to U.S. President Barack Obama's speech to the Muslim world Thursday in Cairo, in which he said instead of remaining trapped in the past, the United States was prepared to move forward in its relations with the Islamic republic. "The problems we have with the U.S. are fundamental and not minor ones," said Jannati, the head of the senate-like Guardian Council. "Israel is one of the fundamental issues, and the question is what you – Obama – want to do with Israel. If you continue the support, then there will be the same old story again," added the ayatollah, who is prominent in the country's hard-line faction and close to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Schalit talks resume?

Indirect talks have resumed for the release of Gilad Schalit, an Arab newspaper reported. A top Hamas leader visited Cairo to continue the negotiations for the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldier, the London-based Al Hayat reported Thursday. Schalit was captured in June 2006 in a cross-border attack from Gaza. Former Mossad senior operative Haggai Hadas was named chief negotiator in the Schalit case Sunday, and met with the Schalit family the following day.

PA kills Hamas operatives

Palestinian police killed two Hamas militants last Thursday after the men opened fire at security forces that had surrounded their underground hideout, Palestinian officials said. One officer was also killed in the operation, part of an intensifying crackdown on Islamic militants in the West Bank.

Death threats to top general

Israel's top army general in charge of the West Bank, Maj-Gen. Gadi Shamni, has received letters containing death threats. "You are tainted with anti-Semitism and hatred of real Jews," one letter read. "We will know how to get to you and your children will see their father for the Satan he is," read the letter, which also threatened Shamni's family. The writers refer to themselves as the Orange Ones, and say they will not evacuate settlements. Shamni's home has been the site of settler protests, Ha'aretz reported. His car's tires were slashed recently in his driveway.

Olmert's surgery a success

Former prime minister Ehud Olmert underwent surgery in the United States to remove a cancerous growth from his prostate. Physicians at the Weill Cornell Medical College in New York state said the operation was successful and there were no complications. »

– Files from JTA and Ha'aretz

Iran goes to the polls

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

Analysis

For several years, Israel and pro-Israel groups have been holding up Iran's president as a would-be Adolf Hitler. But with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad uncertain to win his re-election bid June 12, the question arises of whether they would be worse off if they didn't have the Holocaust-denying leader to kick around anymore.

Ahmadinejad's main challenger is Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a one-time hardliner who was prime minister during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s and who since has evolved into a western-looking moderate.

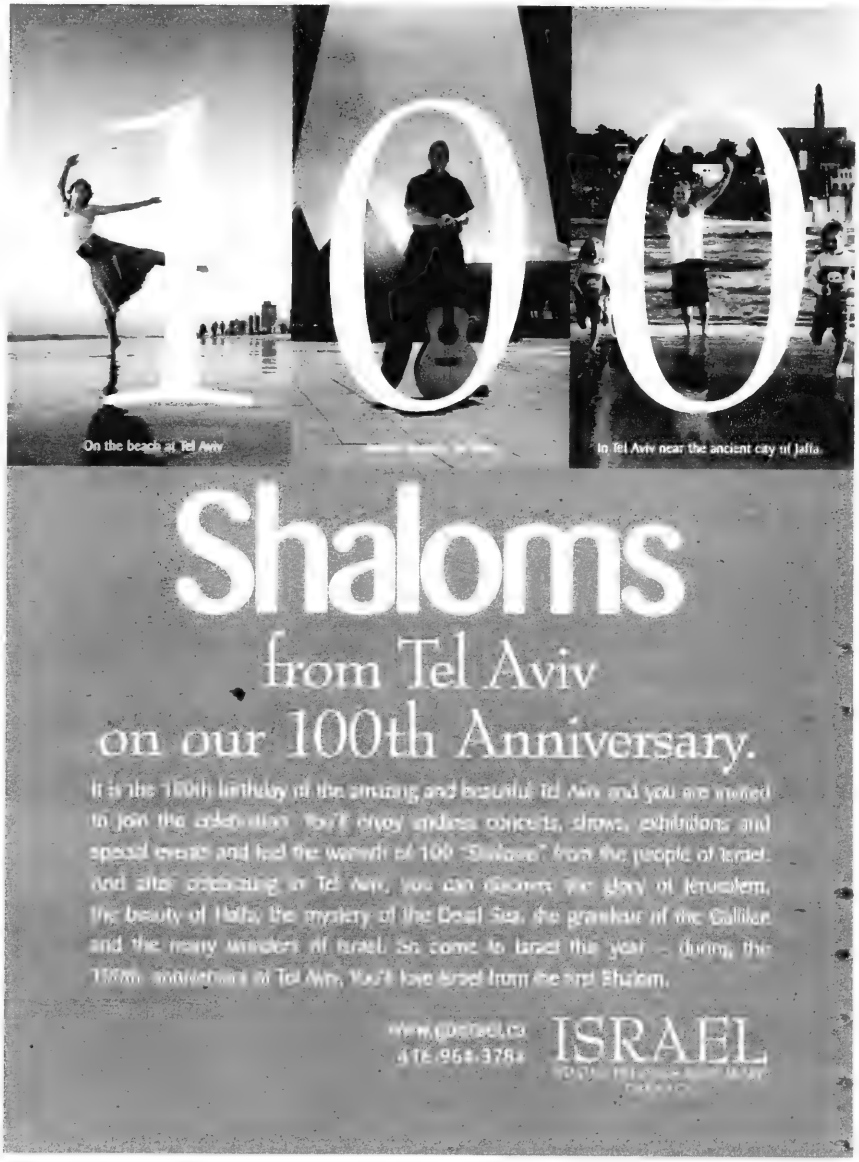
Mousavi, whose chances in the June 12 election have been buoyed by a faltering economy, seems to be saying the right things. Denying the Holocaust, he has argued, is counterproductive and dishonours the Jewish dead. He also wants to negotiate peaceful relations with the United States, although not at the expense of Iran's nuclear program.

The problem from the perspective of some pro-Israel groups is that saying the right things is meaningless so long as Iran remains committed to acquiring game-changing nuclear weapons capability. More than that, they worry, it could be dangerous if the election of a relative moderate such as Mousavi undercuts efforts by Israel to make the case that dealing with Iran's nuclear program is urgent. Any amount of time the West gives Mousavi, if he wins, to consolidate his moderation in the Iranian establishment, according to this thinking, is time Iran will use to develop the bomb – something that Israel believes could happen within a year.

"Cynics would say: maybe we're better with Ahmadinejad, rather than someone who is a master of PR who still believes Israel should be wiped from the map," said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Nonetheless, Foxman said, he'd rather see Ahmadinejad and his poisonous rhetoric gone. "Anyone would be better than Ahmadinejad," he said.

Still, the message flooding in-boxes in recent weeks – from groups like the ADL, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, as well as the Israeli Foreign Ministry – is that whoever wins the election, the strings remain in the hands of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's spiritual leader and highest authority.

Israel's Foreign Ministry has, according to a report in Ha'aretz, ordered an intensification of protests and information briefings ahead of Iran's elections, "to show the world that Iran is not a western democracy," according to a ministry official not named by the newspaper.



Arts & Travel

Israeli shorts are offered at the Worldwide Short Film Festival

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The 15th annual Worldwide Short Film Festival runs from June 16 to 21, and among its many offerings are two films from Israel.

Wind Chimes, a 19-minute feature by Orr Schulman, deals with the always distressing topic of mental illness.

Orit Lerner is in the shower when her grown daughter, Lia, calls yet again. Lia threatens to jump out of the window unless her mother brings her a falafel immediately. "Mom, please help me," she implores.

Orit has been through this drill before, but she can't say no to an unbalanced daughter who may harm herself.

So she and her husband, Avi, comply with Lia's outlandish request. As they drive to her house with a freshly bought falafel, there is a flashback concerning Lia's youth in which she goes wild when her mother refuses to comb out her long, flowing hair.

Being a practical person, Avi suggests that Lia should be hospitalized. Orit won't hear of it, but Lia weighs heavily on her.

When the Lerners arrive, Lia is gone. What else is new? What to do?

Wind Chimes, in its precise and empathetic way, explores the sorrows and frustrations of parents tossed and turned by events beyond their control.

It will be screened, along with a few other shorts, at the Cumberland 4 Cinema, 159 Cumberland Street, on Thursday, June 18 from 2 p.m. onward.

***

What About Me? satirizes Israel's system of checkpoints in the West Bank, which greatly restricts the movements of its Palestinian inhabitants.

The five-minute film, by Shira Geffen and Etgar Keret, unfolds in a desert wasteland. As a lone soldier guards a checkpoint in the middle of nowhere, an Arab man in a suit, leading a donkey, approaches.

The soldier allows the beast, carrying a load of bananas, to pass through the barrier. Strangely enough, he refuses to let the owner through as well.

The man sits down on the sand to eat a banana. The soldier joins him.

"Do you have another banana?" he asks.

"The donkey took them," he replies.

In simple strokes, What About Me? demolishes the logic of a system that controls the lives of Palestinians. It's simplistic, of course, since Israel's security problems cannot be sloughed off. Yet a point has been made.

What About Me? and several other shorts will be screened at the Cumberland 4 on Sunday, June 21 from 9:15 p.m. onward.

What about Me? and Wind Chimes are Israeli films playing at the Worldwide Short Film Festival.

Book profiles Canadian business and cultural leaders

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

If you could sit down with a group of immensely successful business and cultural leaders for an inspirational, advice-filled chat, who would you choose?

How about Issy Sharp, the legendary founder of the Four Season hotel empire?

Or what about Leslie Dan, the brilliant builder of pharmaceutical giant Novopharm?

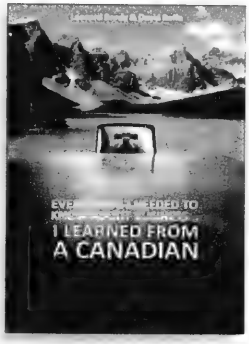
While these real-life characters aren't likely going to join you in person any time soon, their fascinating insights, experiences and lessons learned are candidly shared in Everything I Needed to Know About Business… I Learned from a Canadian, by David Raffa and Leonard Brody.

"Historically, we [Canadians] have been bad at telling our own stories, yet we are actually doing some amazing things," says co-author and prolific entrepreneur in his own right, Leonard Brody.

"This is a business reader's book that builds the Canadian brand."

More than 20 people who have achieved excellence in a diverse array of fields are featured in the book's second edition, including such well-known successes as CEO of CanWest Leonard Asper and child rights' advocate Craig Kielburger, to lesser known champions as Craig Dobbin, founder of the world's largest helicopter company, CHC Helicopter Corp., and Joel Cohen, producer of The Simpsons.

The book provides a brief but comprehensive profile on each subject and includes their tips, wisdom and a key section in each chapter titled "5 Things You Need to Know."



"If I wanted to invite some of the best people in business over for dinner, there would be a disproportionate number of Canadians," says Brody, who is also co-founder and CEO of NowPublic, one of the fastest-growing news agencies in the world, with more than 170,000 contributing reporters and over three million readers per month.

"If I wanted to know about customer service, I'd talk to Issy Sharp – he redefined the luxury brand. If I wanted to learn how to innovate in an industry that's declining, I'd talk to Terry McBride [the founder and CEO of the Canadian music label and band management firm Nettwerk Music Group]."

A significant number of the profilees in the book are Jewish, a fact Brody notes isn't surprising.

"The Jewish community has such as strong communal element, with amazing kinship between entrepreneurs," says Brody, who was raised in Calgary and now lives in Vancouver.

"It began with people coming to the country as immigrants and having to develop an incredible work ethic."

Brody himself did not grow up in a wealthy family and says his entrepreneurialism stems from a staunch desire to channel his own ideas into action.

"I was motivated by wanting to control my own destiny," says Brody, 37.

"I'm an ideas guy and when you have that personality, you're likely to excel as an entrepreneur."

Everything I Needed to Know is an engaging read with practical advice from people who know what they're talking about.

Everything from fostering teamwork and innovative marketing to managing change and even how to sell your company is articulated in a reader-friendly fashion.

As Scott White of the Canadian Press says, "Brody and Raffa… offer valuable lessons on how to harness teamwork, creativity and – above all – passion into any workplace."

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"Have you lost your mind?" Megan shrieked into the phone after I told her about Jacob's summer plans. My friend did not attempt to hide her disapproval which was heightened when I told her three orthodox Jewish teenagers would be responsible for his well-being. Maybe I did lose it, I'm not sure. And I started doubting my parental abilities, again. Jacob, my son, has Pelizaeus-Merzbacher Disease (PMD) a degenerative neurological disorder that prevents him from sitting by himself, walking, talking and swallowing. It does not, however, impair his ability to understand conversations or affect his amazing sense of humour.

Please go to www.cjnews.com for full story

Susannah Perlman, left, is the ringleader of Nice Jewish Girls Gone Bad.

Nice Jewish Girls hit the road

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Bubbies watch out! If you're still trying to find your grandson a nice Jewish girl to settle down with, five of them are coming to Ontario this week.

Except these girls are known for deconstructing years of tradition, expectations and guilt, in a fast-paced vaudeville extravaganza.

"It's a lot of fun," says Susannah Perlman, the ringleader of Nice Jewish Girls Gone Bad, a New York-based troupe.

She says the show is a combination burlesque, comedy, musical, variety show. "Then there's this Jewish thing that keeps it together."

It's been described as a night of comedy told by girls who learned to smoke at Hebrew school and got drunk at their bat mitzvahs.

"People relate to this show in many ways," she says. "We've been told it's pretty edgy." Part of the show has the group taking traditional Jewish songs and giving them a humorous, modern twist. "For instance, we do a surf version of Hava Nagila."

Perlman is a comedian/chanteuse who has performed across America and was featured on the TV show Last Comic Standing.

Nice Jewish Girls Gone Bad started six years as an event for the American magazine Heeb. It was reformatted two years and was successful during a run off-Broadway. It has since toured across America.

A night of comedy

"We are now hitting every place where we haven't been before," Perlman says.

The Girls play the Rivoli in Toronto on June 11 and 12 (416-597-0794), Modern Fuel in Kingston on June 13 (613-548-4883) and Zaphod Beeblebrox in Ottawa on June 14 (613-562-1010). Tickets can be purchased at www.brownpapertickets.com. Visit the Girls' website at www.nicejewishgirlsgonebad.com.

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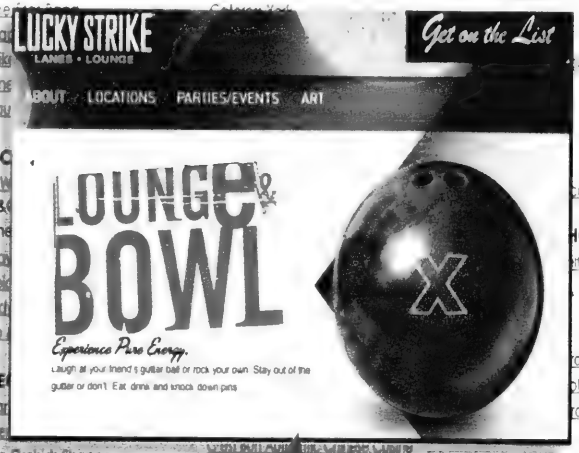
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

POET SEYMOUR MAYNE FETED IN ISRAEL AS NEW COLLECTION PUBLISHED IN HEBREW

Ottawa professor-poet **Seymour Mayne** is in Israel for the launch of Selected Poems, a major collection of his poems in Hebrew translation. The translator is **Moshe Dor**, the senior Israeli poet and man of letters, and the publisher is Keshev Le'Shira, a major Israel publisher of poetry.

While in Israel, Mayne is delivering a lecture on his friend, the late poet **Irving Layton**, and giving a reading at Tel Aviv University for the department of English and the creative writing program. He is also being honoured by four leading Israeli poets – **Raquel Chalfi**, **Amir Or**, **Karen Alkalay-Gut** and **Rafi Weichert** – who are to read his poems in Hebrew as he recites the English originals in a gallery in the trendy Newe Tzedeq district of Tel Aviv.

He is also scheduled as a guest speaker at a gathering of the Voices Israel Association, an English-language group of Israeli writers. The Canadian Ambassador is hosting a reception in his honour on June 17 to celebrate the publication of the new poetry collection. The volume is Mayne's fifth and most substantial work to be published in Hebrew, and underlines the strong connection of his poetry to Israel.

* * *

New Poetry Volume: Speaking of poets, 28-year-old **Brandon Marlon**, winner of the 2007 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, recently published a new collection of poetry titled Inspirations of Israel: Poetry for a Land and People. The work is "a lyrical tribute to the epic saga that is Israel" and suffused with spirituality.

Marlon, who comes from an observant Jewish home, now lives in Jerusalem. A graduate of the University of Toronto in drama, he has also written numerous screen and stage plays on historic and modern Jewish themes. The new book is available from Xlibris Corporation. www.xlibris.com

* * *

Wrecking Ball Party: Join the Koffler Gallery of the Arts in bidding farewell to its famous curved walls and other kooky spaces as it prepares for a bold future in a new state-of-the-art facility. Its Wrecking Ball party features artists **Isaac Applebaum**, **Carmelo Arnoldin**, **Barbara Astman**, **Blue Republic**, **Stephen Cruise**, **Lynn Fisher**, **Simon Frank**, **Karilee Fuglem**, **Rafael Goldchain**, **Sadko Hadzihasanovic**, **David Kaufman**, **Andrew Moore**, **Joshua Neustein**, **Ed Pien**, **Cyril Reade**, **Rochelle Rubinstein**, **Judith Schwartz**, **Brian Smith**, **Evan Tapper**, **Denyse Thomasos** and **Akira Yoshikawa**.

The event features unique installations by artists who have formerly exhibited at the Koffler, on view for one night only. Patrons may also enjoy the exhibition Russia: Beyond Utopia by photographer **Andrew Moore**, as well as a silent art auction, construction-themed cocktails, demolition-inspired desserts, eclectic entertainment and art on the spot. Tickets are $50 in advance, $65 at the door, $250 with VIP reception. Thursday, June 18, 8 p.m. 4588 Bathurst St. www.kofflerarts.org, www.ticketweb.ca

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Nice Jewish Girls Gone Bad features live sketch comedy of the ribald sort. The Rivoli, 334 Queen St. W. June 11 & 12. 416-596-1908

• The 13th annual Festival on Bloor features many craft and specialty food vendors, live music at the Tranzac Club and theatre at the Fringe Stage. The festival takes over the stretch of Bloor Street from Bathurst to Spadina, including the Miles Nadal JCC. Sunday, June 14, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

• Pride @ the J features a reading of the play Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath by **Phil Pivnick**, directed by **David Gale** and featuring **Cayle Chernin**, **Sascha Cole**, **Jack Newman**, **Jordan Pettle**, **Gerry Salsberg** and **David Tomlinson**. "They used to think it would be nice if their son came out for Sabbath dinner." Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, June 25, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Entertainment One, with support from Kulanu Toronto. Suggested donation $8. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, esthera@mnjcc.org

• This year's Fringe Festival features the new musical comedy My Mother's Lesbian Jewish-Wiccan Wedding, by **David Hein** and **Irene Carl**. The piece is scheduled for performance at Bread and Circus at 299 August Ave. in Kensington Market. The Fringe runs July 1 to 12.

KIDS DANCE AUDITIONS!
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Defiance out on DVD

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Defiance, Edward Zwick's film about the Bielski brothers who led a Jewish partisan group in the forests of Belarus during the Holocaust, is now available on DVD.

The film stars Daniel Craig as Tuvia, the eldest of the three brothers, who heroically leads a ragged band of Jews escaping the Nazis into the forest. The group became known as the "Otriad" ("the revenged"), and provided food and shelter for the refugees they were protecting.

The DVD contains an informative commentary soundtrack by director Zwick, as well as several other "making of" features. The best one is a 15-minute documentary, Children of the Otriad, in which the Bielskis' children and grandchildren talk about the memories they have of the brothers. This documentary also includes interesting clips of the Bielski family's home movies and follows them on a moving journey to the forests of Belarus.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Sisters launch Hadassah chapter to continue their grandmother's work

By RIVA GOLD
Special to The CJN

Most people wouldn't combine teddy bears, poker, and brisket lessons with charity work for Israel. Then again, most people aren't Leah Seetner-Goldband and Heidi Seetner-Czutrin, the founders of a new Hadassah chapter in Toronto called Yafah.

Yafah, named after the Hebrew word for beauty, was created last June so that women aged 27 to 32 could help implement Hadassah's vision.

"The women in our chapter are beautiful inside and out, and we wanted the name to reflect that," Seetner-Goldband says.

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) is a women's philanthropic organization that supports women, children, and health care in Canada and Israel.

Seetner-Goldband, 30, and Seetner-Czutrin, 28, were inspired to create the chapter after their grandmother, Ilse Seetner, was honoured by Hadassah with a star for her lifetime commitment to the organization.

From left, Leah Seetner Goldband, her sister Heidi Seetner Czutrin and Alison Fields Sonshine took part in last year's Hadassah Bazaar.

"If you say 'Seetner' at any Hadassah chapter, every person in the room will know our grandmother," Seetner-Czutrin says.

Her grandmother joined CHW with her mother when they came to Canada from Germany after World War II, and her grandmother served as president in 1979. She was particularly committed to Hadassah's Rose Dunkleman Daycare, and travelled to Israel to help build it.

"When we went for the star dedication ceremony, someone told us stories about our grandmother's involvement," says Seetner-Czutrin.

"We'd never heard about her work before, and we were so inspired."

The sisters wanted to make sure the next generation of women would be there to support causes like the daycare centre.

"That kind of project really hits home with women our age who may have growing families," says Seetner-Goldband.

"It's incredible to be able to help Jewish women just like ourselves."

They felt that their generation wasn't taking advantage of these opportunities, and decided to start their own chapter.

The Yafah chapter recently launched the Baby Bear Project, which sells two types of stuffed bears to raise funds for Hadassah. About 350 bears have been sold so far, often serving as centrepieces at baby-namings and brit milahs.

The chapter's next fundraiser will be a poker tournament this September. "We're sort of in the early planning stage... It's really hard to organize," says Seetner-Czutrin.

While charity work is central to the chapter, Yafah's monthly meetings are meant to be entertaining. For their next meeting, a nutritionist is coming to talk about how to maintain healthy lifestyles for young families.

"Meetings are social more than anything," says Seetner-Goldband, adding that many women her age are too busy to spend any time on themselves.

> **"There's definitely a feeling of sisterhood."**

"Once a month, we leave all our responsibilities at home," her sister added. "We have snacks, meet great women, and still get the fulfillment of doing charity."

Meetings have taken on a variety of themes from Chanukah card-making sessions to kosher cooking classes.

"A chef taught us to make brisket – it was amazing," Seetner-Goldband says.

Yafah members gathered at one of the meetings last Chaunkah to make Chanukah greeting cards.

"We're considering having a real estate agent come in and talk about buying homes," Seetner-Czutrin added. "We also might play Guitar Hero for a whole meeting, or do yoga."

Creating the chapter was surprisingly easy for the sisters, who recruited primarily online.

"We sent out a massive e-invite to every young Jewish woman we'd ever met," jokes Seetner-Czutrin.

"There are several people who joined that I had never met before, or hadn't seen in 15 years," she says, adding that through Yafah, they reconnected with a number of their former classmates from United Synagogue Day School and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and have a membership of about 70 women.

"There's definitely a feeling of sisterhood," says Seetner-Czutrin.

For these sisters from North York, working together is nothing new. The two also work full time for their parents' business, which manufactures and imports plush toys.

Yafah members raised more than $4,000 selling these teddy bears at last year's Hadassah Bazaar to support needy women and children in Canada and Israel.

Working in the toy business has been very useful for the pair, who have been able to get discounted rates on the toys they sell for Yafah.

When the young Yafah chapter set up a booth at last year's Hadassah Bazaar to sell their stuffed teddy bears, the women raised more than $4,000.

For more information, e-mail yafahchapter@hotmail.com or visit www.chw.ca.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Books & Authors

A child survivor undergoes therapy in Wiesel's new novel

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Elie Wiesel's latest novel, A Mad Desire to Dance, is a return to his storytelling roots and to themes familiar to his readers.

Although not directly a Holocaust novel, its protagonist is a child survivor who spent the war years hiding with his father in a barn in a town in Poland "too small for the Nazis to bother with."

The narrator is Doriel, a 60-ish bachelor who believes he is mad and haunted by a dybbuk. But you wonder whether he is really mad – or simply wants to be mad. Often you get the impression he enjoys acting mad. Doriel also has a number of other problems – anxiety, inability to be intimate with women, and survivor's guilt.

He is apparently very wealthy (he never tells us till the end how he obtained his wealth) and visits an expensive Manhattan therapist to get to the source of his problems.

The large part of this novel takes place in his therapist's office – the plot mostly unfolding as conversation with her (and as letters to his dead parents). From the outset, he warns his therapist, and the reader, the narrative will not be chronological and jumps all over the place.

"You have to be be abnormal if you want to live normally in the hell of man," he tells his therapist, who like a good Freudian shrink explores his relationship with his mother and with women.

While he and his father were hiding during the war, his mother used her Aryan looks to join the Polish resistance. Throughout his therapy, Doriel drops hints that she may have had an affair with another resistance fighter. His parents, after surviving the war, died in a car crash in Paris. His two siblings died in the Holocaust.

He is raised by his religious uncle in New York, and when he grows up, he attends a yeshiva in Israel. However, he begins to question his faith. "Against a world invaded by madness, should we use the faith of our ancestors, or our own madness?" he asks. Here, the reader finds himself deep in familiar Wiesel territory.

Doriel becomes a lone wanderer, following a path that leads to nowhere. He is a tough patient for his therapist – also a child of survivors – probably because he is well educated and clever. Much of his therapy sessions consist of games he plays with his therapist.

This makes him an annoying character. The reader just wants to hit him on the head sometimes to snap him out of it. But he must be likable enough as, unbelievably at times, women seem to be attracted to him, even when they're less than half his age.

Sometimes A Mad Desire to Dance (Knopf), translated from the French by Catherine Temerson, gets weighted down in its own psychobabble and sometimes the narrative, like Doriel, wanders around aimlessly. Many questions are asked but never answered, many narrative threads begun, but never completed.

Yet, in the end, this book is like therapy. Avenues are explored, ideas prodded, journeys started but never completed. But this is a Wiesel novel, after all, and a patient reader will be rewarded.

Novel introduces Mideast conflict to teens

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

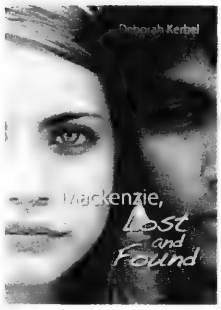
Young adult novelist Deborah Kerbel hopes that her book about love, loss and adventure in Jerusalem will help introduce aspects of the Middle East conflict to North American teens.

Mackenzie, Lost and Found, published by Dundurn Press, is about a 15-year-old Torontonian who reluctantly moves to Jerusalem with her father – who takes a job as a visiting archeology professor at Hebrew University – following the death of her mother a year before.

In addition to trying to fit into a foreign city, and dealing with a tragic death, Mackenzie, who is Christian, finds herself in a secret, forbidden romance with a Palestinian Muslim boy and unwittingly becomes dangerously involved in an illegal antiquities trading ring.

The book also touches on some of the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as terrorism, rights to land, cultural differences and religious issues.

"There is a lot there, and sometimes I wonder if I tried to put too much into one book… I think the themes there are pretty universal – forbidden love, coming of age, a struggle to fit in – all these things are things that kids can relate to," said Kerbel.



"I'd never seen a YA novel set in the Middle East before. I knew it would be challenging, but I thought it would be a great way to introduce a very complex topic to a teenage audience in an accessible way."

She said that people in North America are bombarded with news about the Middle East, but few are truly informed about all the complexities of the region.

"Maybe after reading this story, next time a teenager sees a story about Israel, maybe they won't just look the other way, maybe they will feel more connected to the country and the people. That's what I hope."

Kerbel, who has been writing fiction for the past 10 years, said the inspiration for Mackenzie, Lost and Found came from a friend's childhood experience.

She said she was eight months pregnant and eager to get a book started before the baby was born, when she met with a friend for lunch.

"I mentioned to my friend that I was looking for a book idea, and she immediately said, 'Well, why don't you expand on what happened to me? When I was 15, my parents moved the family from Canada to Israel and it changed my life,'" Kerbel recalled.

"That really got the wheels in my head turning, and I got home and I started thinking about the premise and what I could do to a character who was put in that situation. I started writing about all the possibilities of what could happen. I had an outline and probably a chapter or two done by the time my daughter was born."

Now, with two young children, Kerbel said she works on her writing whenever she has a chance.

By the end of this year, Kerbel is preparing to release another YA novel titled Girl on the Other Side.

"This is about two girls who exist on opposite sides of their school social ladder. There is one girl who seems to have the perfect life, and the other girl is the constant target of school bullies. The book explores the idea of what happens when their lives come crashing together," she said.

Kerbel said she loves to write about children and young adults because their experiences are new and emotions are high.

"I also think it's a great way to stay connected to your young side. Writing for kids, speaking with kids and interacting with them, talking about the books helps to keep me young."

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Clark/New Westminster Bright, spacious 4+1 bdrm, 4 bthrm! $$ upgrades. New roof/CAC/windows/furnace/deck/hrdwd/berber. Designer décor. Steps to shuls, malls,TTC! $499,900.

Centre/Atkinson Spectacular 4 bdrm; 3000+ sq ft; Premium pie shaped lot on private cul-de-sac. Above grnd bsmt w/kit, 4 pce bth & w/o. Sep. entr. Self-contained. Steps to Associated.

Finch/Seniac Bungalow on dream poolsize lot! Million $$ street. Renovate & live in or build your dream home. $519,000.

Bathurst/Mill Pond Prestigious Heritage Estates Spectacular 3300+sq ft 4 bdrm 5 bath home. 3 full baths on 2nd flr. Fin bsmt. Spectacular Deck. Poolsize lot. $588,888.

Centre/New Westminster Exclusive Listing! Large 3 bdrm 4 bath end unit TH. Extensive renovations! $$$ upgr! Fabulous kitchen; hrdwd thruout; 2 car garage, 2300+ sq ft.

Approx. 4000 Sq. Ft.
Thornhill. 5 bed, lux eat-in renod kitchen, ss appliances, w/o to triple deck & hot tub. Main flr. Family & library, oversized master w/ 6 pc Ensuite, wet steam, spiral staircase, fin. bsmnt. w/2 bed. Nanny's ste incl. full bth., walk to shul

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Enirox, Lorne Rose Arch & Carrie Mudford Int. Design! Walnut flrs, elvtr, dazzling kit+serv+pantry to great rm! Sharon Bobkin*416-226-1987

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Mstrpce in desirable location! radiant htd flrs! 4Brs all w/ens! Face Frame gour.kit. Fin'd lwr lvl! Sharon Bobkin*416-226-1987

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30 CANTERBURY PLACE! YONGE S/FINCH! $525,000!
Unbelievable find! Gorg'us 2+1Br, 3Bth s/w corner (Apprx 1475')+open terrace (Apprx 308')! 2 car prkg! Sandon Schwartzben**416-226-1987

1st AD! 2181 YONGE STREET! JUST S/EGLINTON!
$469,000! Spectacular 2Br 2Bth N/E corner w/2 balconies+parking+ Locker! Hi flr! Impeccable! 10+ Sandon Schwartzben**416-226-1987

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1st AD! 10 STONEHILL COURT! WARDEN S/FINCH!
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BATHURST/STEELES
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7 Townsgate. 2 bed., 2 bth. w/balc., 1460 sf, 2 prkng. Priv. sale. Call Albert, 905-660-3140.

35 CONDOMINIUMS FOR RENT

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Belle Ewart Lakefront, fully furn'd., synagogue, 4 bdrms., 1 1/2 bths., leave message. 647-290-7484.

Belle Ewart. 4 bed., 2 bth., near shul. Avail. for month of July. $2000. 416-821-5833.

Jackson's Point, Lake Simcoe. 4 bed., lakefront, close to shul, June 26 - July 31 $3000, or last 2 weeks of July $1500. 416-445-0144.

Wasaga Bch., beachfront, 4 bed., 2 bth., A/C, wi-fi, lrg. priv. deck, modern, shul, Shomer Shabbat only. 416-907-4951.

130 FLORIDA PROPERTY FOR RENT

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Del Ray Bch., Kings Point, 2 bed., 2 bth., condo, first flr., porch, good shape, laund. in condo, pool. $900 USD/mo. 561-703-3908.

160 ISRAEL PROPERTY FOR RENT

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190 VACATION PROPERTY AVAILABLE

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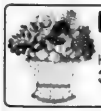

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55 ACCOMMODATION WANTED
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Karate blackbelt, 14, heading to Maccabiah Games

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Samantha Krystantos has trained in karate since she was just four years old. Now 14, she's set to put her skills to the test against international competition at the 18th Maccabiah Games.

Krystantos received her first black belt when she was nine and earned her second-degree black belt just two years later. For the past two years, she's divided her time between working toward her third-degree black belt – there are 10 in all – and teaching part-time at Northern Karate School Thornhill as a *sensei*, or master.

To balance school work and her extracurricular activities, including dance lessons, the eighth grader has to be fairly disciplined with her time.

Then again, as a *sensei*, discipline comes with the territory.

"It's pretty hard," she admitted, "because I also have homework and next year I'm going to be in high school, so I have a lot of projects and exams I have to study for. But I try to make time for it."

Krystantos teaches classes twice a week and also takes classes with both master-level kids ages four to 17 and adults.

As someone who instructs both adults and children, Krystantos has had to find ways to accommodate the needs of both age groups.

"Sometimes with little kids, it's hard for them to focus," she explained. "You have to try and get them to listen to you. But we try to treat the younger kids the same as the adults, so we push them just as much."

As with any martial art, karate requires one to be both physically and psychologically focused, both when sparring with opponents and especially when teaching others.

Fortunately, Krystantos has an innate ability to concentrate on the task at hand.

"Whenever she's up there, she just blocks everything out," her father, Mitchell, said.

He also takes classes at Northern Karate and is currently on his advanced blue belt. His *sensei*, strangely enough, is his daughter, and in case you think there's any familiar father-daughter interplay during lessons, Mitchell said that's simply not the case.

"When we're in the *dojo* [training area], she puts me on the ground," he said matter-of-factly.

"She makes me work for it… At home, she's my daughter, but in the *dojo*, she's 'Sensei Sam' and she'll have me doing pushups. It's the only time she actually gets to punish me."

Although karate is primarily a discipline first and a combat sport second, Krystantos said her training has developed her reflexes and senses to the point that she would have no problem defending herself outside the *dojo*, even against a much larger person.

"Karate teaches you a lot of things, like how to get out of situations… So, if somebody on the street came to grab me, I would know what to do."

Samantha Krystantos

People are generally surprised to learn this lithe teen is not only a participant in the Maccabiah Games, but that she's a competitor in the karate tournament. As might be expected, she's seen her fair share of amazed reactions.

"When I tell people I'm going to the Maccabiah Games, they're like 'Oh cool, for gymnastics?' and I'm like, 'No, for karate.' People don't really expect a girl at 14 to be into karate," she said.

Krystantos – her family takes its name from her father Mitchell's stepfather – is looking forward to her first visit to Israel to celebrate her Jewish heritage and see the famous sights on a tour that's organized for the athletes.

"All my friends are Jewish, and I just feel really excited to go there for my first time… People tell me it's such an amazing experience," she said.

It costs $7,500 to send an athlete to the games, and the Krystantos family has been actively raising funds for Samantha and her teammates to help cover a portion of the cost. They've organized a Spar-a-Thon involving members of Northern Karate and their friends, as well as upcoming event at the Promenade Mall on June 13, and they've solicited donations at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Walk With Israel .

"It's a team effort," Mitchell said. "There are some people on the team that just don't have the luxury we have, and we're trying to get them [support], too."

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Ref's 45-year career recognized

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Johnny Elias walked into the room bearing plaques and certificates, so you knew he was also bearing bragging rights about something.

One of Montreal's best-known baseball figures, Elias had basketball on his mind this day.

The 69-year-old had recently been recognized by two organizations – the Florida High School Athletics Association and the Metropolitan Montreal Basketball Referees Association – for his 45 years of officiating as a referee.

"It's something I'm really proud of," said Elias, who also came with a fistful of photographs of some of the greatest names in baseball – all friends he still corresponds and hobnobs with while wintering in Florida.

Bill "Spaceman" Lee, Jim Bouton, Gary Carter, Stab Bahnsen, Tim Raines, Andre Dawson, Warren Cromartie, Dave Cash, Dennis Martinez, Ron Swoboda – you name them, and Elias has a ready anecdote, as well as photos to go along with it.

As far as basketball is concerned, the job of referee was something Elias sort of fell into years ago at Springfield College, known by some as the "birthplace of basketball."

Elias was asked to ref a game and it fit him perfectly. "Within three years, I was doing college ball," he said.

Elias is considered one of the most reliable basketball referees in the business, officiating at college games in the United States and Canada until the 1990s, when he began to ref only high school and senior men's basketball.

Elias also travelled to Israel several times to officiate in both baseball and basketball. He was assistant basketball coach when the Canadian basketball team won gold at the Maccabiah Games in 1997, and helped run the Canadian baseball team that took silver in 2005.

"I take it a year at a time," Elias said, referring to his high school and senior men's basketball activities these days. "If my health holds up, if I can still be mentally into the games, that's the important thing," he said.

If the game is an obvious rout, it's not necessarily much fun, "but if the game is very competitive, you naturally get into it much more."

The play isn't the problem

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

New Views

On May 14, Paul Michaels, writing in his weekly CJN column, discussed CBC Radio's airing of Caryl Churchill's controversial play, Seven Jewish Children. He opened with the following warning: "Criticism of Israel is reaching a state of hysterical overreaction, devoid of rational analysis of events on the ground."

Michaels went on to quote from the final, highly emotional act of Seven Jewish Children. "Tell her we killed the babies by mistake…Tell her I laughed when I saw the dead policemen. Tell her they're animals living in rubble now. Tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out… Tell her we're better haters. Tell her we're chosen people."

This sounds pretty bad. Churchill would appear to be portraying Israelis as ruthless, unsympathetic killers – she may even be invoking the notorious blood libel. Except…

Well, except that Michaels curiously left out the last part of the quote. Those words are: "Don't tell her that. Tell her we love her. Don't frighten her."

Now, that makes the whole thing sound quite different, doesn't it? The speaker, a Jewish parent pondering how to explain the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a child, rescinds her earlier diatribe – what else can the words "Don't tell her that" mean? The parent displayed anger at the Palestinians – and who can blame him or her, after the incessant rocket attacks, suicide bombings and treachery of the Palestinian leadership? – and even a hunger for vengeance. But cooler heads prevailed: the parent realized that anger and violence won't help anyone, most certainly not the younger generation of Israelis.

"Hysterical overreaction"? Right back at you, Mr. Michaels.

Seven Jewish Children, is perhaps the most rational encounter with the frail psyche of an Israeli parent that I have ever seen. But you wouldn't know that from reading the hypersensitive, paranoid bluster of Jewish leaders.

And Michaels, in my opinion, was guilty of bowdlerizing yours truly much as he did Churchill. In his May 28 CJN column, he discussed a piece I had written a week earlier in the National Post about Seven Jewish Children, wherein I argued, as I just have above, that the play is not the anti-Semitic diatribe that many commentators in the Jewish community have made it out to be.

Michaels quoted me as writing, "The worst one can say about Seven Jewish Children is that it makes a link between the Holocaust perpetrated against the Jews, and another, newer, genocide of the Palestinians perpetrated by Israel." Then he laid it on thick: "What is worse than implying that Israelis are acting like Nazis?" he asked. "There is nothing 'nuanced' about this absurd allegation, which means any claim that the play is a 'nuanced piece of writing' shouldn't be taken seriously."

He's right: How could I have been so ho-hum about a play that links the Holocaust and what the far-left has dubbed the genocide of the Palestinians? Except…

Except that's not what I wrote – or at least not the entirety of it. Here's what I actually penned: "The worst one can say about Seven Jewish Children is that it makes a link between the Holocaust perpetrated against the Jews, and another, newer, genocide of the Palestinians perpetrated by Israel. But the link is tenuous at best."

See the difference?

I hope you do, because if you don't it means our community has a serious problem. It means we have become blind hysterics. It means we are too scared to face anyone who doesn't share our particular worldview. It means we are vulnerable and weak. That's far more worrisome than any 10-minute play.

A short note: This is the last writing you'll see from me in these pages for at least a few months. I intend to use the time off to consider the future – indeed, if there is one – for this column. So long.

GRILLED CORN SALAD

3 tbsp fresh lime juice
3 tbsp cooking oil
3 tsp garlic salt
4 corn on the cobs, cleaned with husks pulled back but not removed
2 tsp chili powder
2 small, seeded, peeled, chopped avocado
2/3 c each, chopped red & yellow pepper
1/2 c cilantro, chopped
1/2 tsp salt

Preheat grill to medium heat. In a bowl combine lime juice, oil and garlic salt. Brush corn lightly with mixture and sprinkle with chili powder. Fold husks back up around corn. Place corn on grill for approx. 8-12 min. with lid closed or until corn is tender, turning every few minutes.

Add avocado, red & yellow peppers, cilantro and salt to remaining lime juice mixture. Cut corn kernels from the finished cobs by running sharp knife from top to bottom of cobs. Add to salad and toss to coat evenly. Serve at room temperature.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

FIRST MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL

This elegant building at 100 Yorkville Ave. was the first home of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. It opened in 1923 as the 50-bed Hebrew Maternity and Convalescent Hospital, offering kosher food, Yiddish-speaking staff and medical care by leading Jewish doctors. Three decades later, in 1953, the much-expanded Mount Sinai relocated to University Avenue. After a long period of construction, the original Yorkville premises reopened last month as a home and garden store capped by a residential tower. Only the historic façade has been preserved.

CJC, a plenary and the Rolling Stones

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

It's amazing that the Rolling Stones are still performing after 45 years. Even more impressive is that Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) is 90 years old – twice as old, yet still strutting across the stage from end to end.

On May 31, CJC held its 29th plenary at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. I was honoured to attend. The excitement and exuberance was palpable. The room was filled with a "who's who" of Canadian society, including outgoing CJC co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol, Israeli Vice-Prime Minister Silvan Shalom, Julia and Henry Koschitsky, Prof. Irving Abela and award-winning Darfur activist Norman Epstein. One couldn't move a few inches without literally rubbing elbows with national dignitaries such as Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff and NDP boss Jack Layton.

Nobody pulls together a rock star lineup better than the CJC.

Like a well-orchestrated concert, the speeches were well-timed, well-delivered and not verbose. Congress CEO Bernie Farber, bopped around the room with a youthful funk and vigour, a characteristic that serves to keep the CJC spirit shining. I like Bernie and always have. He has a well-honed savvy for community work and political manoeuvring, and a *nishamah* for the less fortunate that he's carried with him from his days working with abused children. And you gotta love his earring and the fact he's on Twitter. The boy's got moxy.

But what impressed even the most seasoned plenary- and gala-goers was the list of speakers and honoured guests.

Harper received the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award with elegance and a well-researched speech that elicited a standing ovation. Harper, appropriately, spoke about Canadians, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who toiled in the human rights trenches to change the landscape of our country from one where aboriginal children were stolen from their mothers' arms to a nation where former prime minister John Diefenbaker appointed a Jew, Louis Rasminsky, as governor of the Bank of Canada.

I had never heard the prolific and highly accomplished professor and MP Irwin Cotler speak, and I was quite surprised, at least initially, to hear inflections in his voice that sounded distinctly like Al Pacino in the movie Scent of a Woman. Cotler's address was inspiring and riveting, as he regularly drew upon thoughts from Jewish sources. I figure he must study Torah. That's admirable – a Jew who really is a "person of the book."

That was the thing about the CJC plenary: it was very Jewish, with no apologies. Ignatieff used Torah ideas, as did, of course, Rabbi Bulka. The chair of the board of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, David Koschitsky, who introduced his aunt and uncle, Julia and Henry, as recipients of the Samuel Bronfman Medal, referred to heart-breaking responsas that rabbis were forced to issue during the Holocaust.

The Jewish waters were warm at the CJC plenary.

In our community, there are regular murmurs about disbanding organizations or folding them into others. Such noise has surfaced about Congress over the last few years. While the CJC may not have the same rag-tag, on-the-street activism of old, its spirit is still very much alive. Its voice is loud and its successes – such as fighting white supremacists or mentoring survivors of the Rwandan massacre – are bold and groundbreaking.

Like the Rolling Stones, Congress has been around for a long time. And like Mick Jagger, it's likely to keep on belting 'em out for years to come. Long live the CJC.

Read Avrum's blog at http://avrum.net

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Netanyahu accepts two-state solution

On condition of Israel as Jewish homeland, demilitarized Palestine

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JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday called on Palestinian leaders to restart Middle East peace negotiations without preconditions, in a highly anticipated foreign policy address at Bar-Ilan University.

"I call on you, our Palestinian neighbours, and to the leadership of the Palestinian Authority: let us begin peace negotiations immediately, without preconditions," he said.

"Israel is committed to international agreements and expects all the other parties to fulfil their obligations as well."

In an apparent reversal of his own policy, Netanyahu also declared that he's prepared to see the creation of a Palestinian state, so long as the international community can guarantee that it doesn't have any military capabilities.

"Israel cannot agree to a Palestinian state unless it gets guarantees it is demilitarized," Netanyahu said. He also said that Jerusalem must remain the unified capital of Israel.

The address at Bar-Ilan came in the wake of the Obama administration's insistence that Israel impose a complete freeze on West Bank settlement construction and endorse a two-state solution.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers his foreign policy address at Bar-Ilan University. Full text of speech at cjnews.com *[Israel Sun photo]*

During the speech, Netanyahu vowed that Israel would not build any new settlements and would refrain from expanding existing Israeli communities in the West Bank. Still, he said the government must be allowed to accommodate natural growth in these settlements.

Netanyahu has until now been adamant that a settlement freeze is unfeasible and that he would concentrate on strengthening the Palestinian economy, rather than agreeing to statehood.

The prime minister said he was prepared to meet with the leaders of neighbouring Arab countries at any time, to promote regional peace and to improve the Palestinian economy.

Netanyahu reiterated that Israel has no desire to control the Palestinian people and declared that both nations should be able to live side by side in peace.

"We want both Israeli and Palestinian children to live without war," Netanyahu said, but he added: "We must ask ourselves: why has peace not yet arrived after 60 years?"

Israel would not accept any situation in which it was forced to exist beside a terrorist state, Netanyahu said, adding that every withdrawal from settlement territory would contribute to such terror.

Continued on page 27

Finestone fought for society and the individual

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Sheila Finestone's sister related an anecdote at last week's funeral for the longtime parliamentarian and social justice activist that she believes illustrates the kind of person Finestone was.

About two months before her death from cancer on June 8 at age 82, Finestone reluctantly accepted that she needed full-time home care, said Diane Abbey-Livingston.

Abbey-Livingston, arriving at Finestone's first meeting with her new caregiver, found the young woman in an apartment building corridor in deep conversation with Finestone, who was leaning on a walker and carrying her pain medication.

But Finestone wasn't querying the care worker on her qualifications.

Sheila Finestone

She wanted to know all about her life: her homeland, her studies, her dreams. Finestone encouraged her to get her Canadian papers and to go back to school.

"To her very marrow, Sheila was committed to the potential in each of us," said Abbey-Livingston. She set ambitions and standards for herself, and she wanted others to pursue theirs with as much energy as she did, her sister said.

Her grandson, Jason Finestone, said that Finestone "did not hesitate to let others know if she felt they were not giving their best. She spoke her mind more frequently than expected, and sometimes desired."

Her youngest son, Stephen Finestone, said, "Mom was focused and slightly opinionated," but she respected and sought the views of others.

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EU postpones upgrading ties with Israel – please see page 28

The News in Brief

CANADA

Museum Needs Funds

WINNIPEG — The Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg needs an extra $45 million to complete construction after inflation caused its original $265-million cost to grow to $310 million, it said last month. The brainchild of Izzy Asper, the late founder of Canwest Global Communications, it's currently being built in downtown Winnipeg and is slated to open in 2012. It's raised $160 million from three levels of government and $110 million in private funds. Manitoba Premier Gary Doer said his government is prepared to increase its $40-million contribution, but he expects private money to make up most of the gap.

Gaza Summit Hosted

OTTAWA — The federal government hosted an "expert-level" meeting of the Gaza Counter-Arms Smuggling Initiative (GCASI) in Ottawa last week. The June 10-11 symposium is "a clear sign of our commitment to international efforts to bring about a durable ceasefire between Israel and Hamas [which rules Gaza]," Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon said. "We look forward to continuing work with our partners on the program of action to co-ordinate efforts to stop the flow of arms, ammunition and related material into the Gaza Strip." GCASI members are Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Britain and the United States. Last week's meeting aimed to implement a plan formulated last March.

WORLD

Israeli Journalist Dies

JERUSALEM — Nechemia Meyers, an Israeli-American journalist and spokesperson for the Weizmann Institute of Science, died last week at age 79 after a long illness. Meyers wrote hundreds of columns chronicling life in Israel for Jewish and secular publications. In the months before his death, Meyers was compiling his columns for publication as a book, according to his wife, Adeerah. Meyers was born in Minneapolis, Minn., and lived in Los Angeles before making aliyah in 1951. He lived in Kibbutz Urim in the Negev until joining the Government Press Office in 1958. He moved to Rehovot in 1962 when he was named the publications director and spokesperson for the Weizmann Institute there.

Rev. Blames Zionists

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama's former pastor said he misspoke when he said Jews are keeping him from talking to Obama, saying he meant Zionists. "I misspoke," Rev. Jeremiah Wright said on a satellite radio show. "Let me just say Zionists." He continued: "I am not talking about all Jews, all people of the Jewish faith." Wright was referring to remarks he made to a Virginia newspaper that "Them Jews aren't going to let him talk to me. I told my baby daughter that he'll talk to me in five years when he's a lame duck, or in eight years when he's out of office." Obama broke with Wright last year after learning he blamed U.S. policies for 9-11 and had links to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Cdns. Less Tolerant Than Thought: Poll

TORONTO — A new poll suggests Canadians may not be as tolerant of Judaism as believed.

The national online survey, which was conducted in April by Angus Reid Strategies and released earlier this month, shows that while nearly three-quarters of Canadians have a favourable opinion of Christianity, a little more than half – 53 per cent – feel the same way about Judaism.

The poll of 1,000 adults conducted for Maclean's magazine shows that just 40 per cent of respondents claim to have a good or basic understanding of Jewish teachings, compared to 86 per cent for Christian teachings.

Christianity also dominated on the question of whether respondents have friends who follow specific religions, with 89 per cent of those polls reporting that they have a Christian friend. Judaism was second, at 45 per cent.

A slight majority – 56 per cent – said they would find it acceptable for one of their children to marry a Jew.

Just 14 per cent said Judaism "encourages violence," while Islam led in that category, with 45 per cent saying it encourages violence.

The poll found that most Canadians – 68 per cent – oppose public funding of private Jewish schools. Only 51 per cent oppose tax dollars going to Catholic, evangelical or other Christian schools.

One of the poll's key findings is that 62 per cent of respondents believe Canadian laws and norms shouldn't be modified to accommodate minorities.

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Ottawa reviews funding for York U conference

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

A controversial conference on Israel slated to start Monday at York University has drawn the eye of Gary Goodyear, minister of state for science and technology, who last week called for a review of federal funding to the event.

"Israel-Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" received $19,750 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in January and features more than 50 guest speakers, many of whom are renowned for their anti-Israel views.

"We feel this conference is really not an academic conference… and does not meet rigorous academic criteria," said Howard English, spokesperson for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

He said the event has an anti-Israel tilt and many presenters aren't strictly considered academics. "There is a predominance [of speakers]… who have a history of vehement anti-Israel statements," he added, noting that many – such as Ali Abunimah, co-founder of the Electronic Intifada, a website that claims Israel is an apartheid state – aren't objective presenters.

"To say [Abunimah] is anti-Israel would be a mild understatement," English said. "The preoccupation of this conference with a 'one-state' solution will only highlight the legitimacy of the demise of Israel as a Jewish state."

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), which represents 65,000 academics, is calling for Goodyear's resignation because of his "unprecedented efforts to interfere" with the June 22-24 conference.

The CAUT said that Goodyear's decision to contact SSHRC "to express political concerns is not something we have seen in this country since the McCarthy period," and that the move "sets a very dangerous precedent."

Last month, York University president Mamdouh Shoukri said that the "freedom of independent scholars to organize events such as conferences on matters of legitimate academic inquiry goes to the very heart of academic freedom," adding that it "would be entirely inappropriate for the university administration to intervene in or to take responsibility for the academic content of such events, provided that they do not offend Canadian law."

A peer review committee of scholars from a number of academic disciplines awarded the SSHRC grant. Goodyear contacted SSHRC last week to ask that a second review committee assess whether the event still deserves funding, given that the initial proposal didn't have details about who would be speaking.

SSHRC spokesperson Trevor Lynn, confirmed Goodyear had spoken to the council, and that it asked conference organizer and Osgoode Hall associate law professor Bruce Ryder to provide details about any changes to the conference since the grant was made.

Under SSHRC guidelines, applicants are allowed "minor" changes to conferences, but approval for major changes, such as an event's theme or focus, must be made in writing. Lynn wouldn't speculate on what SSHRC might do if it decided major changes had been made.

Sharryn Aiken, a Jewish law professor at Queen's University and a lead organizer of the event, urged the Jewish community to remain open-minded about it. She also refuted claims about non-academic speakers.

"At least 90 per cent of the confirmed speakers are academics affiliated with academic institutions around the world," Aiken told The CJN.

Sharryn Aiken

Aiken said speakers such as Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, and David Berlin, an ex-pat Israeli and former editor of the Walrus, who, while not academics, were accepted based on their experience.

Aiken admitted that Abunimah "raises a lot of anxiety," but she defended his participation, calling his book on Israel, One Country, "a thoughtful book about the way forward out of the impasse. I'm not a self-hating Jew who is anti-Israel," she said. "I am deeply disappointed by the reaction in the [Jewish] community and by those who know me and who continue to insist that this conference is all about promoting hate."

— With files from JTA

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Lest we forget...

From the editor's desk...

A recent letter to the editor of the Jerusalem Post by Malka Hillel Shulewitz twigs our memory, conscience and our resolve like a tuning fork resonating with synchronicity with sound waves of the heart.

An acknowledged scholar on the subject of the Jews from Arab lands, Shulewitz was commenting on a review of the recently published Stories of Daily Life, Upheaval and Escape from Modern Babylon, edited by Tamar Morad, Dennis Shasha and Robert Shasha, Palgrave Studies in Oral History.

In the course of the review she wrote: "Sadly, it is not only the Jews of Iraq that are forgotten; it is the Jews of all the Arab countries who were the victims of Islamic hatred and brutality. They were exiled, leaving behind vast communal and private property. The majority immigrated to Israel, and today they and their progeny comprise almost half of the population of the Jewish state."

The timing of Shulewitz's letter was especially propitious.

Two days earlier, U.S. President Barack Obama delivered his watershed speech at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, in which he spoke long and pointedly about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The conflict-related remarks comprised nearly one-quarter of the president's address. It was very clearly part of the freshly painted, new horizon in U.S.-Muslim relations toward which he was trying to steer the American ship of state.

"On the other hand," Obama said after he spoke about the founding of the State of Israel in relation to the persecution and suffering of the Jewish people, "it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people – Muslims and Christians – have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years, they have endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighbouring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead."

Obama's aim is to win the confidence and trust of the majority of the Muslim world, without which he believes, the United States will not be successful in brokering a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis.

We hope he does indeed gain that trust and confidence. But it must decidedly not be at the expense of truth.

Obama and his advisers hold the view that tactically, it is counter-productive to delve into the full story of the past to ascertain precisely how and why Palestinians are still enduring the "the pain of dislocation" some 60 years after the creation of Israel. He wants the sides to stop "pointing fingers." He wants to proceed quickly. Indeed, his special Mideast envoy, Senator George Mitchell, was dispatched the following week to meet with regional leaders.

But not pointing fingers as the president urges Israelis and Palestinians, does not also mean letting go of the scales of justice.

Shulewitz correctly scolds us.

"We have allowed an important historic event – the virtual dissolution of the Jewish people's most ancient Diaspora – to fade away, and to be almost forgotten… We have remained silent as the Arabs continue to use their refugees as political pawns, propped up with billions from international coffers (not from their oil-rich brethren) for over 60 years."

We can understand Obama's reluctance to speak in Cairo of the Jews' "pain of dislocation" from their homes throughout the Arab world, and the hostility and hatred of the Arab governments that brought it about. Though we ought not condone it.

Nor would we ever condone the president and his advisers not weighing in the balance of the final determination of a just agreement, the dislocation from Arab lands and dispossession of the property of 750,000 Jews.

There were some commentators who pointed to the omission of the Jewish refugees from the president's speech. International law and human rights expert, Anne Bayefsky, a senior fellow of the Hudson Institute, was particularly scathing.

"But judging by Obama's speech," she wrote in the Jewish World Review, "only one 'dislocation' counts. After placing the Holocaust side by side with the Palestinian 'pain of dislocation,' he ignored the dislocation of 800,000 Jewish refugees from all over the Arab Middle East in response to the creation of Israel."

Bayefsky concluded her observations with unremitting disparagement and pessimism. "President Obama's meticulously planned and executed Egyptian speech marks the lowest point in the U.S. presidency's understanding and appreciation of the Jewish state, its history, and its people's future. Added to his administration's evident infirmity on Iran, the speech of June 4, 2009, by the supposed leader of the free world will be remembered as a major decline in human history."

In light of the approaches to Mideast peace by people such as former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and the entire State Department establishment advising former president Harry Truman, it is hard to accept Bayefsky's trenchant condemnation of Obama.

It is up to us, the Jewish people, to ensure that where it is lacking, Obama's "understanding and appreciation of the Jewish state, its history, and its people's future" is fully filled in.

– MBD

Correction

In "The Madoff fiasco," the story about financier Bernard Madoff that was published in the June 11 issue of The CJN, the Women's Zionist Organization of America was incorrectly identified as Hadassah-WIZO. Canadian Hadassah-WIZO was not affected by losses incurred by Madoff's Ponzi scheme. We regret the error.

SeeJN

MOVING AND GROOVING: Zareinu Educational Centre held its annual Moveathon on Sunday at Downsview Park. The festival featured 5-kilometre and 10-kilometre runs, the 20-kilometre Eli Monson Simpson Family bike ride and a fair with a carousel, inflatable and mechanical rides, pony rides, and a ferris wheel. Also part of the fair was a booth displaying toys created for Zareinu students by grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 students from participating schools. The toys take into account abilities and specific skill sets, such as motor skills, movement, co-ordination and communication. Other Moveathan photos can be found at CJNews.com.

[Carolyn Blackman photo]

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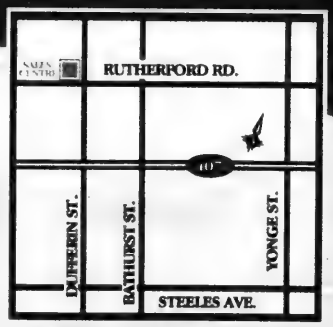

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COMMUNITY HONOURS SIKH PHILANTHROPIST:
The Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto last week honoured Sarabjit S. "Sabi" Marwah, vice-chair and chief operating officer of Scotiabank, with the 2009 Words & Deeds Leadership Award, given to "leaders whose contribution to humanitarian causes, tolerance and inclusion in Canadian society has been outstanding." Marwah was fêted at a gala dinner attended by some 700 guests. Presenting the award to Marwah, centre, are Words and Deeds dinner co-chair Tom O'Neill, left, and honorary co-chair Hari Panday. *For further details, please go to cjnews.com*

[Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf photo]

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Shaviv takes role at Mercaz

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Paul Shaviv, director of education at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, has been hired to direct the committee that's restructuring the former board of Jewish education.

In his new role, he'll serve as adviser to the lay leaders who are preparing a report on the goals of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's reworked Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz) and will develop a job description for its future director, with the aim of filling that position by September 2010.

Paul Shaviv

He will also oversee the entity's day-to-day operations, together with an interim co-ordinator, who is expected to be hired before the school year begins this September.

Earlier this year, the federation made major cuts to the Mercaz, eliminating 10 full-time jobs and two contract positions, effective April 3. As well, two full-time and one half-time employee were reassigned to other duties at the federation, leaving only four employees still on staff.

In addition, Seymour Epstein, the federation's former senior vice-president for the Mercaz, was offered a high-level position related to Jewish education with federation, a spokesperson said at the time. However, Epstein is also no longer with the federation.

Writing in The CJN, David Koschitzky, chair of the federation's board, said that the aim of the cuts was "to increase direct financial support to Jewish education, through an additional $500,000 for tuition subsidies."

News of Shaviv's appointment came as he was preparing to leave for Israel to accept the prestigious Max M. Fisher Prize for Jewish Education in the Diaspora in a June 25 ceremony.

He's one of two recipients to win this year's award, and he's the first Canadian to receive the annual honour, which has been awarded since 1999 by the L.A. Pincus Fund for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, an independent foundation based in Jerusalem.

Shaviv, who turned 60 at the end of May, anticipates his new position will take up to a day and a half a week while he continues with his responsibilities at TanenbaumCHAT.

His term is expected to last for 12 to 15 months, the federation said.

The board of TanenbaumCHAT has given Shaviv a part-time leave of absence.

Shaviv said his first priorities at the Mercaz include finding an interim director for the coming year, "to ensure that [the Mercaz's] essential services are kept running."

One of the services he noted is the Board of Licence, which ascertains teachers' salaries according to their qualifications. "It's always done centrally, so they're uniform across the city," Shaviv said.

As well, he cited the Midrasha L'Morim, a Jewish teacher training and certification program.

Shaviv began his career as a Hillel director in his native London, England, in the early 1970s before becoming director of Jewish studies and vice-principal at Carmel College, a Jewish boarding school in London that closed in 1997.

Before moving to Toronto in 1998, Shaviv – who is nearing completion of a book about leadership management and structure of Jewish high schools – served for four years as principal of Bialik High School in Montreal. In the late 1980s, he was on the founding team of London's Immanuel College, a school started by then British Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits.

Golf tourney benefits students with learning disabilities

By Daniel Horowitz

The late Max Guttmann believed that no child should ever be left behind. The community leader, who passed away in 1998 at the age of 65, felt that if you invest in children when they're young, you save them for a lifetime.

Fortunately for many of Toronto's Jewish students with special needs, his sons, Craig and Sean, feel the same way.

"Over 25 years ago, my father met with one of She'arim's founding rabbis, Rabbi Joseph Kelman, who told dad that the school was going to miss the teachers' payroll and needed his help," recalls Craig. "My dad called a group of his friends to a parlour meeting and they raised more than $25,000 in one night. Since then, my dad was a big supporter of the school. He was a Holocaust survivor and someone who, because of the war, never had a chance to gain a formal education. He really loved kids and wanted to do what he could to help them."

A year after their father died, Sean and Craig wanted to honour his memory while raising money to keep Max's legacy of helping children alive. In 1999, the Max Guttmann Memorial Golf Tournament was born.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, the tournament takes place on July 14 at Pheasant Run Golf Club. In its previous nine years of operation, the tournament has raised more than $500,000 in support of Jewish children with learning disabilities.

In light of the fact that She'arim decided to close its doors a year ago, the Max Guttmann Memorial Golf Tournament will continue raising funds so that UJA Federation can meet the unique educational needs of the school's former students in special programs at TanenbaumCHAT's Wallenberg campus, Associated Hebrew Schools and Netivot Hatorah Day School.

The late Max Guttmann z"l

Roberta Newman is one of many parents who can attest to the great work being done through these programs. Her 13-year-old daughter, Leora, a former She'arim student, was part of TanenbaumCHAT's Grade 8 program this year. She was also named the class Valedictorian.

"I can't say enough about what TanenbaumCHAT has done for my daughter," says Newman. "Leora has made tremendous progress in the last year thanks to the dedication of the teachers and the staff. They have provided all the kids with a great atmosphere in which to learn. All the parents were so excited and relieved when UJA Federation and TanenbaumCHAT stepped forward. They made a commitment to our children; they've treated our children with love and respect and truly made them feel at home."

Sean (l) and Craig Guttmann

Tournament participation will ensure small class sizes and dedicated support specialists so these wonderful kids will gain self-esteem, positive learning skills and a bright future.

The tournament will include a barbecue, refreshments, contests, dinner, silent auction, awards ceremony, and much, much more.

"My dad would have loved this golf tournament," says Craig. "It's a chance for people to come out, enjoy some golf, enjoy some great food, and just enjoy themselves. It's also a day in memory of a man who loved to give back to his community, just like those who participate will be doing."

For more information, or to register, visit www.maxguttmannmemorial.org

Connecting to Judaism through summer camp

Raphi Massil was 15 when he came to Toronto from his native Bombay in December 2004, and like anybody starting a new life in a new country, he yearned to fit in, find his place in his new home, and make friends his own age.

Thanks to community funding, Raphi was able to do just that by attending Camp George in Parry Sound during his first summer in Canada, and his life has never been the same since.

"Going to Camp George was definitely a turning point in my life in Canada. I made a lot of friends and learned a lot of new things about, not only Canadian culture – as I was still a relative newcomer to this country – but about Judaism, too," says a smiling Raphi, who now studies business at Brock University. "I made so many friends at camp during that first year; some even have come to visit me at Brock. Going to Jewish summer camp and having so many new Jewish friends has given me the urge to move to Bathurst Street where most of them live, but we still haven't had the chance to do that as my parents have jobs close to where we currently live. Still, I talk to most of my camp friends at least twice a week."

Raphi Massil enjoying Camp George

After having worked his way up the Camp George ladder, Raphi was made a senior counselor in 2008. This year, the young man is most anxious to return to the camp as a ropes specialist. "I was very nervous about going to camp at the beginning," he says. "The first few days were overwhelming as it was all new to me and I didn't understand how things would work. I was also very nervous because I still had an accent and I thought there might be a communication problem between me and the campers and other counselors. Now, I am so excited for the summer. All in all, the Jewish camp experience has given me a lot of good friends and a lot of new Jewish values which will stay with me forever. If it wasn't for camp I wouldn't be connected to Jewish life."

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto makes it possible for approximately 1,000 children to experience Jewish summer camp annually.

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Response from Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looked squarely at the video camera filming his foreign policy address Sunday at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, but he was also speaking directly to U.S President Barack Obama in Washington. Responding almost point for point to the president's speech 10 days earlier at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Netanyahu accepted a two-state solution, as long as the international community ensures that an independent Palestinian state does not constitute a military threat to Israel.

Netanyahu also accepted that his government would build no new settlements, but he insisted on the right of allowing the natural growth of the communities.

He urged the Palestinian leadership in straightforward terms to return to the negotiating table. "I call on you, our Palestinian neighbors, and to the leadership of the Palestinian Authority: Let us begin peace negotiations immediately, without preconditions. Israel is committed to international agreements and expects all the other parties to fulfil their obligations as well."

To be sure, Netanyahu was also speaking to the large majority of Israelis who hover at the centre of the political spectrum. While holding on to the centrist Israeli who seeks a safe way of disengaging from the Palestinians, he wanted to give enough to Obama to keep the process moving and the relationship intact.

Preliminary comments by Obama officials on Netanyahu's speech were positive. White House press secretary Robert Gibbs characterized Netanyahu's remarks as an "important step forward."

More importantly, Gibbs used the occasion to reinforce to Israelis that Obama understood the principles as well as the nuances of Israel's side of the process. "The president is committed to two states, *a Jewish state of Israel* and an independent Palestine, in the historic homeland of both peoples. He believes this solution can and must ensure both *Israel's security* and the fulfilment of the Palestinians' legitimate aspirations for a viable state, and he welcomes Prime Minister Netanyahu's endorsement of that goal" (emphasis added).

Response from Iran

The White House did not offer positive comments regarding the presidential election in Iran last Friday. Nor did any fair-minded, democratic country. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was returned as president in a process that his chief challenger Mohsen Moussavi branded a "charade." The election was rigged, most believe. Large groups of dejected and disbelieving voters have taken to the streets to riot their displeasure with the results. The mullahs' contempt for the democratic process places U.S. policy makers in a bind. Defrauding and deceiving the majority of the Iranian voters was the mullahs' response to Washington's call for a new beginning to Iranian-American relations.

25 years ago in The CJN

A study done for Canadian Jewish Congress found that women were underrepresented in positions of power in Jewish organizations in Canada, both as employees and volunteers. Even those who held professional or managerial positions earned less than their male counterparts. Committees to address the problem were formed in cities across the country.

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Oh, Woe Be Us!

If Martians landed in Toronto today and wanted to learn more about our Jewish community, they would think our entire community hinged on the belief that some people have hated us and other people still do. I realize that the Holocaust and anti-Semitism are issues that do need to be discussed, but other aspects of Judaism should receive equal coverage in The CJN. Perhaps you should include more articles, such as the one about the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are intelligent and interesting, instead of a bajillion articles about Iran and anti-Semitic plays that no one bothers to go see anyway ("Prof explores journey of Dead Sea Scrolls," CJN, June 11). Otherwise, we will end up with a generation that defines their Judaism by hysterically defending it without even knowing what they are defending. Remember that your paper is called the *Jewish* news, not the Canadian – Oh, Woe Be Us, the Hated People – News.

Danielle Kubes
Toronto

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Friendship at what price

The history of the Yom Kippur War is about to repeat itself. In 1973, then-prime minister Golda Meir and defence minister Moshe Dayan adamantly refused to use the air force for a pre-emptive strike. The reason cited was that the United States would strongly disapprove, and they sadly concluded that for the sake of U.S. support, Israel would have to absorb the first blow. This pattern is now being repeated with Iran. The 1973 absorption of the first blow cost Israel 2,700 soldiers. What will U.S. President Barack Obama's reluctance and hesitation cost Israel if it is obliged to absorb the first nuclear strike by Iran? I leave it to the readers' imagination.

Max Kon
Montreal

* * *

CJC plenary was heimish

I attended my first Canadian Jewish Congress plenary on May 31, and now regret I haven't attended others ("CJC gives Harper human rights award," CJN, June 4). It was a real eye-opener! Along with hearing Canada's top political leaders, we were able to revel in the bestowing of a most deserving and prestigious award to Canadian Jewish leaders and philanthropists Julia and Henry Koschitsky.

This was really a heimish affair. While hundreds attended, it had more the feel of a family simchah. I guess our pride as a community was showing, and we should thank CJC for its leadership in putting together a perfect day of *amcha* and advocacy. In the CJC, our community has much to be proud.

Marilyn Shapiro
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Neuer edited magazine about Mideast

I wish to proudly state that Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch in Geneva, was the editor of Date Line: Middle East, the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research student magazine, during his undergraduate years at McGill University ("Canadians uphold a proud human rights legacy," CJN, May 21).

Baruch Cohen
Montreal

* * *

People search

I am looking for Joseph Ryger (Yosi Rygier?), a Holocaust survivor who was born in Lubaczow, Austria, in 1913 and who later lived in Warsaw. He survived the war, apparently with a wife and a son. He lived in Toronto with his sister sometime after World War II. I found a a manuscript written by him among the personal effects of my mother, Mollie Blum, who passed away in February 2009. It is possible that it was originally given to my father, the late Hugo Blum, who passed away in Toronto in 1964. I would be grateful if anyone with knowledge of Joseph Ryger would contact me.

Linda Yechiel
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* * *

We found them!

My sister recently wished to renew contact with a close friend of ours, Ezra Moses, who immigrated to Canada 40 years ago. My efforts to locate Ezra and his family, from Hyderabad where I live, were unsuccessful. While I was browsing the Internet, I got the impression that the Jewish community is close-knit. I sent an e-mail with the information I had about the family to The CJN, and I received a reply saying that the paper would publish my letter. The CJN did publish my letter ("People search," June 4), and like a miracle, I got an e-mail from Ezra's wife, Betty, that week.

Bobjee Kurien
Hyderabad, India

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Tough economic times drive European voters to far right

By DINAH SPRITZER
JTA

Gains by anti-Semitic, xenophobic and racist far-right parties in June 4 to 7 elections for the European Parliament were a reminder of how voters across Europe gravitate toward fringe parties and extremists during tough economic times.

As in the United States, Europe is experiencing levels of unemployment not seen since the Great Depression. The financial misery has given rise here to increased nationalism, skewing an election of representatives whose job is mostly to pass Europe-wide regulations on food and safety standards, the environment and internal market competition.

"As far as Jews are concerned, the election results are a warning that in a period of crisis, people vote with extremists," Serge Cwajgenbaum, secretary general of the European Jewish Congress, told JTA from Paris. "It doesn't matter if it is left or right to angry voters, as long as it is extreme."

For the first time since the 1930s, a neo-fascist group in Britain, the British National Party, received enough votes to enter a legislative body. Of the two representatives the party will send to the European Union (EU) Parliament in Brussels, one is Nick Griffin, a convicted Holocaust denier accused of chanting "Death to Jews!" at a 1981 political rally in Leeds.

Krisztina Morvai, the newly elected Hungarian parliamentarian from the far-right Jobbik party, blogged earlier this month in response to accusations of xenophobia: "I would be glad if the so-called proud Hungarian Jews would go back to playing with their tiny little circumcised d---s rather than vilifying me."

Her party won three seats, marking Jobbik's first entry into EU politics.

In Austria, far-right parties won 18 per cent of the vote, a greater percentage than anywhere else in Europe. One of the parties, the Freedom party, or FPO, campaigned with posters reading: "FPO veto for Turkey and Israel in the EU." With 13 per cent of Austrian votes, the party more than doubled the share it received in the last European Parliament elections, in 2004.

The ascent of the far right in a record-low turnout of 43 per cent of 388 million eligible voters was a message to European institutions that worries over immigration and anger over failed domestic policies take precedence over any pan-European agenda, analysts said.

About 30 of the 736 new European Parliament members come from extreme-right parties in countries including Hungary, Italy, Britain, the Netherlands, Finland, Romania and Bulgaria – up from 23 in 2004. The strongest showing in the elections was for centre-right parties, which took victories across Europe and trounced their socialist rivals. The centrist conservatives have the largest voting bloc in the Parliament.

But apathy – national voter turnouts in Europe frequently are above 60 per cent – and the perception that the vote was for a distant, insignificant legislature may mean that extremists will not do as well in upcoming national elections in individual European countries.

Clara Marina O'Donnell, an analyst at the Centre for European Reform in London, cautioned against interpreting the far-right gains as a major political upheaval.

"We have a growth in certain countries of extreme parties, but they only got a few seats and the growth is very much marginal," O'Donnell said. "People feel the European Parliament does not count, so they feel more tempted to vote extreme, often electing candidates they would never think of choosing for their national parliaments."

European institutions in Brussels comprised of country representatives have no unified foreign policy or jurisdiction over crucial national issues such as immigration, education or health care.

But they occasionally make policy – for example, when the European Parliament froze a planned upgrade of EU relations with Israel during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza in January. They may also have a hand in setting European rules on shchitah, Jewish ritual slaughter, which is banned in some European countries.

More worrying to Jews and other minorities is that extremist parties who gained ground in the recent European vote show no sign of going away.

The Freedom party, for instance, is already in the Austrian Parliament, with 34 out of 183 seats, and twice has been a junior partner in coalition governments. The possibility that Jobbik will win seats in Hungary's Parliament in 2010 elections is no longer remote, given that the party captured nearly 15 per cent of the vote in Hungary for EU Parliament.

In the Netherlands, the openly anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant Freedom party – a far-right party that, though supportive of Israel, has been condemned by European Jewish groups – defeated the mainstream socialists to finish a close second behind the centre-right, with 17 per cent of the vote.

"If, on the EU level, they do not stop this kind of extremism, it will get worse," Cwajgenbaum said. "There is something wrong with how people are being educated, or not educated, in these countries."

There are some positive signs, with the far right garnering almost no support in Germany, France, the Czech Republic and Poland.

In addition, the new extreme right members of the European Parliament are not expected to have much influence in Brussels because, as nationalists, they will have difficulty coming up with a united position – as they demonstrated in their 2004 failure to form a voting bloc.

"Within the European Parliament, there are people who need to be quarantined," said the Simon Wiesenthal Center's director for international relations in Paris, Shimon Samuels, "and there are enough centrists who will make sure that happens."

Hungarian Jews reeling from far-right party's gains

By THOMAS ORSZAG-LAND
JTA

A Hungarian far-right party, Jobbik, catapulted from the fringes of political life to grab nearly 15 per cent of Hungary's vote in European Union parliamentary elections, sending shock waves through Europe's fourth-largest Jewish community.

Having come in third in the voting in Hungary, Jobbik is likely to acquire a significant parliamentary presence in Hungarian elections scheduled for next year.

While the far right made gains in EU parliamentary voting elsewhere on the continent, Jobbik's success was extraordinary. It was the first time the party had run for the EU Parliament, and the results show that Jobbik, which had run in local elections mostly on joint tickets with Hungary's main right-ist opposition party, Fidesz, is a potent political force on its own. Fidesz won 56 per cent of the vote Sunday, while Hungary's ruling socialists suffered a crushing defeat, garnering only about 17 per cent.

Many Hungarian Jews are now asking how this could happen.

George Konrad, a Hungarian Jewish intellectual and author, blamed Fidesz leader Viktor Orban for encouraging the far right in the hope of absorbing Jobbik's supporters into Fidesz's populist camp.

"Orban has miscalculated and created a political monster," Konrad said.

Budapest, with some 80,000 Jews, has the largest Jewish population of any central European city. Some play an important role in Hungarian political life, and Hungary has a relatively low level of anti-Semitism compared to other European countries.

But with the economic downturn hitting eastern and central Europe particularly hard, old stereotypes about Jews have been revived. In Hungary, as elsewhere in Europe, far-right parties have gained.

"The crisis generated by the recession is about discrimination, inequality, xenophobia, racism, violence and repression," Irene Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International, said upon release of the organization's 2009 world report.

The Jobbik party – a Hungarian word that means both "better" and "further to the right" – is led by Gabor Vona, 30, a former high school history teacher. Though he denies being a racist, Vona says the party keeps an "open mind" about the veracity of the Holocaust.

Krisztina Morvai, 46, who led Jobbik's list of candidates in the EU parliamentary elections, will hold one of the three seats won by the party. Articulate and passionate, she is a former Fulbright scholar from the University of Wisconsin and a well-known author and human rights lawyer who teaches law at a prestigious university in Budapest.

Morvai has also earned attention for remarks seen as disparaging Jews. In March, a German magazine reported that it had discovered a speech by Morvai in which she advised the "liberal-Bolshevik Zionists" to "start thinking of where to flee and where to hide." In the run-up to the EU election, she sparked outrage with an obscene, anti-Semitic post in an online forum. Morvai has also accused Israeli leaders of war crimes.

The Hungarian Alliance of Jewish Communities has called Morvai's invective obscene and openly anti-Semitic.

During the EU parliamentary campaign, the election offices of Jobbik were secured by units of the Hungarian Guard, a far-right paramilitary organization.

Jobbik's campaign, which featured the slogan "Hungary for Hungarians," was based on whipping up fear among foreign bankers, industrialists and journalists. The party said it sought to "rescue" the nation from a political elite that has sold out to "enemies within our midst," which many took to be thinly veiled references to Jews and other minorities, notably Roma, or Gypsies.

"The greatest surprise is that two decades after the collapse of Soviet power, a bright young generation of east Europeans should now put its faith in the tired anti-Semitic stereotypes that were current here a century ago," said historian Rafael Vago of Tel Aviv University. "I see the gravest danger in the consequent infiltration of racist perceptions and hate speech into political and civil discourse."

Vago noted that in a 300-yard stretch along a central Budapest avenue, he found several infamous and long-discredited anti-Semitic pamphlets on sale by at least three newspaper venders.

The favourite target of the Jobbik-allied Hungarian Guard has been the Roma. At least seven deaths of Roma by thugs armed with firebombs have been reported, and terrified Roma have taken to guarding their rural communities from nighttime assaults.

Though it boasts fewer than 1,000 members, the Hungarian Guard enjoys significant popular support in the country.

Opinions

Divine eyeglasses

On May 9, I started to see for the first time. For the first 45 years of my life, I had been blind to human potential.

On that Shabbat morning, our synagogue held a bar and bat mitzvah celebration. Technically, at bar and bat mitzvah age, children are mandated with adult responsibilities. But in a larger sense, bar and bat mitzvah celebrations are a way of recognizing young adults as full members of the community.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

This particular bar/bat mitzvah was different. The participants were much older, with some in their 50s. They were celebrating now because they had never done so in their youth. The participants were intellectually disabled. Years ago they had stood on the periphery, and their bar and bat mitzvahs were overlooked.

Throughout history, the disabled have been stigmatized. In Sparta, "deformed" babies were tossed off a mountain. Martin Luther believed disabled children were "changelings," demonic beings in the form of a child. He advocated drowning the "changelings." The Nazis, starting in 1939, initiated "Aktion T4," a program to kill the disabled.

These negative attitudes continue to have an impact. Until recently, people with intellectual disabilities were often hidden away. The developmentally disabled were viewed as blemished, and people simply couldn't see the person beyond the disability.

On that Shabbat morning, our view of the disabled changed. A powerful passage in the Book of Samuel states that "man sees only with his eyes, but God sees into the heart." Humanity's perspective is superficial, limited by what our eyes can see. But on that Shabbat, we were fitted with divine eyeglasses and saw the beauty of the human soul.

We saw the pride of these participants, who were waiting for this ceremony their entire lives. In their shy demeanour and gentle words, we could see the journey they had taken in search of dignity. And their faces radiated love. We all felt the connection between the participants and everyone in the room.

This celebration was more significant for the participants' families. They had experienced the sting of exclusion as their siblings were isolated without friends, as their sons and daughters bounced from program to program. They were also waiting for the day that their sons, daughters, brothers and sisters would take their place in the community.

But the people most affected were the congregants. In standing ovation after standing ovation, community members opened their hearts to the participants. It was a family reunion. We, the community, were welcoming back the men and women we had long excluded.

On that Shabbat morning, our congregation looked past superficial disabilities, and appreciated the gift of community. And for a few short moments, we all wore divine eyeglasses.

Education cuts are hasty and shortsighted

In July, 2007, amid much fanfare, the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Board of Jewish Education became the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education, widely called the Mercaz – Hebrew for "centre." "The name says what the priorities are," the Mercaz chair Lou Greenbaum exulted. This spring, less than two years later and amid much less fanfare, the Mercaz was abruptly downsized and thus marginalized, shedding at least 10 full-time jobs.

Gil Troy in Montreal

What happened in Toronto is happening throughout the Jewish world. The last two decades' gains in Jewish education and identity-building are disappearing as quickly as people's net worths have plummeted. The legendary Boston Board of Jewish Education recently lost 80 per cent of its funding and will likely close. Birthright Israel, perhaps the most successful Jewish program of the 21st century, has turned away thousands of applicants this year because of limited funds.

These cutbacks are dangerous. Capitalism is cyclical – economic busts are usually followed by economic booms – but education and identity-building are more linear. Opportunities missed are rarely recovered. Children uneducated frequently remain ignorant. Young people turned off are rarely turned back on. Jewish leaders in Toronto and elsewhere can't afford to be shortsighted. We must continue investing in education and outreach programs that foster Jewish pride and knowledge.

During the last two decades, Jewish education and identity-building boomed. Philanthropic visionaries such as Charles Bronfman, Michael Steinhardt and Lynn Schusterman made funding Israel trips, initiating teen programs, and even building Jewish day schools sexy.

They understood – as did many other generous donors and passionate professionals – that anti-Semitism doesn't pose the greatest threat to this generation of thoroughly North Americanized Jews that it did to the immigrant generation. In fact, Jews today risked being loved to death by intermarriage, especially after having been bored to tears by so many initial encounters in synagogues, Jewish schools, and youth groups. The writer Leon Wieseltier adds that this generation's great crime is not intermarriage but ignorance – most are extremely educated in secular subjects and appallingly uninformed Jewishly.

These insights – backed by sobering demographic studies – galvanized the community. Birthright Israel, which has brought more than 120,000 18-to-26-year-olds on free 10-day trips to Israel, has been the flagship program, generating the most buzz. But Birthright's success reflected a broader reorientation toward education and identity building, accompanied by massive investments in teachers, teacher training, curricula, programs, infrastructure and central educational agencies such as the Mercaz.

I recall that in Montreal, as we planned our own massive, ambitious "Gen J" program to invest in our kids' future, Toronto's 2007 launch of the Mercaz inspired us – and made us feel a tad inadequate. We wondered whether our community could mobilize similar support for Jewish education. At the risk of feeding the Toronto-Montreal rivalry – although all of us should compete regarding who cares most about Jewish education and identity – so far Montreal has kept Jewish education front and centre, despite the economic downturn.

In fairness, Toronto continues to lead North America in providing tuition assistance, fostering quality Jewish day schools, and identity building. Still, shrinking the Mercaz is a big blow. Boards of Jewish education such as the Mercaz serve essential roles in professionalizing teachers, coaching administrators, providing quality control, nurturing reforms and upholding city-wide standards.

"I have always felt that the Mercaz did very important work and made significant contributions to Jewish education in Toronto," Prof. Martin Lockshin of York University told me via e-mail. "They were, for example, indispensable for us at York in making our Jewish teacher education program work. They also provided indispensable services to many day schools and many teachers, particularly new teachers. I am very worried about how this gap will be filled. From conversations that I have had, I sense that my concerns are shared by many respected educators here in Toronto."

The financial crisis is forcing Jewish communities worldwide to clarify their priorities, abandon unnecessary projects and focus on initiatives that work. Such retrenchment, while always painful and involuntary, can be constructive, resulting in more focused and effective communities. But hasty and thoughtless cutbacks can be particularly destructive, dooming this generation to ignorance and apathy.

A different kind of aliyah

Yehuda Halevi wrote, "My heart is in the East, but I am at the ends of the West." Me, too. But I don't think the Diaspora is vapid and that Israel is the only place to live a full Jewish life. No amount of "you should make aliyah" guilt will inspire those who feel most at home here and believe in the imperative to make this community the best we can with dynamic synagogues, day schools, community centres, adult education institutes, Jewish film festivals, walks for Israel, charitable fundraising and more. Bravo to those who choose to live in Eretz Yisrael, and bravo to those who build and sustain Jewish life here, and bravo to those who live somewhere in the middle.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Toronto

So, let's think about aliyah in different terms. I've been a passionate advocate for Israel throughout my career as a rabbi, and I've lead eight trips there in the past four years to help people build a special bond with the land. I have helped people make the decision to make aliyah and have written many recommendations for young people taking a year in Israel in "gap" programs. Last year in this paper, I had a lively exchange with Rabbi Dow Marmur about "part-time aliyah."

So I was truly excited to hear about a new idea from my colleague, Rabbi Stanley Davids, who coined the term aliyat hanefesh, or spiritual aliyah. Rabbi Paul Kipnes calls it "a soul-driven aliyah that places love for Israel near the centre of our lives. Aliyat hanefesh could be expressed by visits for study and for vacations, by making certain that our children and grandchildren have extensive personal experiences of Israel, by becoming informed advocates for Israel and by personally making certain to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut as a religious holiday each May."

This notion of spiritual aliyah makes our frequent, or even infrequent, visits to Israel that much more meaningful. We aren't just tourists, we're spiritual pilgrims. It conceptualizes and frames every letter to the editor, every trip to the wine store to counter-protest against boycotts, and every choice of Israel for winter break over Cancun, as well as dancing with an Israeli flag at a rally or supporting a candidate for a Birthright trip.

Each act is a soul-driven aliyah that may or may not lead to settling in the land, but it is a "going up" all the same.

There are many texts in rabbinic sources that point toward making physical aliyah. However, the talmudic and medieval rabbis living under oppressive regimes could never have imagined the kind of flowering, Jewishly vibrant Diaspora that we live in today in North America. For us, spiritual aliyah may be a way of acknowledging that we have two children – without having to choose which one we love better.

Thus I share with you the news that I will be taking a year's leave of absence for an aliyat hanefesh in Israel, together with my husband and our three sons, from July 2009 to July 2010. We will be studying, teaching, writing, volunteering, and experiencing. In my absence, Kolel in Toronto will be fully functioning with its signature courses and events under the guidance of Sharoni Sibony at the exciting new Prosserman JCC-Gales Family Pavilion.

Sharoni comes with a wealth of educational programming experience from Limmud, and enthusiasm from having been a Kolel student herself. I will be returning to Toronto in September to lead Kolel's High Holiday services on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I will keep in touch via a monthly blog at www.kolel.org. I will also continue to write this monthly column for The CJN, and I'll be leading two Kolel Israel educational expeditions: Women's Inward Bound, Nov. 15 to 23, and Hidden Gems of Israel, April 18 to 27, 2010. I'll be back in September 2010 in time to lead High Holiday services once again and to continue to help sustain Toronto's Jewish community.

If you're inspired to make an aliyat hanefesh in the coming year, please get in touch with me. In the meantime, let's think about ways to spiritually "go up" while still living in Canada.

The Kirshner File

Letter from Berlin

The ghosts of the past linger in Berlin as in few other major cities in Europe. Berlin, the grand capital of a democratic republic that is commemorating its 60th anniversary this year, has soberly come to terms with its Nazi legacy as it acknowledges the Holocaust through memorials, museums and plaques, and pays homage to that segment of its Jewish population that was mercilessly killed by the Nazi regime.

Sheldon Kirshner in Germany

I spent a day exploring the Jewish and formerly Nazi dimensions of Berlin, which was home to 160,000 Jews on the eve of Adolf Hitler's accession to power in January 1933. My guide was Carolyn Gammon, a Canadian who works as a guide for Milk & Honey Tours (www.milkandhoneytours.com).

One of the first places we visited was the leafy, upscale neighbourhood of Grunewald, where a simple stone monument marks the spot on Koenigsallee where Walther Rathenau – the foreign minister of Weimar Germany, a founder of the German Democratic Party and the son of the founder of an industrial conglomerate – was assassinated on June 24, 1922. Rathenau, a Jew, was gunned down by three armed men as he was driving from his villa to his office. The lemon-coloured house where he lived from 1910 onward is now used by a publishing company, and is directly across the street from Turkey's embassy.

Berlin's Jews were deported from Track 17. [Sheldon Kirshner photos]

The assassins, right-wing German nationalists imbued with anti-Semitism, were infuriated that Rathenau, as minister of reconstruction in 1921, had insisted that Germany was duty bound to fulfil its obligations under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, and that, as foreign minister, he had signed the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo, which normalized German-Soviet relations.

Rathenau's murder disturbed a German-born Jewish scientist named Albert Einstein, who regarded it as an unmistakable sign of the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Germany. To no one's surprise, the Nazi regime hailed the murderers as national heroes and designated June 24 as a holiday.

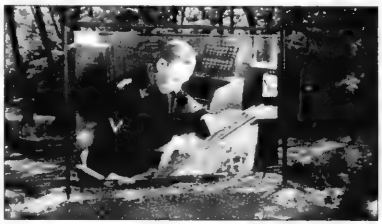
The marker in Rathenau's memory is close to Israel's embassy – a modern, fenced-in building partially sheathed in Jerusalem stone – on Auguste-Viktoriastrasse. It, in turn, is around the corner from Track 17, the railway siding from which 55,000 Jewish residents of Berlin were deported to Nazi-occupied Poland in 186 transports from October 1941 to February 1945. As I walked along the ramp, I looked down at metal plates embossed with the dates and sizes of the doomed transports.

Prior to visiting Track 17, which was established as a memorial in 1998, I paused at a building at 10 Meinckestrasse, where the Jewish Agency – a quasi-governmental body of the Jewish community in Palestine – was located in the 1930s. The white plaque on it says that the Jewish Agency helped about 50,000 German Jews to emigrate. In fact, 90,000 Berlin Jews managed to leave before the gates were slammed shut on Oct. 23, 1941. Still others committed suicide in despair, while 1,500 survived as "submarines" in hiding. (There are 15,000 Jews in Berlin today, mainly from the former Soviet Union).

Many of the deportees were first detained in the Jewish Home for the Aging on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, in Berlin's once-dilapidated but now trendy Scheunenviertel neighbourhood. A plain memorial tablet reminds visitors of the deportations.

Berlin's oldest Jewish cemetery, the Alter Judischer Friedhof, established in 1672, is nearby. The Gestapo desecrated the gravestones in 1942, leaving a few broken ones. The municipality turned the cemetery into a park after World War II. Only one headstone remains, and it was erected in 1990 in honour of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), the philosopher and grandfather of the composer Felix Mendelssohn.

The Scheunenviertel, or barn district, attracted newly arrived Jews from Poland in the 19th century. Prior to World War II, it was a slum, but these days, particularly around the funky Hackescher Markt, it is full of smart shops and boutiques in a labyrinth of courtyards filled with art galleries, cafés, bars and restaurants. I went into Levy's, a shop on 40 Rosenthalerstrasse brimming with books, toys and Judaica. I picked up two books, the first containing a list of every deported Berlin Jew and the second listing the names of Berlin's Jewish residents in 1931.



A picture of Gestapo chieftain Reinhard Heydrich is in the Topography of Terror memorial.

I also wandered into the adjacent Otto Weidt Museum, which tells the story of a largely unknown rescuer. Oskar Schindler's rescue of Jews has been told and retold in books and films, yet the saga of Otto Weidt (1883-1947), a Berliner who saved mainly blind and deaf Jews working in his brush and broom factory, is largely clouded in obscurity, notwithstanding his recognition by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile.

The museum, housed in Weidt's drab original workshop, is funded by the federal government, the city of Berlin and the European Union. It contains photographs, testimonies from those he protected or tried to protect, as well as artifacts from the period.

In this section of Berlin, on Rosenstrasse, is a parkette with red sandstone sculptures of protesting and mourning women. They commemorate a virtually unique incident in the annals of Nazi Germany. During the winter of 1943, following Germany's defeat in the Battle of Stalingrad, the Gestapo arrested about 1,800 Jewish men, almost all of whom were married to Christians. Before they could be deported, their wives and relatives mounted a non-violent protest. The men were released, as were Jews already sent to Auschwitz.

The Rosenstrasse incident is historically significant because it was one of the only examples of civil disobedience to Nazi policy. The sculptures, the Block of Women, were made by Ingeborg Hunzinger and placed here, not far from the actual protest, in 1995.

Another memorial worth visiting is on Levetozowstrasse, the site of a Reform synagogue that the Nazis destroyed on Kristallnacht. The Holocaust is recalled through a stylized freight car, a stele engraved with the names of concentration camps to which Jews were dispatched, and metal plates flush with the ground that list the synagogues of Berlin targeted by Hitler's National Socialist regime.

One more reminder of Nazi crimes is in Berlin's sedate Bavarian quarter. There, affixed to some 200 poles, are signs with inscriptions attesting to the meticulous Nazi campaign against Jews.

Much of it was conceived and planned at Gestapo and SS headquarters on Prinz-Albrechtstrasse. The buildings were severely damaged or obliterated by Allied bombing raids in 1945. After the war, the ruins were demolished, so that nothing remained.

But in the 1970s and 1880s, the site was gradually rediscovered through excavations. In 1987, when Berlin marked its 750th anniversary, it was converted into an outdoor memorial and museum, known as Topography of Terror. Consisting largely of photographs from that ugly era, as well as SS torture chambers, the site will be housed in a museum currently under construction.

The Nazi Reich chancellery on Wilhelmstrasse is gone, too, having been replaced by non-descript apartment blocks. Hermann Goring's air force building has been taken over the finance ministry, while Joseph Goebbels' propaganda ministry has been appropriated by the ministry of labour and social security.

Hitler's bunker, just south of the Brandenburg Gate, was long ago sealed off and paved over with a prosaic parking lot on Gertrud-Kolmarstrasse.

Ironically, the stark Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, consisting of 2,711 concrete steles and a museum, and opened in 2005, is just a few steps away.

Hitler must surely be spinning in hell.

Am Yisrael Chai

Arthur Resnick Mark Hilson Wesley Rotman Blake Cassidy Sheldon Esbin

Independence and security, isn't that what we all want? Whether it's the people of Israel or those of us seeking a prosperous and healthy retirement, self-determination is both a right and a responsibility.

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From left, Lenny Rothschild; Rabbi Moshe Stern, spiritual leader, Shaarei Tefillah Congregation; Moshe Segal, executive member of Mizrachi (partially obscured); Kurt Rothschild, honoree; Rabbi Professor Daniel Hershkowitz, Minister of Science and Technology in the Israeli Government and head of the Habayit Hayehudi party (holding the Torah). For more photos from the procession, please go to www.cjnews.com

[Cara Edell photo]

Sefer Torah dedicated in Rothschild's honour

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Kurt Rothschild's attention and whole-hearted commitment to the Jewish community is the same kind of attention a scribe exhibits when he writes, with care and precision, the more than half a million letters in a sefer Torah.

Rothschild was recently honoured with a sefer Torah dedicated in his name at Toras Emes Congregation in Toronto. Friends, colleagues and admirers gathered at the shul on June 7 to pay tribute to Rothschild and celebrate his charitable nature and passion for Jewish causes.

The scroll, which was written in Israel and brought to Toronto for the dedication, will be returned to its homeland and placed in a newly constructed synagogue in the Negev region.

"This is a special day," said Solly Sacks, executive director of Mizrachi, a religious Zionist movement that organized the event. "There is nobody better that I could choose, nobody who cares more for Am Yisrael, than Kurt. We want to praise Kurt, who has been serving us for so many years."

Rabbi Daniel Herskowitz, Israel's science and technology minister, said that Rothschild has "always had room in his heart and doings for Am Yisrael and Torat Yisrael… He has served as a role model for all of us."

The sefer Torah will be returned to former Jewish residents of the Gaza Strip. The majority of the 8,000 people who were evacuated from settlements in Gaza in 2005 lived in temporary accommodation until a new neighbourhood was built for them in the Negev's Chalutza Desert.

"These people have relived a modern-day history of Jewish affliction," said Sacks. "They lost everything overnight. This sefer Torah [that will belong to the first shul in Chalutza] is a testament to the spirit of Jewish revival and survival. It will bring joy and hope to the community."

Rothschild said he is "deeply appreciative" to be associated with this mitzvah. "I am proud of the Toronto Jewish community for making the Negev Desert bloom."

He said his work in the community has been motivated by "the debt he owes to the heroes of Jewish history" and that his goals and aspirations date back to his youth.

Rothschild was born in Cologne, Germany, and raised in a modern Orthodox family. He said that the Jewish education he received as a child in religious day schools has guided him through his life's journey.

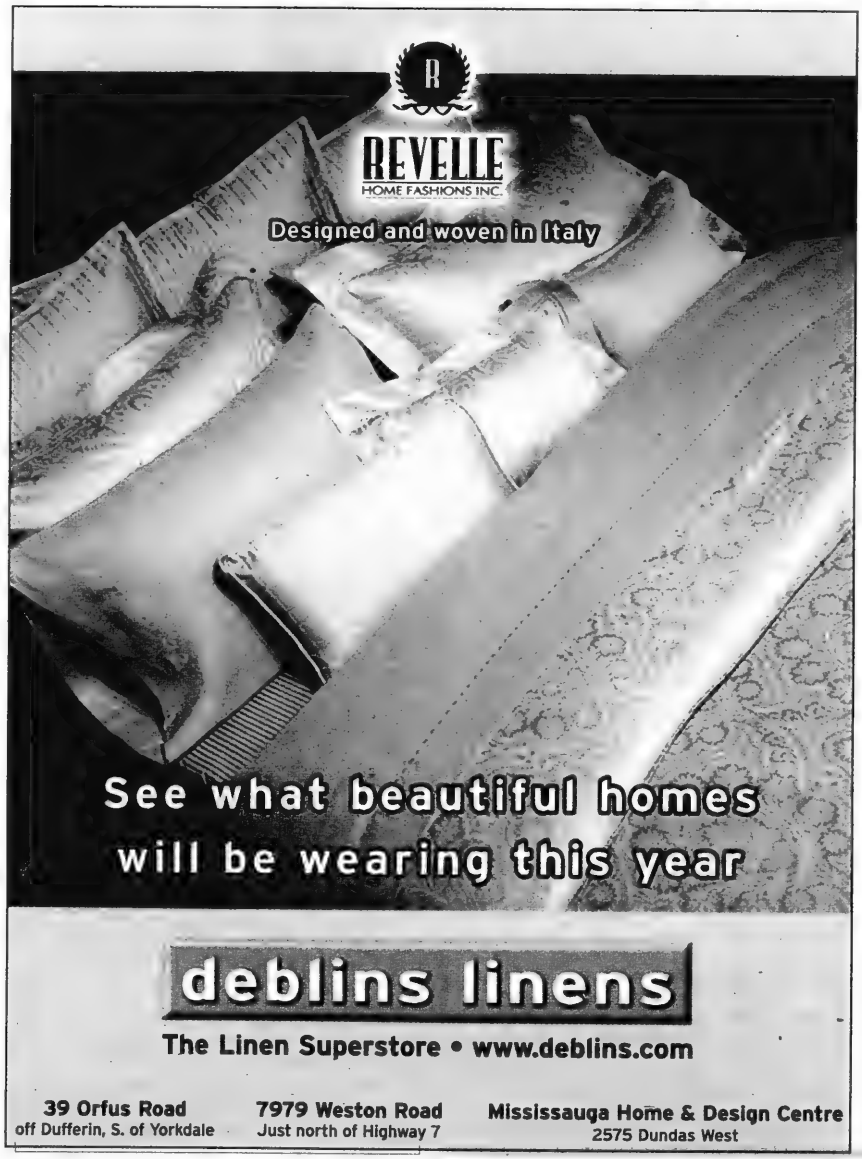
Rothschild escaped from the European inferno before the outbreak of war, and although he did not experience the cruelties of the extermination camps, he said being part of the Holocaust generation has pushed him to commit himself to the needs of his fellow Jews.

In May 1940, Rothschild was interned along with several thousand other German Jews and sent to Canada. After spending two years behind barbwire, Rothschild was released from the internment camp and came to Canada to study engineering at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. He went on to found a national electrical and mechanical contracting group that was engaged in industrial and commercial construction.

In 1987, Rothschild retired from business to shift all of his attention toward the Jewish community in Canada, Israel and the United States. He is currently world chairman of the Mizrachi Movement and sits on the boards of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, Yeshiva University in New York, Shaare Zedek Hospital, the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and United Israel Appeal of Toronto.

To safeguard and promote Jewish continuity, Rothschild said the funding of Jewish education is first and foremost on his list of obligations. He said Jewish youth must be taught the ethics of Torah in order to carry on its traditions and pass them from generation to generation.

He and his wife, Edith, have three children, 21 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



Archives sets up Speisman bursary

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA) has established a bursary in memory of Stephen Speisman, its founding director, to assist graduate students and other researchers whose work requires the use of its archival records.

Speisman founded the archives in 1973 and served as director through 1999 before leaving to become executive director of Toronto Hebrew Memorial Park/Pardes Shalom Cemetery.

He retired from Pardes Shalom in May 2008, following a prolonged medical leave of absence after undergoing surgery for cancer. He died last October of a heart attack.

The new bursary will provide an annual grant of up to $500 to assist one or more researchers with some of the costs of research at the OJA, including travel and photocopying. It's funded by Pardes Shalom, which has made a 10-year commitment to the project, as well as by the Ontario Association of Cemetery and Funeral Professionals.

Stephen Speisman

The bursary will be awarded for the first time this October, to coincide with Speisman's first yahrzeit. The application deadline is Aug. 31.

Archives director Ellen Scheinberg suggested at an OJA board meeting that a bursary would be a fitting tribute, because Speisman's "commitment to scholarship and research was of primary importance to him," she told The CJN.

The archives has never provided a bursary before.

"Not that many institutions in the archival community have bursaries," Scheinberg said. "It's very rare. Across the country, there are probably just a handful that are named for someone."

Bill Draimin, president of Pardes Shalom, told The CJN, "We wanted to play a material role in honouring his memory," explaining why the initiative appealed when the OJA approached his organization. "Stephen's contribution to the community throughout his life warranted special recognition."

On a personal note, he added that Speisman had interviewed his grandmother, Bertha Draimin, who was in her 90s at the time, for his book, The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937. The book was a winner of the 1980 City of Toronto Book Award.

Leila Speisman, a CJN staff member, recalls that her late husband travelled to Boston and Ottawa to research his PhD thesis – the basis for his book – in the early 1970s.

"He was certainly conscious that he was lucky [in having received grants to fund his research], and he was conscious, too, that awards like that have been cut back."

Recently, the OJA created a Stephen Speisman *fonds*, a collection of his personal research materials, presentations and photographs.

Scheinberg said the archives usually serves one or two researchers a week, "primarily historians and graduate students."

If they are doing in-depth research, they need to visit the archives personally, she added, explaining why they may need to travel.

"We can send scanned images of photos, and even small numbers of documents, but if they're delving into collections, they really need to be on site."

While current funding will ensure the bursary is viable for the next 11 years, Scheinberg – who recalls Speisman as "a fountain of information" and "very helpful" – said that community members should "consider making a donation so we can keep the bursary running 20 to 25 years or longer, because that would be a most fitting tribute for Steve. He was the director for close to 30 years."

Further information about the bursary is available at http://www.ontariojewisharchives.org/speismanbursary.htm.

On cjnews.com

As people begin to age, making healthy food choices is not only good for the body but also the mind, says a top research expert on nutrition and brain function.

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The graduation ceremony will take place on Monday, June 22, 2009 at 7:30 pm at Congregation Darchei Noam, 864 Sheppard Avenue West, Toronto.

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Girls at Leo Baeck Day School's Holy Blossom campus spent many lunch hours in the art studio, beading bracelets and necklaces to sell as a tzedakah project. After a successful sale, the girls donated more than $1,000 to Safehaven Community Living, which offers residential programs for children and young adults with multiple disabilities or complex medical needs. Pictured, from left, are Tyler Jane Robins, Hannah White, Bev Gordon from Safehaven, and Jessica Katzman.

Couple fought for Israel

Compiled by CJN Staff

Naim and Adina Nissan, a couple who fought for Israel with courage and devotion, received the Heritage Award at Chabad's recent Gala Spirit of Community Dinner.

More than 800 people attended the June 3 dinner, held at the Riviera Parque Banquet Hall in Vaughan, Ont. The event was a fundraiser for the Beth Chabad Israeli Community Centre

Rabbi Israel Landa, Chabad's executive director, presented the award to the Nissans.

In a moving video presentation, guests at the dinner learned that Naim Nissan travelled to Israel by bus and by foot, entering the country secretly during the British Mandate years. In the 1940s Adina, as a schoolgirl, enlisted in the Irgun, eventually becoming a commander. "I used to slip out of Jerusalem after curfew dressed in a disguise, to travel the dangerous route to Tel Aviv and deliver information to my comrades," she said.

The Nissans went on to run successful hotels and restaurants. They lived in England for a time, eventually settling in Canada.

The Nissans have always excelled at giving to others, and their exceptional acts of goodness and kindness have served as an example to the next generation, as both of their children are active in the community.

At the dinner, the Nissans shared the stage with two other guests of honour: Vaughan councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, who received the Community Service Award, and Francine Shefman, who accepted the Community Spirit Award on behalf of her husband, Vaughan councillor Alan Shefman.

From left, standing, are Adina Nissan and her son, Ray, and Naim Nissan, seated. Adina and Naim Nissan are recipients of Chabad's Heritage Award.

An auction raised funds for the Beth Chabad Chabad Israeli Community Centre. The cornerstone plaque for the new building was auctioned for $20,000, and the groundbreaking ceremony takes place on June 21.

The guest speaker at the dinner, Rabbi Dov Greenberg from the Stanford University Jewish Centre, spoke about transforming challenges and hardships into opportunities to give to others.

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The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Jewish Life

By RABBI MARTIN LOCKSHIN

A stubborn, stiff-necked people?

This week's Torah portion centres around the story of the scouts Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan before the Israelites' arrival there. According to Rashi (Rabbi Solomon, son of Isaac, 11th-century France), the pre-eminent Jewish Bible interpreter, this story should be read as a cautionary tale about faithlessness. Sending spies was a bad idea, a result of our ancestors' lack of faith. They should have trusted in God that all would be well.

On a simple reading of the text, Rashi's interpretation seems like a stretch for a few reasons, especially since the opening verse of the story (Numbers 14:1) suggests that the whole idea of spies was God's. But Jewish tradition has shown an amazingly strong loyalty to Rashi's Bible interpretations, beginning right after his death, and perhaps even before. Many of the explanations offered by Rashi have become so ingrained in the Jewish reading of the Bible that it's difficult for traditional Jews to look at the text of the Bible any other way.

But there have been pious Jews over the years who have boldly gone back to the words of the Bible and interpreted them anew. One of the most creative medieval rabbis to write a Bible commentary that was radically different from Rashi's was Rashi's own grandson, Rashbam (Rabbi Samuel, son of Meir and of Yocheved, Rashi's oldest daughter, 12th-century France).

Rashbam explains that the Israelites were perfectly justified in wanting spies to scout out the land. "They were confident that God would give them the land of Canaan," Rashbam writes, but they had no reason to think that they would get the land "without effort," and they hoped to learn from the spies "how they should wage war" against the Canaanites.

One difference between Rashi and Rashbam is that Rashi seems to promote passive faith, while Rashbam feels that faith and human effort can go hand in hand.

But the difference goes well beyond that. While the Torah itself says that the Israelites in the wilderness were stubborn and stick-necked, Rashi consistently portrays the Israelites in an even more negative light. For example, in Numbers 11, the Bible states that the Israelites complained about the food they ate in the desert. Rashi reads the story as describing how ungrateful and malevolent the Israelites were. According to Rashi, they had just experienced an amazing miracle and they were simply looking for any pretext to complain, since their goal was to get God angry.

Rashbam, on the other hand, explains the biblical context of the complaining totally differently. The people, according to Rashbam's reading, had just been asked to travel for three days straight without setting up camp. Understandably, they complained.

Later in that same chapter, Rashi says the Israelites spoke ill about the manna even though, as the Bible says (according to Rashi's understanding), it was a perfect, miraculous food. Rashbam says that the Bible itself explains that the people complained because the manna truly was not esthetically pleasing: "It looked dry and hard."

So what is the Bible teaching us about our ancestors in the wilderness – that they were stiff-necked ornery complainers or that they actually had things to complain about? Reasonable people might argue about which interpretation – Rashi's or Rashbam's – fits the words of the Bible better.

But it seems to me that Rashbam's approach ought to be required reading for rabbis and other leaders of the Jewish people. The lesson should be that when you hear the Jewish people complaining, don't label them as stubborn troublemakers. Look around to see if you can find out what is causing their complaints.

Rabbi Martin Lockshin is rabbi of the Toronto Partnership Minyan. He is the author of an annotated English translation of Rashbam's commentary on the Torah, and a new version of the Hebrew text of Rashbam's commentary, with Hebrew notes and introduction.

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

Humility, above all else

As Israel continues its journey through the wilderness, an interesting revolt takes place. Another member of the Levite tribe, Korach, gathers together a group of people to challenge the authority of Moses.

The argument that Korach presents is a personal one. Essentially, he asks: what makes Moses so great? It couldn't be lineage, since Korach is of the same tribe and, therefore, of the same lineage as Moses. It couldn't be communication with God, since Korach claims to have also spoken closely with God. Certainly Korach could pull out a long list of complaints that the People of Israel had raised against Moses during their wilderness journey, since the text reflects an ongoing reality of complaint after complaint directed toward Moses.

Ultimately, the challenge for leadership is forced to the forefront, with a full-blown mutiny on the horizon. Moses must now defend his leadership and argue for his worthiness to hold the prominent position that he holds. One can imagine that mounting an argument in support of Moses' leadership should be an easy thing. In truth, merely stating the fact that God chose Moses as leader should put an end to the discussion, since it's one thing to argue with Moses while quite another to challenge God.

Interestingly, Moses doesn't defend himself, but rather seems shocked into silence. The text reflects that Moses has "fallen upon his face," indicating both shock and shame. To settle the dispute, God steps forward (so to speak) and represents Moses in the challenge. Of course, Korach loses and is discredited, and the text describes the famous incident of the earth opening up and swallowing Korach and his followers.

The question remains: why couldn't Moses respond to Korach, and is that a sign of vulnerability in a leader?

From the moment we meet Moses as an infant, there are many things we don't know about him. We have no sense of how he looked or about any of his preferences in daily life. The only traits we encounter again and again are his humanity and his humility.

It's Moses' humanity that leads him to strike an Egyptian taskmaster and begin a journey of destiny that will help redeem the Jewish people. It's his humility that will begin a relationship with God, which will stand as unique for all time.

Moses' first conversation with God was an argument. At the burning bush, God instructs Moses that he was to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, and Moses argues with God. The more God expresses commitment to the vision of Moses as a leader, the more Moses argues that he's not equipped for the job. Moses pushes the argument so far that God ultimately shuts it down and unilaterally dictates to Moses that he must accept his fate. This initial argument is the key to our understanding why Moses can't respond to Korach. Korach is merely reinforcing the self-doubt that Moses had expressed in the beginning.

The essence of humility is not to feel that you can't accomplish anything, but to understand that many others in the world can likewise accomplish a task and to believe that they can probably do it better. Humility creates the space in which other people's accomplishments and strengths can exist. When there is humility, there is room for others. Moses showed us that with great humility comes greater room for the presence of God in our lives.

The Talmud states that Psalms teaches us how God can't endure someone of proud heart. Rabbi Hisda says not to pronounce the word as *oto* (him), but *ito* (with him). It's not that God can't endure someone of proud heart because of his pride, but rather that a proud heart has filled the entire space, leaving no room within which God can reside.

Jewish Life

The Dead Sea Scrolls and me

By ALEX GROPPER

Past Forward

For almost half a decade, I was involved in the effort to bring the Dead Sea Scrolls to Toronto.

Now I find it hard to believe that I was fortunate enough to have helped to bring the scrolls to the city. They will be on exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum from June 27 to Jan. 3, 2010.

For me, it was a personal odyssey that started when as a young boy I lived in Israel and became enamoured of my people's fascinating history. It was a fascination that would become an avocation when I began my formal study of history. It would also lead me into the field of archeology, especially the elucidation of our biblical past. Although the term biblical archeology is no longer fashionable in academic circles, it continues to hold me captive.

It was just about 30 years ago that I had the opportunity to combine my two loves, in a series that I was doing for CBC Radio's documentary program, Ideas. Needless to say, the Dead Sea Scrolls were featured prominently.

I was fortunate enough to have interviewed Yigael Yadin, a man who personified the term biblical archeology for the series and who played a major role in the ongoing saga of the scrolls. He was already a legend by this time.

As a young man, Yadin was the chief of staff of the Haganah during the 1948 War of Independence. Yadin's father, Eliezer Sukenik, was the first director of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Sukenik was one of the first scholars to see the scrolls and to recognize their importance. This happened around Nov. 29, 1947, the date on which the United Nations voted for the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state.

The fact that the scrolls reappeared after almost 2,000 years to bear witness to the birth of a new Jewish state has been likened to a modern miracle. Sukenik even managed to secure a batch of the scrolls for Israel but could not get enough money to purchase the entire lot. Sadly, Sukenik had to let some of them go, but fortunately his son, Yadin, caught up with the batch in New York through an ad in, of all places, the Wall Street Journal.

Yadin told me that by then he had his PhD in archeology, and his dissertation was on the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness, one of the scrolls his father had acquired for Israel. Through delicate negotiation, as well as wheeling and dealing, Yadin managed to get the scrolls for Israel.

But Yadin's connection with the scrolls did not end then. He told me the story of how, when he was on sabbatical in London in 1961 and preparing to lead the excavations on Masada, someone sent him a fragment of a much larger scroll for which he paid $10,000. Then he lost contact with his go-between. Interestingly, while excavating Masada from 1963 to 1965, Yadin found fragments of scrolls corresponding to those that had been found at Qumran.

Eventually, Yadin caught up with the rest of the scroll for which he had paid $10,000. This happened in 1967 during the Six Day War, when he was an adviser to the then-chief of staff, Yitzhak Rabin. As Jerusalem was being taken from the Jordanians, Rabin allowed Yadin to take a patrol to the house of a man known as Kando, who lived in east Jerusalem.

Kando had acted as a go-between for the initial scroll discovery in 1947. Yadin found an enormous document more than 30 feet long, whose top third had decomposed during its burial for almost 20 years, underneath the floorboards of Kando's porch.

Yadin would call this hitherto unknown document the Temple Scroll. He told me that it was unlike any other of the scrolls that had been discovered previously. In it, God talks in the first person, giving instructions on how to build the Temple. It would take Yadin 10 years to study and publish it, which he did in 1977.

Yadin's enthusiasm for the scrolls was infectious. Even though he died in 1984, his enthusiasm inspired me to try to bring the scrolls to Toronto. It was but another example in my life of the Past moving Forward toward the future.

Baseball and Jews

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Nem mikh mit tsu der ball geym (Take me out to the ball game)

Tsum oylem lomir dokh geyn (Take me out with the crowd)

Koyf mir di nislekh un krekerjek (Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jacks)

Vil ikh keyn molfun dort nit avek (I don't care if I never get back) **[tinyurl.com/bbll08]**

The Jewish Highway

Albert von Tilzer will be loved forever for composing the melody to "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." And like many of the game's greats, von Tilzer (originally Gumm or Gumbinsky) was Jewish. **[tinyurl.com/bbll09]**

Baseball lover Paul Roitman Bardack has written a great essay that traces what started off as a somewhat ambiguous relationship between Jews and the game – and has since turned into a full-fledged passion. Lipman Emanuel Pike didn't hide his Jewishness when he became the first Jewish player in the mid-19th century. But Pike was followed by a clutch of players who took great pains to hide their religious affiliation, including Philip Clarence (Cohen) Cooney, Henry (Lipschitz) Bostick and Joseph (Rosebloom) Bennett. **[tinyurl.com/bbll12]**

I prefer the approach taken by Al Schacht, pitcher for the Washington Senators in 1919 and better known as the Clown Prince of Baseball. "There is talk that I am Jewish – just because my father was Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I speak Yiddish and once studied to be a rabbi and a cantor. Well, that's how rumours get started." **[tinyurl.com/bbll23]**

Sandy Koufax, of course, made no bones about his heritage. Koufax didn't pitch for his Los Angeles Dodgers in the first game of the 1965 World Series against the Minnesota Twins because it was Yom Kippur. Sandor Slomovits captures the pride felt by every Jewish baseball-loving fan at the time in his article Yom Kippur and Sandy Koufax: They'll Always Go Together. **[tinyurl.com/bbll14]** Stay at the JewishSports website for several great baseball articles, including a look at how Jews made baseball "Our Own," and a review of Aviva Kemper's documentary, The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg. **[tinyurl. com/bbll15]**

And now, a home run of Jewish baseball treats!

• Fans can download Prof. Eric Solomon's essay "Jews and Baseball: A Cultural Love Story," in which he argues that the game has played a crucial role in the evolution of Jewish society. **[tinyurl.com/bbll16]**

• After that, you can read online, the *entire* book, Jewish Baseball Stars (New York: Hippocrene Books) by Harold U. Ribalow and Meir Z. Ribalow. **[tinyurl.com/bbll27]**

• Visit the archives of The Forward, which has been documenting Jews and the game for years. **[tinyurl.com/bbll19]**

• Want more? How about profiles of 189 Jewish baseball players – from Cal (Abie) Abrams to Eddie Zosky. **[tinyurl.com/bbll18]** Most sites take an inclusive stance when including players on their "Jewish" lists. I presume that most don't want to engage in a "Who Is a Jew(ish baseball player)" debate.

With the popularity of baseball and Jews on this side of the Atlantic, how have things fared in the Holy Land? On the amateur level, the Israel Association of Baseball has been around since 1986 and according to its website oversees 70 teams: "Religious and [haredi] youth, secular children, boys, girls, rich and poor, kibbutz children, city dwellers, Jews, Christians and Arabs all play together on the same field and very often on the same team." **[tinyurl.com/bbll20]**

A couple of seasons ago, there were great hopes for the nascent Israel Baseball League. You can read all about its ignominious end. **[tinyurl.com/bbll24]**

But plans are underway to relaunch the game with the help of Marvin Goldklang, a part-owner of the New York Yankees and principal owner of several minor league teams. **[tinyurl.com/bbll25]**

Before closing, let's salute the game one more time as Mandy Patinkin sings a *geshmakt* Yiddish double-header of Take Me Out to the Ball Game and God Bless America. **[tinyurl.com/bbll21]**

Vayls'iz eyns, tsvey, dray strikes, un oys (For it's one, two, three strikes you're out)

Bay der beysball shpil. (At the old ballgame.)

Shpil ball! (Play ball!)

* * *

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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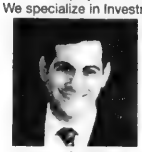

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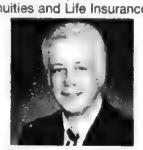

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Toronto man takes part in Kids Cancer Ride

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

After logging more than 5,000 kilometres over the course of three months, cycling five to six hours a day five days a week, David Sugarman is finally on his way.

The 40-year-old Toronto resident is participating in one of country's most gruelling fundraisers. He's one of 36 people who was selected to participate in this year's Sears National Kids Cancer Ride, the longest charity ride in the world.

The cyclists, who hail from all parts of Canada, are crossing the country on two wheels with the goal of raising $2 million for 17 Canadian pediatric oncology centres. They left Vancouver on June 13 and will be arriving in Halifax on June 25.

"A hundred per cent of the money raised is going directly to charity," Sugarman told The CJN about a week before the ride began. "That's one of the things that attracted me to the cause."

Participants had to raise a minimum of $25,000 – he raised $30,000 – as well as pay $4,000 to cover the cost of the trip, he said.

Sugarman, the father of a four-year-old daughter, had no previous connection to childhood cancer. "I can't imagine what it's like for the families with children who have cancer. About 2,000 children are diagnosed with cancer every year."

Describing himself as a sports generalist, Sugarman said he decided to apply for the gruelling charity ride at a point in his life when he had extra time to devote to the project. He is the former president of Billy Bee Honey, a company he recently sold.

David Sugarman is riding across Canada to raise funds for children's cancer centres.
[Barbara Silverstein photo]

"I heard about this great charity. I thought, 'I have the time.' I realized this was a good way to give back to the community.

"I thought it would be a terrific challenge. It became a full-time job."

Sugarman has also been helping his wife, Laurin Mayer, run justforme.com, a company that creates personalized CDs for children.

He said he had done recreational cycling in the range of 20 to 40 kilometres before embarking on the Sears ride training program. He began with 300 kilometres in the initial week in March. By mid-May, he was logging 600 kilometres a week, with 250-kilometre-rides in the end to build up endurance for the cross-country trip.

He said the Sears group will cover 250 to 300 kilometres a day. "Most nights we'll be sleeping in an RV."

Sugarman said that to keep up his energy, he's been consuming from 7,000 to 8,000 calories a day. "It's all about maintaining the weight. I'm on the thin side, so I have to be extra careful."

The riders are being followed by a group of 12 professionals, including a bike technician. "We'll be surrounded by support vehicles on all the major highways."

They visited hospitals and Sears stores to raise awareness and funds for children's cancer, he said, noting that in major cities, people are invited to join the cyclists for a ride-along.

Sugarman said he's in a very fortunate position. "When someone has the time, there is nothing more fulfilling or important than giving back to the community. I'm lucky to be able to do this."

To register online for the ride-along or to make a donation, visit www.searsnationalkidscancerride.com

Ottawa pledges funding for swine flu research

Compiled by CJN Staff

In response to the swine flu outbreak, Ottawa will fund a national influenza research network focused on evaluating a vaccine to fight a potential pandemic, Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq announced.

The network will strengthen Canada's capacity to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of a pandemic influenza vaccine and vaccination programs, Aglukkaq said June 5.

The initiative is a partnership between the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the federal agency for health research, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Ottawa's public health arm. It will be led by Dr. Scott Halperin, director of the Canadian Centre for Vaccinology in Halifax, and will link more than 80 scientists from 30 research and public health institutions across the country.

The network will provide a pan-Canadian co-ordinating mechanism for conducting applied public health research that will help governments and the public health community prepare for, and respond quickly to, an influenza pandemic.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

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Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

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Olivia Pearl Faigan arrived June 6 to parents Alysa-Beth Engel, Mitch Faigan and brother Gabriel. Grandparents, Sheila Cohen, Lynda & Jeff Engel, Rosalie & Harvey Faigan.

Debra & Sidney Zucker, Diana & Jeffrey Kerbel are thrilled to announce the engagement of Avi to Adam. Proud grandparents Nacha Zucker and Ruth Kerbel.

Mazel tov to Anna & Brian Friedman on the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Naomi.

Mazel tov to Fara, Efrem and big sister Abby on the birth of Zachary Joseph Mandelcorn. Grandparents Beverly & Reuben Redlick, Berenice & Mark Mandelcorn.

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Mazel tov to Ephraim Hoffman & Lori Motola on their first anniversary.

Mazel tov to Avi Hochman & Rivka Jakubovic on their recent engagement and upcoming wedding.

Mazel tov on the recent birth of Hannah Harper Steinberg.

Mazel tov on the recent graduation of Yaakov Faitelewicz.

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By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines. Monday, June 15, is the deadline for the June 25 issue, and Monday, June 22, is the deadline for the July 2 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Thursday, June 18

JEWS AS WAR CRIMINALS?

Three Lithuanian Jews fought as partisans against the Nazis during World War II. Sixty years later, they were charged as war criminals. Yiddish translator and artist **Vivian Felsen** tells their story. Sponsored by Friends of Yiddish and the Toronto Workmen's Circle. Illustrated lecture at Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Admission free for Friends of Yiddish or Workmen's Circle members, $8 non-members. **Marvin Schiff**, 416-781-8331.

1937 IN 2009?

Frank Dimant, executive vice-president, B'nai Brith Canada, and CEO, Institute for International Affairs and League for Human Rights, asks "1937 in 2009: Could it happen again?" Temple Har Zion, 1 p.m. Refreshments. Non-temple members $5.

Friday, June 19

ANNE STROM CONCERT

Temple Sinai Congregation presents its Musical Legacy series, Anne Strom Memorial Concert in the Round. Guest is jazz artist, composer, arranger and recording artist **Ron Davis**. 8 p.m. Call **Ruthe Swern**, 416-487-4161, ext. 334.

Saturday, June 20

SHABBAT SERVICE

B'Nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel holds its Shabbat service, 10 a.m., at a hotel in Oakville. The Conservative egalitarian shul serves Jews in Mississauga, Oakville, Burlington, and the surrounding area. Kiddush following the service. Contact www.bnaishalom.ca, e-mail info@bnaishalom.ca, or call 905-901-9889.

TORAH CLASS

Henry Alkin runs a Beth Tikvah Shabbat class on the weekly Torah portion, 10-11 a.m. June 20, parshat Shelah. For more information, call 416-491-4746.

Sunday, June 21

UPON THE DOORPOSTS

Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles presents a new exhibit, Upon the Doorposts, a unique collection of exquisite mezzuzot created by guild members. Opening reception, Baycrest Apotex Centre, Winter Garden Court. 3 - 5 p.m.

CHORALAIRS CONCERT

Choralairs of North York end of season concert. 1:30 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre social hall. No charge. Varied program of Broadway, pop and folk songs. For more information, call **Brian Slepchik**, 416-631-0029.

Wednesday, June 24

SPRING INTO SUMMER

Young Canadian Hadassah-WIZO presents its second annual Spring into Summer program. Alleycatz Lounge, 2400 Yonge St., 8 p.m. $20 in advance (call 416-630-8373) or $25 at the door.

HEROES OF MUMBAI

Lecturer and author **Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis** speaks at an evening of inspiration. Music by Israeli singer **Yoel Sharabi**, and remarks by **Nachman Holtzberg**, whose son and daughter-in-law **Rabbi Gavriel** and **Rivka Holtzberg**, were murdered by terrorists last year. MC **Dana Levenson**, CTV News. Leah Posluns Theatre, 7:30 p.m. Dessert reception follows. $90. Call 416-635-9696, or www.UptownChabad.com.

CANADA DAY

Bernard Betel Centre holds its

Continued on page 21

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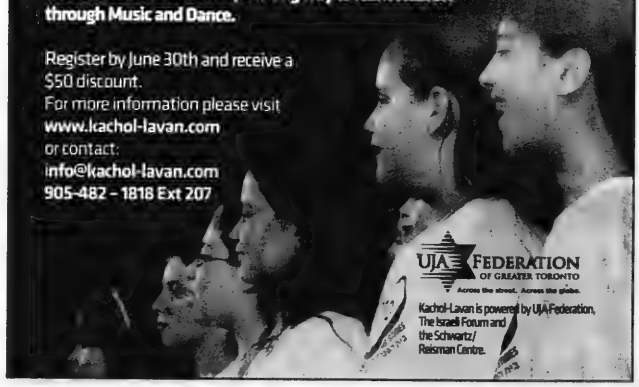

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Continued from page 20

Canada Day Celebration. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. 416-225-2112

Other News

NCJWC GARAGE SALE

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section, will hold its annual garage sale, 4700 Bathurst St., Sunday, June 28, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations accepted until June 26. Call 416-633-5100.

MEDIA MARKETING

UJA Israeli Forum business cabinet division and Canada-Israel Chamber of Commerce invite you to "New Media Marketing Strategies: Be at the Forefront of Emerging Trends." Thursday, June 25, 6:30 p.m. Light dinner. Panel **Stacy Jarvis**, Microsoft Canada. **Zack Havat**, Searchlings, **Simi Grossman**, Hawk Consultants. Moderator **Avi Pollock**, RBC. Lipa Green Bldg., 4600 Bathurst St. $20 early registration, $25 at the door. RSVP **Glenda Gompers**, 416- 631-5707, or online, www.ujaevents.com/registration strategies.

JWIC SERVICES

Jewish Women International Canada offers speakers on domestic abuse in the Jewish community. Sometimes known as woman abuse or relationship abuse, it is a very complex problem, and more widespread than is generally thought. Trained speakers are available for your group, free of charge. Mountains of Mittens, a project to knit mittens, hats and scarves for inner-city schoolchildren, needs wool. Call 416-630-9313, fax 416-630-9319, or toll free 1-866-333-5942, or www.jwicanada.com.

ZAREINU PRO TOUR

50-, 100-, or 162.5-km bike rides, part of Zareinu Moveathon. Meet at Bishop Reding High School, 1120 Main St. E., Milton, Sunday, June 28. Route along Niagara Escarpment. Pre- and post-ride massages, food and rest stops, showers and change rooms, finish line BBQ. Minimum sponsorship $1,000. To register or for more information, visit www.moveathon.com

WORKMEN'S CIRCLE 100

Toronto Workmen's Circle will celebrate its 100th anniversary, Oct. 17-18, with a weekend of nostalgia geared to former campers and students, and members past and present. For information, 416-787-2081.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday, 10 a.m., Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. For information, call 416-630-9440.

Earl Bales in the Park. Lunch and Laughter group, June 18, noon. Sunday Father's Day Dance, an evening of nostalgia. June 21, 7 - 10 p.m. Casino Rama, July 22. Non-members welcome. Call Valerie, 416-395-7881.

Baycrest Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library. Share your time and talent and make a big difference in the quality of library service to Baycrest clients, family members, staff and volunteers. Library volunteers will be trained in circulation duties, sorting and shelving library materials, assisting special projects, and helping visitors accessing online health information. Call volunteer services, 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

BJCC: Learn to be comfortable with the Internet, websites and e-mail. Covers surfing the web, using search engines and e-mail, and computer and Internet basics, such as address bar, menus and other tools. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 - 3 p.m. Fees, members $55, non-members $70. Call **Eran Barlev**, 416-636-1880, ext. 464 or ebarlev@bjcc.ca.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Zion Oren: One History, Many Stories; a family album of Israel at 60. Co-presented with Koffler Centre of the Arts. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space, until Aug. 31. Ext. 606, or harrietw@mnjcc.org.

Pride @ the J. Play Reading, "Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath" by **Phil Pivnick**, directed by **David Gale**. With **Cayle Chernin, Sascha Cole, Jack Newman, Jordan Pettle, Gerry Salberg, David Tomlinson.** June 25, 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. Suggested donation $8. Sponsored by Entertainment One, with support from Kulanu Toronto. For more information, ext. 606.

Israel Dance Festival 2009. Three guest Israeli choreographers: **Yaron Carmel, Gadi Bitton** and **Yaron Ben Simchon**. Put your Israeli folk dancing talents to work over a three-day intensive workshop. Includes a Friday night Shabbat dinner, performances and more. July 3, 4, 5. For more information, www.israelifolk-dancingtoronto.com, or **Sofie**, 416-221-6280, or sofsof@sympatico.ca, or **Laurie**, 416-789-1671, or knarjys0327@rogers.com.

Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition submission deadline is June 30. First prize, professionally directed and performed public play reading at Miles Nadal JCC. For guidelines and more information contact **Esther Arbeid**, ext. 606, or esthera@mnjcc.org.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Outdoor pool opens officially June 21. Ext. 291 for membership information.

Jewish Discovery Museum has My Hebrew picnic. Share Hebrew with your child through music, puppets and games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers welcome. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m. Newborn to four years, with adult. Ext. 390.

Shabbat Club. Your child can join with peers to sing, tell stories, make challah, play games and do age-appropriate crafts. Fridays, 9:45-11:15 a.m. Ages 3-5. Ext. 390.

Maccabi Games information. Contact **Grant**, ext. 257, or gsmith@bjcc.ca. Youth ages 13-16.

Conversation Cafe, a program with JIAS. Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m. Offers newcomers a chance to practice their English in a social environment.

KOFFLER CENTRE

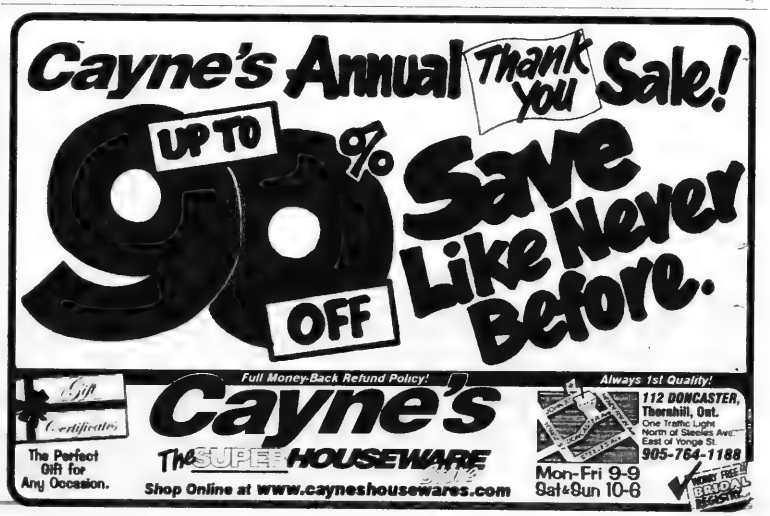
Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-636-1880, www.kofflerarts.org.

Russia: Beyond Utopia. Images of post-Communist Russia, by photographer **Andrew Moore.** Loggia Gallery, until June 30.

EATING DISORDERS OF YORK REGION APPRECIATION: Anita Gutterman [second from left] is honoured by EDOYR for serving as board president for two years and continuing on the board. Seen from left are board members Edith Shore, Gutterman, Renee Herzog and Karen Turack Isaacson.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARD: Beatrice Weiss received the Bernard Betel Centre Esther Ship Volunteer of the Year Award at the centre's annual volunteer appreciation dinner. The 80-year-old has committed over 1,000 hours a year for almost 20 years. She arrives by 8 a.m. every morning and prepares the food area with everything needed for it to operate successfully. She oversees the delivery of breakfast, snacks, hot lunches and light refreshments.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 24



OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Kol Marder	May 29/09	C/O 419 Coxwell Ave
Myron Tobias	May 30/09	22 Creston Rd
Dorothy Bregman	May 31/09	1555 Finch Ave E
Judy Gwartz	Jun 1/09	38 Avenue Rd
Dora Miller	Jun 1/09	7 Townsgate Dr
Rita Lichtblau	Jun 2/09	115 Antibes Dr
Leslie Tator	Jun 2/09	7805 Bayview Ave
Ethel Elias	Jun 2/09	3560 Bathurst St
Morris Wesley	Jun 2/09	27 Trinity Cres
Jack Greenspoon	Jun 3/09	119 Collinson Blvd
Debbi Leff	Jun 4/09	29 Northern Heights Dr
Tovia Dwosh	Jun 3/09	17 Purdon Dr
Etta Cole	Jun 2/09	61 St. Clair Ave W

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Jablonski, Fela	May 29/09	866 Sheppard W
Zeldman, Allan	May 30/09	11 Lisa Cres
Lastman, Irene	May 30/09	37 Evanston Dr
Sirotinsky, Sonia	May 31/09	10 Tangreen Crt
Dekter, Mark Steven	May 30/09	166 Murray Dr
Kakuriev, Riwa	June 1/09	126 Fisherville
Karo, Karola	June 1/09	550 Cummer Ave
Shumelinsky, Rafael	June 1/09	11 Townsgate Dr
Sobel, Harvey	June 2/09	65 Rimmington Dr
Dona, Anna	June 2/09	3560 Bathurst St
Grunfeld, Leah	June 3/09	3560 Bathurst St
Hiscott, Sadie	June 3/09	Private
Salit, Sarah Mina	June 3/09	
Tenenbaum, Marcie	June 4/09	21 Midvale Ave

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MOLLY COLOMBY ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 28th at 10:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
PEARL BLACKMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 28th at 11:30 a.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
Workmen's Circle Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MARA KATZ ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 21st at 10:30 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst south of Steeles
Beth Emeth Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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Obituary

Fought for women's equality

Continued from page 1

She put family first, which wasn't easy, given the long hours she devoted to her public life, he said. She was "a mother to more than four boys. She was a mother to a generation of men and women."

Though she is most associated with fighting for women's equality, she was not a true feminist, he said, because "her core value was humanity, not gender: she believed in work and effort, not entitlement."

Former prime minister Paul Martin, who attended the funeral, told reporters that Finestone offered him advice from the time he was a rookie MP to his retirement. "She never shrank from giving me advice, even when I was in cabinet, and I always took it… she certainly had the right balance. She had a very strong social conscience, but would also say, 'You've got to balance the books.'"

He added: "She did enormous good for the country, and Canada is poorer for her passing."

Finestone was the Liberal member of Parliament for Mount Royal riding from 1984 to 1999. The riding, which at the time had probably the largest Jewish population in the country, had been held since 1965 by former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who retired in 1984. Finestone admired Trudeau and has said he inspired her to go into politics.

She had to fight for the party nomination in 1984 against two other contenders, both from the Jewish community.

She was secretary of state for multiculturalism and the status of women under prime minister Jean Chrétien from 1993 to 1996, and she served on dozens of committees over her time in Parliament. In 1999, Chrétien appointed Finestone to the Senate, where she served until her mandatory retirement seven years ago.

She also worked for women's rights at the international level, attending the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi and leading the Canadian delegation to Beijing in 1995.

Finestone was the daughter of a prominent Montreal Jewish family, and came by community service naturally. Her father was Monroe Abbey, president of Canadian Jewish Congress from 1968 to 1971, and her mother was the former Minnie Cummings.

From an early age, Finestone volunteered in the Jewish community, including serving as president of the Women's Federation of Allied Jewish Community Services (now Federation CJA), and was a founder of Project Genesis, a storefront agency helping people in need secure their rights in the 1970s and of the francophone Centre Communautaire Juif in the 1960s.

She worked professionally in Jewish Family Services' youth protection department, just before entering politics.

Her interest in women's and human rights in general led her to activism in the broader society. She was the first anglophone (and Jewish) president of the Féderation des Femmes du Québec, the province's largest women's organization. She was elected in 1977. Back then, she said in an interview with The CJN: "I've always been a groundbreaker in many ways. There's a little of the avant-gardist in me."

She was behind the famous pro-federalist "Yvette" rally of thousands of women during the 1980 referendum on sovereignty, a protest against a derisive remark by Parti Québécois cabinet minister Lise Payette about women on the "no" side. Some observers felt the event, held at the old Montreal Forum, help turn the tide against separatism.

At the funeral, Martin termed it "a political masterpiece."

The eulogy was delivered by Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, who officiated 62 years ago to the day at the wedding of Sheila and her husband, Alan, who predeceased her.

Tributes to Finestone have been numerous. Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff stated: "Dedicating a large part of her life to public service, she fought to better the lives of the less fortunate… Ms. Finestone's tireless devotion and compassion for others stemmed from her belief that 'living in society goes beyond caring about yourself.' Her exemplary commitment to helping her community was an inspiration to us all."

Irwin Cotler, who followed in Finestone's footsteps as Mount Royal MP, said in the House of Commons that she "knew every *quartier* of this increasingly multicultural constituency."

$100,000 for Manitoba-Israel wetlands research

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — A $100,000 provincial grant will support collaborative Manitoba-Israel research into wetlands and watersheds.

"Israel is a country that knows how to use and conserve water well, and we intend to learn from it," Manitoba Premier Gary Doer told The CJN.

The grant announcement was made June 4 simultaneously with an announcement that the second Manitoba-Israel Water Experts Symposium will take place in Israel in January 2010, by invitation of Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael and its Canadian counterpart, the Jewish National Fund of Canada. The first symposium was held in Winnipeg in August 2008.

Israel's experience in reconstructing wetlands could serve as a model for Manitoba, given that restoration of wetlands is a "pillar of our provincial water plan," Manitoba's minister of water stewardship, Christine Melnick, told The CJN.

She noted that Israel has had experience in "restoring a large wetland, the Hula Valley, and the Jewish National Fund is currently working on plans to restore a large wetland in the Negev.

"This [research grant] is especially important for Manitoba as we move forward to restore and protect our wetlands, including the large Delta and Netley/Libau marshes on the southern shores of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg," said Melnick, who has been to Israel three times.

"Israel has a long history of successfully managing many unique water quality and water supply issues throughout its history," said Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, who was in Winnipeg for the announcements. "The partnership with Manitoba will be of great benefit to both jurisdictions," she added.

The grant will go to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, whose head office is in Winnipeg, and the Galilee Technology Centre in Israel, to implement a joint project developed from collaboration between scientists from Manitoba and Israel that took place during the first Manitoba-Israel Water Experts Symposium last year.

Christine Melnick

Melnick said that at last summer's symposium, she announced a $100,000 grant "for a research idea coming out of the symposium. We received several proposals and chose this one for its universal application and because it focused on wetlands."

Scientists from Manitoba, Israel and Mexico will work together to establish an Agricultural Wetland/Watershed Research Network. The network will provide an Internet-based forum for researchers around the world whose work focuses on the role and function of wetlands and watershed research in largely agricultural regions.

The site will be designed to serve as a globally credible source of accurate scientific information that can be used by policy-makers and researchers interested in examining issues such as the flow of nutrients and other contaminants, the value of wetlands and their role in providing resiliency to watersheds during times of drought. The site will also provide information on the role of protecting downstream freshwater lakes such as Lake Winnipeg.

Melnick said the project will be useful to the many Manitoba conservation districts engaged in developing watershed management plans and will be consistent with the establishment of a research chair in watershed sciences at the University of Manitoba that was announced in April 2008.

The new grant of $100,000 for collaborative research on wetlands comes on the heels of scholarships totalling $250,000 announced by Melnick in 2008. The scholarships are earmarked for Manitoba students who want to study water resources at an Israeli institution of higher learning of their choice, and then return to work in the province. Scholarships of $25,000 will be given out for 10 years, with each student being eligible to receive the scholarship for up to two consecutive years.

Melnick noted that Manitoba is looking at sending 12 scientists to the upcoming symposium, many of whom were at the first symposium. Participants will likely travel to several locations in Israel, she added.

TORONTO STUDENTS WIN PICTURE CONTEST: Three Toronto Jewish day school students took the top prizes last week in an Israel Government Tourist Office picture contest in May. Students were asked to come up with imagery in celebration of Tel Aviv's 100th anniversary this year, with the winning entry scheduled for use in upcoming promotional advertising for the city. Holding their winning entries are, from left, first-place winner Joely Pulver, a Grade 8 Bialik Hebrew Day School student, second-place winner Maya Hartman, who is in Grade 3 at Toronto Heschel School, and third-place winner Alexandra Khozen, a Grade 6 Associated Hebrew Day School student. ***For more on the contest, please go to cjnews.com***

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Private member's bill on Iran will have impact: MP

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

Irwin Cotler

MONTREAL — Irwin Cotler conceded that it's next to impossible for the Iran Accountability Act, the private member's bill he tabled in Parliament June 9, to actually be adopted.

But Cotler, the Liberal opposition's special counsel on human rights, said Bill C-412 – intended to hold Iran to account for its genocidal and nuclear ambitions and repression of its people – is already making an impact.

The former justice minister said he is working on getting all-party support for the legislation and hoped it would inspire the government to use it as a model for initiating similar legislation on its own.

"Or if not, at least to be held to account as to why it's not doing so," Cotler said in a phone interview last week.

If the government does nothing, it will be a "standing reminder… that they are not exercising their responsibility," he said.

Cotler held a press conference in Ottawa last week to announce the bill with Liberal MP Ken Dryden and Roya Boroumand, director of a foundation promoting democracy and human rights in Iran.

If adopted, the bill would have Canada divest from Iran, establish a mechanism to monitor incitement there, and keep the most "virulent" inciters from that country from entering Canada, Cotler said.

The bill also would freeze the assets of those helping Iran achieve nuclear capability and enhance its "machinery of hate," use the United Nations and international community to "bring Iran to justice" through principles of international law, and target Iran's dependence on imported petroleum, he said.

"As a signatory of the 1948 Genocide Convention, Canada has a responsibility to prevent and punish incitement to genocide that it has largely ignored in the case of the world's greatest threat," Cotler said in a statement last week.

Bill C-412 "fulfils these responsibilities and affirms Canada as a world leader in fighting impunity."

Cotler told The CJN that the bill has already begun to serve as a "concrete, tangible template" for similar initiatives in the United States and around the world that seek to "expose the dangers of a nuclear, genocidal, rights-violating Iran."

He said the bill was the "organizing theme" of remarks that he delivered last week at a conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars in Washington.

Cotler discussed the bill with Representative Howard Berman (D-California), chair of the House committee on foreign affairs. Berman is "exploring it in terms of an American initiative," Cotler said.

CHRC offers ideas for change

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has released an internal report that rejected suggestions it abandon its mandate to act against hate propaganda through Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA).

Instead, it urged Parliament to consider expanding the criminal prosecution of alleged hatemongers by removing safeguards in the Criminal Code that make prosecutions more difficult.

The commission said it must retain the ability to bring remedial action against violators of the CHRA's Section 13, which prohibits repeated electronic dissemination of hate messages that expose a group to hatred or contempt.

"Words and ideas have power," states the report, which was presented to Parliament last week. "That power, while overwhelmingly positive, can also be used to undermine democracy, freedom and equality. It is for this reason that Canada, and many other nations, have enacted laws to limit forms of extreme hateful expression that have very minimal value in the free exchange of ideas, but do great harm to our fellow citizens."

In recent years, the federal commission and its provincial counterparts have come under attack for cases launched against mainstream publications, including Maclean's and the Western Standard magazine.

The Western Standard and its publisher Ezra Levant were brought before the Alberta commission for publishing cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad that had ignited riots around the world. The case was eventually dismissed.

The CHRC asked University of Windsor law professor Richard Moon to analyze the issues surrounding Section 13, and in November 2008, he recommended the section be abandoned.

The commission dismissed that suggestion and instead proposed reforms to improve the CHRA.

Among the proposals:

- add a statutory definition of "hatred" and "contempt" in accordance with that applied by the Supreme Court of Canada in a case involving Nazi agitator John Ross Taylor;
- allow for an award of costs where the complainant abused the adjudication process;
- allow for the early dismissal of complaints;
- end the assessment of fines in successful cases.

The commission also offered suggestions for changes to Criminal Code. It called for an end to the requirement that the provincial attorney general consent to prosecutions and for removal of the defence of truth.

In calling for the end of that defence, the Commission quoted former Ontario deputy attorney general Mark Freiman, who now serves as president of Canadian Jewish Congress. The commission suggested that in a 2006 article, Freiman wrote that the promotion of hatred against a group could never be true.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber took issue with that interpretation, saying Freiman, who was not writing for Congress at the time, only called for clarification of the issue. "Congress has no position on the removal of the truth defence," Farber said.

Congress supports the report's recommendations to reform the Commission. "We are concerned when [Chief Commissioner Jennifer Lynch] goes off the track in dealing with the Criminal Code," he said.

What's more, Congress has advocated that some sort of consent, similar to the one envisioned in the Criminal Code, be required before CHRA cases could proceed, he said.

Levant, one of the commission's severest critics, was scathing in his assessment of the report. "I'm embarrassed for the CHRC," he said. "It's clear they disrespect our Charter [of Rights] and Canadian values of free speech. They just don't get it."

He said the commission is out of step with the vast majority of Canadians, and instead of reining in its powers, it is "doubling down" by calling for fewer safeguards in Criminal Code prosecutions.

"Lynch wants police to have more power to censor Canadians," he said. "Can you imagine living in a country that when you say something that's true you're prosecuted. That's crazy. That's Iran. That's the Soviet Union."

Levant also questioned the commission's contention that people have a "right" to be treated with dignity. "What does that mean?" he asked. "It's such a loosey-goosey, touchy-feely thing. It's not a real right," such as free expression, he said.

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Coast to Coast

Obama distorts in name of diplomacy

New York Times columnist David Brooks is as shrewd and erudite an observer of world affairs as one can hope to find in journalism today. In his June 5 column ("The Chicago View") about U.S. President Barack Obama's Cairo speech, Brooks argued that Obama is a pragmatist, not a rigid ideologue, who tries to combine diplomatic idealism with hard-core political realism.

According to Brooks, in the pursuit of pragmatism in Cairo, Obama took competing Arab and Israeli historical narratives "and tried to create a new narrative that all sides could relate to."

"To construct this new narrative," Brooks continued, "Obama strung together some hard truths, historical distortions, eloquent appeals and strained [better put: illegitimate] moral equivalencies."

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The problem is that even given Obama's admirable willingness to speak "some hard truths," his distortions nevertheless made his effort to "construct" a new, shared narrative dubious, even though Brooks didn't see it this way. Brooks defended Obama, saying that the president, after all, is engaged in "diplomacy, not scholarship."

Still, Brooks did cite some critics' complaints about Obama's distortions. For instance, the president compared the plight of the Palestinians to that of former slaves in the American south. This was arguably an unsuccessful attempt to make a point about pursuing only non-violent struggle. There was, unfortunately, no mention of efforts over many years to achieve peace through negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours, including the Palestinians.

Nonetheless, never before in an Arab capital had Arab and Muslim audiences listened to a leader speak about the need for them to recognize Israel's legitimacy. Again, critics have pointed out that a central part of that legitimacy is something Obama failed to note – that the Jews have an unbroken historical attachment to the land dating back millennia. However, by focusing solely on the Holocaust as the tragic episode in the Jews' past, he left the impression that the Holocaust is the reason for the existence of the State of Israel, whereas in truth that horror was only a catalyst that accelerated Israel's creation.

To his credit, Obama tried to inculcate the truth about the Holocaust in areas of the world where it is widely denied and where anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist conspiracy theories, including about 9/11, run rampant.

Realistically, there was only so much "truth telling" that could happen on this one special occasion. And this was, as Brooks indicated, an important start.

* * *

While faulting my May 14 column for taking playwright Caryl Churchill's words in "Seven Jewish Children" out of context, Yoni Goldstein (CJN, June 11) wrote that her play "is perhaps the most rational encounter with the frail psyche of an Israeli parent that I have ever seen."

Really? Here's the reaction of Yossi Klein Halevi, a highly respected Israeli writer who cares deeply about reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians:

"My only reaction is that the play is a lie: As the father of Israeli children, I know no Israeli parent who would speak that way to his/her children. Maybe there are some; maybe some Kachniks. But it is so beyond the pale of Israeli discourse between parents and children, so ludicrous, that that in itself is a form of blood libel. I know some Jews have written in her defence. But the play is so dishonest, so corrupt, that anyone who touches this risks being contaminated with the sin of demonizing the Jews."

Goldstein also faults me for taking his own words (in a National Post column defending the play) out of context – for failing to note that he had written that for Churchill, the link between the Holocaust perpetrated against the Jews "and another, newer, genocide of the Palestinians perpetrated by Israel," is "tenuous at best."

"See the difference?" Goldstein asks. However, he fails to understand that this "difference" is actually irrelevant. One expects a playwright to insinuate explosive ideas, not to declare them baldly. But this "artfulness" in no way lessens their impact. If anything, it only makes noxious ideas more effective, even insidious. In this case, linking Jews/Israelis to Nazis remains a hideous, grotesque lie.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

SOLDIERS VISIT: Alexander Rotman, left, and Avi Sasson, two Israeli soldiers, visited Netivot HaTorah recently, sponsored by Beit Halochem Canada – Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel (Canada) and shared their "uplifting" personal stories. Pictured with them are Sarah J. and Shane J. [Rebecca Ansel photo]

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New grants support young Jewish innovators

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — The Jewish leaders of tomorrow can be thankful for people like Lynn Schusterman.

In 2006, Schusterman founded the Center for Leadership Initiatives (CLI), a Vancouver-based foundation dedicated to developing Jewish leaders and promoting managerial excellence in the Jewish community.

The centre recently allocated more than $400,000 for projects undertaken by the Return on Investment Community (ROI), a global community of young Jewish innovators, also created by Schusterman in 2006, as a partnership between CLI and Taglit-Birthright Israel.

More than half of the funds will be allocated to the ROI innovation fund, which will provide five grants of approximately $50,000 each.

"Preference will be given to projects that support and deploy the existing ROI network of some 400 people," CLI director Yoni Gordis says.

About $80,000 will be allocated to the ROI seed fund, which provides small grants ranging between $2,000 and $10,000 to help members of the ROI community with projects in the start-up phase. In 2009, 40 seed fund grants will be given, as compared to 34 in 2008.

"We have a fairly sophisticated strategy when it comes to working with young leadership, using a mixture of teaching them the skills of running non-profits, horizontal and vertical networking and fiscal support," Gordis says.

"We believe these three ingredients, when put together in the ROI community, are a powerful braid to help people progress to the next step."

The goal, he says, is "to open and lubricate the doors so young leaders can reach the younger generation and actualize their visions. This new innovation grant will take it to a whole new level."

Two Canadians were among those who received ROI grants in recent years: Daniel Rattner, in 2007, for Revival, a one-hour documentary on the history and rebirth of Hebrew, and Julie Schneiderman, in 2006, for her work on the fight against AIDS. Schneiderman did a two-week assessment project in Ethiopia with Canadian and Israeli HIV and urological experts, in order to provide initial training of local staff.

Both Canadian recipients attended the third annual ROI Summit in Jerusalem last year, meeting and networking with other ROI entrepreneurs from all over the world.

Rabbi Joseph Kelman
The Board of Directors, The Executive, Staff and Students of the former

Dr. Abraham Shore SHE'ARIM Hebrew Day School
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המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Yes, it is unfair

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 28 years

Question. I am a parent with custody of three children. At trial the judge ordered that my spouse pay child support retroactive to the beginning of last year, totalling some $6,000, in addition to monthly ongoing support of about $500. I spent thousands of dollars in legal fees and took a lot of time off work over a two year period to obtain that judgment.

All these payments were to be made automatically through the Ontario Director of the Family Responsibility Office (the FRO). If my spouse fails to pay the Director then the FRO is supposed to enforce the Order. My spouse failed to make the payments, so the FRO suspended his driver's license.

To get his license back, my spouse then made a special arrangement with the FRO. Under this arrangement he has to pay $50 per month towards the $6,000 retroactive child support the judge ordered and towards $2,000 in arrears, so long as he keeps paying the ongoing $500 child support each month.

In short, some bureaucrat at the FRO unilaterally overruled the trial judge's decision, without even notifying me. I was given no opportunity to argue why this $50 payment was unfair. I was told I had no say in the matter. Can anything be done?

Answer. No. The legislation was designed to allow the FRO to give parents who pay child support some "breathing room" when the FRO feels that such arrangements are warranted. However noble the idea, the FRO takes the position that the legislation governing its conduct does not allow it to canvass the views of the recipient of child support before entering into such arrangements.

Given that it is the recipient and his or her children that are the most directly affected by such "deals", the insensitivity of the FRO and their refusal to canvass the views of the recipient in such situations is mind-boggling. These arrangements can sometimes lead to grave injustices. In any event, it should be up to our judiciary to determine when and how such payments are to be structured, not a functionary who does so behind closed doors.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

Neither Garfin Zeidenberg LLP nor John Syrtash is liable for any consequences arising from anyone's reliance on this material, which is presented as general information and not as a legal opinion.

Sponsored by the Community for Jewish Culture of B'Nai Brith Canada.

LEMONADE 2009: Grade 2 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns branch on Neptune Drive held their third annual lemonade stand with proceeds going to support the therapeutic clown program at the Hospital for Sick Children. The students raised $400, for a total of $1,000 over three years. Pictured, from left, are Josh Holzman, Joe Birnboim, Joey Hotz, Dara Birnboim, Jason Bergman and Alyssa Bergman.

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Netanyahu the unifier

By ARI SHAVIT
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Commentary

Benjamin Netanyahu crossed the Rubicon yesterday. In order to serve the country, he abandoned his father's ideological home. The decision to leave that home came at great emotional cost.

The prime minister agonized for 10 days over the text that would redefine him. But in the end, Netanyahu did the right thing. He neither stuttered nor blinked. Instead, he placed the spotlight squarely on one irreplaceable phrase: a demilitarized Palestinian state next to a Jewish State of Israel.

The rhetoric of his speech at Bar-Ilan University on Sunday was right of centre, while its political conclusion was left of centre. But if the truth be told, Netanyahu's message yesterday was one of unity. Netanyahu, who in the past was seen as divisive, yesterday became a unifier of Israel. He put on the table a clear, realistic and precise diplomatic formula that reflects the worldview of the Israeli majority.

No, Netanyahu did not abandon Likud for Meretz. But he laid the ideological basis for the next political big bang. He pulled the rug out from under Kadima leader Tzipi Livni and became former prime minister Ariel Sharon's successor. After Bar-Ilan, Netanyahu defines the centre. The prime minister is now a unifying premier who is trying to reduce the occupation without undermining Israeli security.

Netanyahu's new move is harmful to his political future. If he loses the right without gaining the left and Barack Obama, it could destroy him. But that is precisely why the Bar-Ilan speech was a courageous one. Netanyahu is well aware of the dangers ahead. Yet at the decisive moment, several days ago, he told his worried aides that he would do the right thing, even if it brought about his downfall. In that moment, he proved that he is not a politician but a statesman. He proved that he has matured. At the end of a long and painful labour, he has given birth to his internal truth.

Netanyahu's new truth is not that of Peace Now. Iran is still the greatest existential threat. An armed Palestinian state is also a threat. And the root of the conflict is the Palestinians' refusal to recognize Jewish history, Jewish sovereignty and the Jewish People's right to a state in the Land of Israel. However, this bitter truth is no longer being translated into an insistence on territory and settlements. Instead, it is being translated into two principles whose morality is incontrovertible: recognition of the Jewish state and demilitarization of the Palestinian state.

These two principles have now been laid before the White House. If Obama refuses to accept them, we will all know that we are facing an American president who is no longer committed to the existence of the State of Israel. But if Obama does accept these two principles and grants Israel international guarantees for peace, he will prove himself a genuine peace leader – a leader who will pave the way to the correct, stable solution of two nation-states: a Jewish state and a Palestinian one.

Speech 'scuttles chances for peace,' Mubarak says

By YOAV STERN
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's demand in a key speech Sunday that Palestinians recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people "scuttles the chances for peace," Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Monday.

Mubarak made the comments in a speech to Egyptian army commandos, the state-run MENA news agency reported.

The president said he had informed Netanyahu of his position, according to which Israeli-Palestinian peace talks must be renewed from the point where they broke off, and that the call for recognition of Israel as a Jewish state would only complicate matters.

"You won't find anyone to answer that call in Egypt, or in any other place," Mubarak was quoted as telling the troops.

In his speech, Netanyahu conditioned the establishment of a Palestinian state on that recognition.

Mubarak added that the problems in the Middle East won't be solved until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved. "The solution to the crises in the Arab and Muslim world lies in Jerusalem," he said.

Hamas, meanwhile, has dismissed Netanyahu's speech as a "racist" attempt to deny Palestinian national rights.

"[Netanyahu wants] to recognize Palestine as pure Jewish land, denying the Palestinian people any rights in their land," the Palestinian news agency Ma'an on Monday quoted the Islamist group as saying in a statement.

In the address, Netanyahu also vowed that Israel would not build any new West Bank settlements, or expand existing ones, but refused to stop accommodating for their natural growth.

According to Ma'an, the Hamas statement added: "Netanyahu attempted to play with words in order to mislead people, claiming he wants peace.

"However, his racial attitudes when he stipulates that the Palestinians recognize Palestine as land for the Jews, indicate that Netanyahu is a liar when he talks about peace. This speech increased hatred and spitefulness."

On Sunday, an aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that the speech "sabotages" regional peace efforts, due to Netanyahu's refusal to accept an influx of Palestinian refugees into Israel and his unwillingness to compromise on the status of Jerusalem.

"Netanyahu's remarks have sabotaged all initiatives, paralyzed all efforts being made and challenges the Palestinian, Arab and American positions," said Nabil Abu Rudeinah.

Netanyahu pledged in the address that Jerusalem be the undivided capital of Israel and that Palestinian refugees not be allowed into Israel.

"This will not lead to complete and just peace," Abu Rudeinah said. "His remarks are not enough and will not lead to a solution."

"Our main demand is the end of the occupation and finding a fair solution for Palestinian refugees and halting settlements," Abu Rudeinah said. "Other details should be resolved in negotiations."

A senior Palestinian negotiator, meanwhile, called on U.S. President Barack Obama to intervene to force Israel to abide by previous interim agreements that include freezing settlement activity in the West Bank. The alternative, he said, is violence.

"President Obama, the ball is in your court tonight," Saeb Erekat said. "You have the choice tonight. You can treat Netanyahu as a prime minister above the law and… close off the path of peace tonight and set the whole region on the path of violence, chaos, extremism and bloodletting.

"The alternative is to make Netanyahu abide by the 'road map,'" he said, referring to a U.S.-sponsored document under which Israel agreed to freeze settlement activity and Palestinians agreed to rein in militants.

"The peace process has been moving at the speed of a tortoise," Erekat added. "Tonight, Netanyahu has flipped it over on its back."

Islamist extremism, nuclear weapons greatest threat

Continued from page 1

The prime minister also said Palestinians must accept Israel as a Jewish state, and said the root of the regional conflict is the fact that "even moderate" Palestinian elements refuse to do so.

"When Palestinians are ready to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, we will be ready for a true final settlement," he said.

He emphasized that the Jewish People have been linked to the Land of Israel for more than 3,000 years, and he ruled out the option of granting Palestinian refugees the right to settle within Israeli borders.

Netanyahu said Israel would not negotiate with terrorists who wish to destroy it, and he said Palestinians must choose between the path of peace and Hamas.

The prime minister opened his speech by saying that he formed his new government earlier this year with three major challenges facing Israel: the economic crisis, the Iranian threat and the Mideast peace process.

He stressed that the greatest threat to the world today is the link between Islamist extremism and nuclear weapons.

Netanyahu, who until now had not endorsed U.S. President Barack Obama's goal of Palestinian statehood, used this policy speech as an opportunity to reverse course and try to narrow a rare rift between Israel and its closest ally.

The prime minister met with Defence Minister Ehud Barak and President Shimon Peres last weekend for consultations about his speech.

Peres and Barak reportedly pressed Netanyahu to announce in the speech his acceptance of the internationally sponsored "road map" peace plan and willingness to recognize a Palestinian state with security limitations.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, himself at loggerheads with Hamas, has said talks with Israel cannot resume until Netanyahu halts settlement construction and accepts a two-state solution.

Netanyahu's declaration of support for limited Palestinian statehood laid bare Palestinian rejectionism, Vice-Premier Moshe Ya'alon said Monday.

"I agree with what was said," Ya'alon, who is also strategic affairs minister, told Army Radio. "I know this reality well. I think there was a very important statement that formulated the internal Israeli consensus in the face of Palestinian rejectionism."

Ya'alon, a former Israel Defence Forces chief of staff who opposed Israel's 2005 pullout from the Gaza Strip, added that the debate over whether Netanyahu had supported a two-state solution before the speech was unnecessary and merely about semantics.

"What did the prime minister say before the speech? 'We don't want to rule them. I am prepared to strengthen them so that they can rule themselves,'" he said.

Netanyahu's address was met with mixed responses from across the political spectrum.

Both Israeli Arab and nationalist political leaders blasted the speech as political spin, while Peres praised it as "strengthening Israel's international position and opening the door to direct peace negotiations."

Iran supreme leader orders probe of vote fraud

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JERUSALEM — Iran's state television reported Monday that the supreme leader has ordered an investigation into claims of fraud in last week's presidential election.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was said to have ordered the powerful Guardian Council to examine the allegations by pro-reform candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, who claims there was widespread vote rigging in Friday's election. The government declared President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad the winner in a landslide victory.

It was a turnaround for Iran's most powerful figure, who previously welcomed the results.

The European Union (EU) on Monday said an Iranian probe into alleged election fraud must answer all complaints made by opposition protesters who say the re-election of Ahmadinejad was rigged.

This is a matter that the Iranian authorities must address and investigate, EU foreign ministers said in a statement.

The call came after Khamenei ordered the Guardian Council, a powerful 12-member clerical panel that's a pillar of Iran's theocracy, to look into the charges by Mousavi, who has said he is the rightful winner of Friday's election.

The EU said it was concerned over election fraud allegations and the postelection violence that erupted after the release of results.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

It is essential that the aspirations of the Iranian people are achieved through peaceful means and that freedom of expression is respected, the EU ministers said.

EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said she hopes election authorities will really look into all the complaints of irregularities.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said the probe needs to answer the allegations and protests made by demonstrators.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said protests and the crackdown in Iran raised very serious doubts… about the free and fair nature of the elections.

The EU ministers also said they remain open to relaunching talks over Iran's nuclear program with Tehran despite the concerns over the elections.

Mousavi wrote an appeal to the Guardian Council Sunday and also met with Khamenei. He asked the council to annul the result because of alleged irregularities, a charge the Interior Ministry and Ahmadinejad have dismissed.

Mousavi's backers led street protests in Tehran on the weekend, after the election results were announced.

Protests erupted in the capital and elsewhere Saturday when the ministry announced a landslide victory for hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Friday's election.

The outcome has disconcerted western powers trying to induce the world's fifth-largest oil exporter to curb its nuclear program. U.S. President Barack Obama had urged Iran's leadership "to unclench its fist" for a new start in creating ties.

The European Union urged Iran not to use violence against those protesting the disputed election and urged the authorities to look into complaints of irregularities.

"I have thorough respect for all the Iranian citizens who have shown their discontent and have demonstrated peacefully," Ferrero-Waldner told reporters in Luxembourg. "I do hope that the security forces will refrain from showing violence."

In response to Mousavi's appeal to the Guardian Council, whose chairman, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, endorsed Ahmadinejad before the vote, said it would rule within 10 days on two official complaints it had received from Mousavi and another losing candidate, Mohsen Rezaie.

"Mousavi and Rezaie appealed yesterday. After the official announcement [of the appeal], the Guardian Council has seven to 10 days to see if it was a healthy election or not," ISNA news agency quoted council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodai as saying.

The council vets election candidates and must formally approve results for the outcome to stand. Khamenei has told Iranians to support Ahmadinejad.

On Sunday, Mousavi's supporters handed out leaflets calling for a rally in downtown Tehran on Monday afternoon. The protests on the previous two days were the sharpest show of discontent against the Islamic Republic's leadership in years.

Mousavi urged Iranians on Sunday to keep up nationwide protests "in a peaceful and legal way."

Pro-Mousavi demonstrators threw stones at police at Tehran University on Sunday and clashed with Ahmadinejad supporters on a main avenue that was littered with broken glass and fires.

In the north of the capital, a stronghold of Mousavi backers, riot police patrolled after midnight. Rubbish burned in the street, some cars had their windows broken, and police blocked access to roads.

After dusk, some Mousavi supporters took to rooftops across Tehran calling out "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest), an echo of tactics by protesters in the 1979 Islamic revolution.

U.S. leaders have shown caution in their comments on the election so far, in the hope of keeping alive Obama's strategy of engagement with Iran, with tougher talk coming from Europe.

Germany, one of Iran's biggest trading partners and a negotiator in the West's nuclear talks with Tehran, said it had summoned the Iranian ambassador on Sunday.

Jews expelled from Arab lands press case

JTA

ROME — Jews displaced from Arab lands met in Rome this week to press for the recognition of their rights as forced exiles.

Participants were to present their case Tuesday to the Italian parliament's Foreign Affairs Commission.

"We hope that this will lead to a resolution on the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries," Stanley Urman, executive vice-president of the group Justice for Jews from Arab Lands, which organized the meeting, told JTA.

Urman said representatives from Jews of Arab origin now living in nine countries – Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States – were scheduled to attend the meeting this week. Among other things on the agenda, he said, is drawing up a joint response to Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi's visit to Rome last week. Jewish leaders in Rome boycotted a meeting over the weekend between Gadhafi and Italians expelled from Libya as the meeting was held on Shabbat. Gadhafi "missed an opportunity to set a standard in the Arab world to address the issue in an open and courageous manner," Urman said.

The 6,000 Jews forced out of Libya were among as many as 850,000 Jews from 10 Arab countries forced to flee their homelands since 1947.

EU postpones upgrading ties with Israel

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JERUSALEM—European Union foreign ministers on Monday welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conditional endorsement of a future Palestinian state, but they said it wasn't enough to raise EU-Israel ties to a higher level.

The ministers, who were due to meet Israel's foreign minister on Monday, questioned conditions cited by Netanyahu for backing a Palestinian state and also his defence of Jewish settlements on occupied land.

Netanyahu has refused to back a state for Palestinians since taking office in March, but he said on Sunday he would endorse it if Israel received guarantees it would have no army and if the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

"That's good, but it's only a first step," Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, whose country takes over the EU presidency next month, said before the talks in Luxembourg.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said it was "not sufficient."

"Nothing was said on the settlements… but this stopping of the settlements is essential," said Kouchner, who in an earlier statement rejected any pre-conditions to peace negotiations.

The EU and Israel have agreed in principle to upgrade an "association agreement" defining their ties, a move that would bring trade benefits for both sides.

But the 27-nation bloc has postponed the upgrade and says it wants a firm commitment from Israel to seek a two-state peace accord with the Palestinians.

"We must say quite clearly today there can only be talk of an upgrade when the peace process is on its way, and for that we need a few steps more," said Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn.

Asked if Netanyahu's move was sufficient for the EU to upgrade ties with Israel, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb said: "No."

The EU ministers were due to meet Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman for talks in Luxembourg on Monday evening.

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada
extends their deepest sympathy to the family of the
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Dianne Glass, *National President*
Officers and Board of Directors
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Interested and qualified applicants should send a resumé with cover letter no later than June 29, 2009 to:

Ms. Ellen Wexler, Board Chair, Ashkenaz Foundation
455 Spadina Avenue, Suite 303, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2G8
Or by email to: ellen@ashkenazfestival.com

For more information about Ashkenaz visit: www.ashkenazfestival.com

*only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

Israel Briefs

Search for cash in mattress

An Israeli woman mistakenly threw out a mattress with $J million stuffed inside, setting off a frantic search through tons of garbage at a number of landfill sites. The woman told Army Radio that she bought her elderly mother a new mattress as a surprise and threw out the old one, only to discover her mother had hidden her life savings inside. The dump manager said his staff was helping the woman, but that the mattress was hard to find among the 2,500 tons of garbage arriving at the site every day.

IAEA reports on Iran

Iran has stepped up its production of nuclear fuel, according to a report by the United Nations nuclear watchdog. The Islamic Republic now has 7,200 installed centrifuges, which reportedly could fuel two nuclear weapons a year, at its underground bunker in Natanz, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported last week. But the IAEA found no evidence that the fuel has reached the stage where it is pure enough to make a bomb. That could take several months. For more than a year, IAEA inspectors have been blocked from visiting an Iranian nuclear reactor, which could be modified to produce weapons-grade plutonium, according to the report. The UN Security Council has ordered Iran to stop enriching uranium. Iran also has flouted three Security Council resolutions requiring it to answer questions about reports that its scientists have researched nuclear warhead design.

Hirchson found guilty

Former finance minister Abraham Hirchson was convicted of fraud and theft. He was found guilty of stealing $625,000 from the National Workers Organization while he worked as its chairman. Hirchson has denied any wrongdoing. Five accomplices already pleaded guilty to stealing similar sums between 1998 and 2005. Hirchson is awaiting sentencing.

Israel says it will retaliate

The security-diplomatic cabinet agreed that the Israel Defence Forces will respond to all attacks from Gaza. The cabinet met last week to discuss the situation in Gaza, including the issue of kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit, the Prime Minister's Office said. "Israel views Hamas as responsible for all aggressive actions against Israel from the Gaza Strip," the cabinet agreed, and instructed the IDF to respond to all attacks emanating from Gaza. The cabinet also discussed ways to ease restrictions on the day-to-day life of Palestinians in Gaza while maintaining Israel's security.

Family allegedly kills son

A 15-year-old Palestinian boy allegedly was killed by his family after being accused of collaborating with Israel. The victim was tortured before being hanged, according to the Jerusalem Post and other reports. Palestinian Authority police arrested several members of the teen's family in connection with the murder, including his father, uncle and a cousin. The suspects reportedly confessed to killing the teen for being a collaborator.

Most back settlement work

Nearly six of every 10 Israelis think Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should resist U.S. demands to completely freeze construction in Jewish West Bank settlements, according to a new poll released June 12. The poll by the Maagar Mohot Polling Institute was made public ahead of Netanyahu's major policy speech on Sunday.

Carter carries letter to Hamas

Noam Schalit, father of abducted Israel Defence Forces soldier Gilad Schalit, passed a letter addressed to his son to former United States president Jimmy Carter during their meeting last Friday. Schalit met Carter, who arrived in the region for a series of talks, in Jerusalem and asked him to do what he could in order to make sure his son will receive the letter. After the meeting Schalit said the former president was one of a few Americans with links to Hamas and was hopeful that those connections could be used to secure the release of his son. Schalit also said the meeting went well and that Carter committed himself to helping Gilad's cause.

– files from JTA and Ha'aretz

Shooter's notes show obsession with Jews

By ERIC FINGERHUT
JTA

WASHINGTON — A note was discovered in the car of the alleged Holocaust museum shooter declaring that President Barack Obama was "created" by Jews and does what his "Jew owners tell him to do."

According to court papers released last Thursday, the note was discovered in the car of James von Brunn, the 88-year-old white supremacist who has been charged with murder in the death of a security guard last Wednesday at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. The car was parked outside the museum.

Inside a notebook, the handwritten note said, "You want my weapons – this is how you'll get them. The Holocaust is a lie. Obama was created by Jews. Obama does what Jew owners tell him to do. Jews captured America's money. Jews control the mass media. The First Amendment is abrogated – henceforth…"

Von Brunn could face the death penalty if convicted in the murder of 39-year-old Stephen T. Johns, according to media reports. He also faces a charge of killing while in possession of a firearm in a federal facility. He remains hospitalized after being shot in the face multiple times by other security guards after he opened fire on Johns.

Meanwhile, 200 people joined religious leaders last Thursday afternoon for an interfaith gathering at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to mourn the death of museum security guard Stephen Johns.

Organized by the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, the event included speeches and prayers by clergy from Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Hindu and Baha'i traditions, as well as representatives of the German and Israeli embassies.

Clark Lobenstine, executive director of the InterFaith Conference, told the crowd, some of whom held candles, that the vigil was designed to show that "hate has no place in any of our community's religious traditions."

"Let's not let this terrorist divide us and prevent us from coming back here," he said.

Martin Peled-Flax, the Israeli Embassy's minister-counsellor for domestic political affairs, said Wednesday's attack showed that Holocaust denial is a "pernicious ideology that ultimately leads to insane violence," whether it comes from a "racist and anti-Semite" in Washington or at the highest levels of "leadership of the world stage," an apparent reference to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Museum chief of staff Bill Parson thanked the crowd, saying the "tremendous outpouring" since the attack "has meant a lot to us."

Both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously passed resolutions last Thursday condemning the shooting attack at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and offering condolences to the family of slain security officer Stephen Johns.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Canadian artist brings Yiddish hip hop to China

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

Six thousand cheering Chinese music fans were probably hoping for something a little bit out of the ordinary when a Canadian artist named SoCalled took the main stage at the Midi Music Festival in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province. But whatever they were expecting, Yiddish hip hop definitely wasn't it.

Nevertheless, Yiddish hip hop is what they got, or at least a rough approximation thereof. Of course, no single label really does justice to the music of Montreal's SoCalled, a.k.a. Josh Dolgin.

A mix of hip-hop beats, rap lyrics, klezmer and Yiddish samples, stick-in-your-head melodies and the unique contributions of a bunch of guest performers, SoCalled's creations are a category unto themselves. Though Dolgin has made a name for himself in both Jewish and indie music circles for the energy and originality of his music, this was the first time he had gone as far as China to play.

"It was crazy. It was fun. It was amazing," said Dolgin of the whirlwind eight-day tour.

Dolgin and his band were part of a group of Canadian musicians that made the trip, including fellow Montrealers Final Flash, Hollerado, and Creature, as well as Victoria, B.C.'s Jets Overhead. Katie Moore, a Montreal singer and long-time SoCalled collaborator, accompanied him on the tour, as did guitarist Lubo Alexandrov, violinist Alex Chow and bassist Michael Felber.

After landing in Beijing in late April, Dolgin and his crew took to the road, playing in Shanghai, Zhenjiang and Shenzhen, before heading back to Canada. Though the schedule was hectic, the band had a few opportunities to head out, see the sights, and sample the local cuisine.

"We had a day off on May Day, so we walked around checked things out. The violinist in the band ate some scorpions," Dolgin recalled.

Audiences got to experience another kind of culture shock, however, once SoCalled started to play. According to one local music critic, the set in Zhenjiang left "everyone who saw it utterly bewildered."

SoCalled on stage at a Chinese club performing his mix of hip-hop beats, rap lyrics, klezmer and Yiddish samples.

Whether this harsh assessment is a reflection of the music or the audience is open to question, but from the perspective of Dolgin and his manager, Dan Seligman, audiences were enthusiastic about the unfamiliar tunes.

"My music is kind of different anyway, so I guess people could be bewildered by the music everywhere, because it's not really normal music. But it was a totally rocking show," Dolgin said.

"It's definitely pretty unique. For one, it was totally out of cultural context. I imagine 95 per cent of the people have never heard Jewish music or heard of Jewish culture, so it was refreshing to see the music just taken for what it is as an art form, and people got into it," added Seligman, who first met Dolgin in a McGill University Yiddish literature class.

"Obviously, a lot of the references are lost. But the excitement of the people was amazing. It was like rock 'n' roll at the end of the '50s and early '60s, this unbridled enthusiasm that you don't see very often in North America," he said.

Though the tour was a success, getting to China was a bit of a chore. Seligman got a call in March from Transmission, a British Columbia organization that sponsors music industry conferences in Canada and China, asking if he and SoCalled wanted to participate.

Though the answer was yes, getting visas on time was dicey. In addition to the normal paperwork, Seligman also had to submit the lyrics to SoCalled songs, a video, and information on all of the band members.

"We just kind rolled with the punches," he said.

Though the visa application process was strenuous, once in China there was little government interference.

"I didn't feel watched or anything. There were tons of cops everywhere and army people, but I never felt under the thumb of some regime. I felt really safe. And welcome," Dolgin said.

"I mean you do notice a bit of a looming presence, and you don't necessary feel like you're walking down the streets of New York or Toronto, but we never felt like there was someone watching," Seligman said.

Montreal's Josh Dolgin, a.k.a. SoCalled, was happy to bring his music to an audience that had never heard of Jewish music or been exposed to Jewish culture.

"I think once we got the rubber stamp, it was kind of open game, but getting in, you notice the whole mechanism of control. Two of the shows we played weren't officially sanctioned shows, so I guess they weren't supposed to happen, but there's so much stuff that happens in the underground that no one would notice," he added.

For Seligman, going to China was also an opportunity to connect with Chinese artists and music industry professionals. In addition to managing SoCalled, he is also the artistic director of Pop Montreal, a major annual music festival. Though he has no immediate plans to bring over any Chinese acts, he said that he's interested in furthering connections with Chinese musicians and exploring the Chinese market for Canadian bands.

"It's still at a pretty nascent stage at the moment, but there's definitely a lot of interest beginning to develop. It definitely needs investment and cultivation and I think, beyond the mere economics of it, there are cultural, social and political issues that arise. But there definitely is potential," Seligman said.

For his part, Dolgin would like to go back, though he doesn't know when he might do so. In the meantime, he's playing more Canadian shows and working on a new album. Until his next visit, the Chinese market will have to come to him.

JAFFA ROAD

Toronto band Jaffa Road will perform at Harbourfront Centre on June 21, the final day of the Franco-Fete weekend. Led by vocalist Aviva Chernick and composer-musician Aaron Lightstone, the group is known for blending Afro-Caribbean jazz, ancient Ladino songs, reggae and Arabian grooves, but singing mostly in Hebrew. "What we are doing is part of a renaissance of Jewish and Hebrew culture," Lightstone told The CJN. The band released its debut album, Sun Place, in March. For the full weekend lineup and schedule, visit www.franco-fete.ca.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ANNE FRANK REMEMBERED ON WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HER 80th BIRTHDAY

Anne Frank was a teenage girl in hiding with her family from the Nazis in Holland when she began the diary that would make her, posthumously, one of the world's most widely read authors. Her diary was published seven years after her death in Bergen-Belsen in 1945. It has since been translated into 67 languages and has sold more than 25 million copies. Literary critic **Ruth Wisse** has noted that it is the second-most popular book, after the Bible, to emerge from the Jewish world.

Numerous events were planned to coincide with what would have been Anne's 80th birthday last week; she was born on June 12, 1929. Gala screenings of **George Stevens'** 1959 film, The Diary of Anne Frank, were scheduled for Los Angeles and New York, where surviving stars of the film were to be in attendance at the Pierre Hotel.

Based largely on the Broadway play by **Frances Goodrich** and **Albert Hackett**, the film won three 1959 Oscars and five additional nominations. **Millie Perkins**, then an unknown fashion model, was plucked from among 10,000 hopefuls for the title role; **Diane Baker** played Anne's sister, Margot. Both actresses were to discuss their experiences at the New York screenings, along with **George Stevens Jr.**, son of director George Stevens.

A new DVD and Blu-ray version of the film is set for release this week by 20th Century Fox. Perkins plans to present her original movie script to the Jerusalem-based Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in October.

* * *

Felsen Discusses Lithuanian Partisans: More than 60 years after the end of World War II, three elderly Lithuanian Jews who once fought as partisans against the Nazis came under investigation for alleged war crimes. In 1998, Toronto historian, Yiddishist and artist **Vivian Felsen** met one of the accused, **Fanya Brantsovskaya**, whom she visited again in Vilnius in 2006. Using substantial research, Felsen has constructed an illustrated lecture, The Case of the Jewish War Criminals. Jointly sponsored by Friends of Yiddish and the Toronto Workmen's Circle, her lecture takes place at the Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Thursday, June 18, 7:30 p.m. Members free, non-members $8.

* * *

Play Reading at Earl Bales: Medina Theatre Ensemble presents a staged reading of Over the River and Through the Woods, **Joe DiPietro**'s winning theatrical comedy about an Italian man whose grandparents scheme to keep him in New Jersey after he accepts a promotion in Seattle. The play features the three '*L*'s – love, laughter and lasagna. The reading, directed by **Mario D'Alimonte**, is at the Earl Bales Community Centre, Sunday, June 28, 2 p.m. Admission $5.

* * *

Names in the News: Recipients of this year's George Luscombe Award for mentorship in theatre are **Leah Cherniak** and **Martha Ross**, co-artistic directors of Theatre Columbus. Since its inception in 1983, the Toronto-based company has added 29 original comedies to the Canadian artistic landscape.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Who will be the Senior Star "Canadian Idol?" The third annual Senior Star singing, musical instrument competitions feature talented Canadians over 65. Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living, 1003 Steeles Ave. W. Thursday, June 18, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. 416-225-2112.

• Hear **Mitch Smolkin** with **Klezmer En Buenos Aires** in performance, with **Paul Brody**, **Boris Sichon**, **Aviva Chernick** and pianist **Marilyn Lerner**. $25, $30. Glenn Gould Studio, Sunday June 21, 3 p.m. www.glenngouldstudio.com

• Pride @ the J features a reading of **Phil Pivnick**'s play Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath. Directed by **David Gale**, with **Cayle Chernin**, **Sascha Cole**, **Jack Newman**, **Jordan Pettle**, **Gerry Salsberg** and **David Tomlinson**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Thursday, June 25, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation $8.

• The Toronto Fringe Festival presents 150 diverse productions, all for $10 or less. Running July 1 to 12 at 30 venues across Toronto, from Honest Ed's loading dock to the Free Times Café. Fringe Hotline, 416-966-1062.

• Journalist-writer **Shlomit Kriger** invites Holocaust survivors to submit short stories (maximum 1,500 words) or poems, songs or plays (maximum two pages) for inclusion in a creative writing anthology. Submissions must be in English; no more than two pieces from any submitter. Please include name and contact information at the top of each page, as well as a cover letter with a brief paragraph about yourself. Deadline, Aug. 31. E-mail holocaustanthology@yahoo.ca or mail to Holocaust Anthology, c/o Shlomit, P.O. Box 984, 1 Promenade Circle, Thornhill Ont. L4J 8G7.

* * *

At the Galleries: "Zion Ozeri: One History, Many Stories – A Family Album of Israel at 60" is on view in the Miles Nadal JCC, Jacobs Lounge, until Aug. 31. Co-presented with the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

Ed Begley Jr. | Patricia Clarkson | Larry David | Conleth Hill | Michael McKean | Evan Rachel Wood

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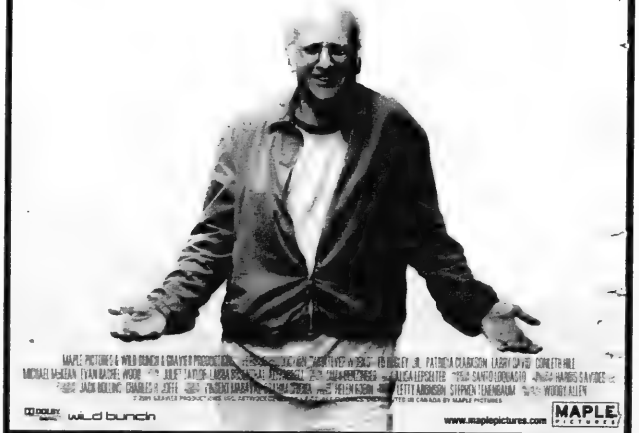
a new comedy from Woody Allen

"Vintage Woody Allen...Jewish-American comedy comes full circle."
- Brian D. Johnson, *Maclean's Magazine*



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CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT VARSITY

Bezmozgis makes his debut as a film director

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Having made his mark as a writer with the acclaimed Natasha and Other Stories, David Bezmozgis has reinvented himself as a screenwriter and movie director.

His debut feature film, Victoria Day, which opens in Toronto and Montreal on June 19, is a coming-of-age story based on his experiences as the son of Russian Jewish immigrants in Canada.

Set in Toronto in 1988 during the Victoria Day holiday and the launch of the Stanley Cup playoffs, Victoria Day grapples with such universal themes as adolescence and sexual awakening.

The central character, Ben Spektor (Mark Rendall), 16, is an intelligent, well-rounded, level-headed fellow. He's also unusually sensitive.

Still, boys will be boys. Ben and his wacky friends (John Mavro and Scott Beaudin), all of whom play for the high school hockey team, have begun to explore their curiosity in the opposite sex.

The object of Ben's desire is Cayla (Holly Deveaux), a remote beauty whose brother, Jordan, a bully and Ben's nemesis, suddenly goes missing.

The police get involved in Jordan's disappearance, and not surprisingly, Ben feels a little conflicted about his romantic interest in Cayla. As well, he is torn by guilt, since he grudgingly lent Jordan $5 to buy drugs.

As Bezmozgis fleshes out this theme, he focuses on Ben's changing relationship with his parents, Yuri and Milla (Sergiy Kotelents and Nataliya Alyexeyenko), who always speak to him in Russian.

Ben is an obedient and respectful son, but as his carnal desires bloom, he spends less and less time at home, much to their disappointment and concern.

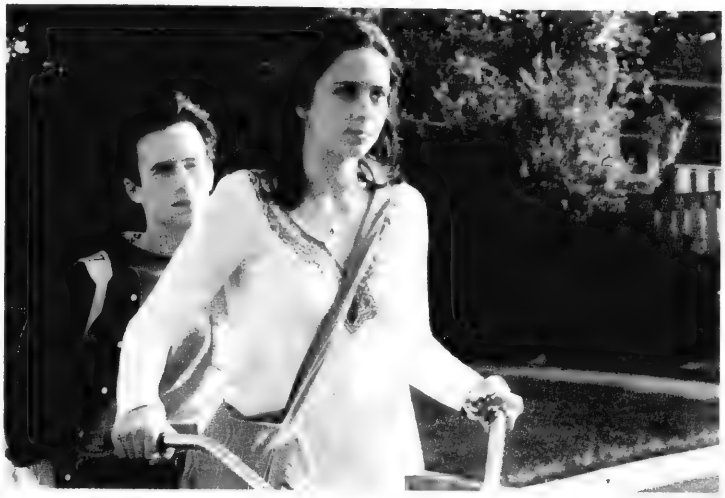
Yuri is disappointed that Ben no longer wants to watch professional hockey games on television with him, while Milla is worried that he is going astray.

Yet Ben remains grounded and responsible. When Cayla, unexpectedly, comes on to him one night, he says, "Maybe we shouldn't be doing this."

To a certain degree, Victoria Day is adept in portraying Ben's disorientation as he attempts to chart a path from adolescence to adulthood.

The film, however, is somewhat less than compelling, as it generally fails to connect with the audience on a deeper emotional level.

Still, Bezmozgis' young, unknown cast tries to please and is quite appealing. Rendall conveys Ben's sensitivity and vulnerabilities, Mavro keeps jumping out of his skin, and Deveaux is sweetly demure.



Mark Rendall and Holly Deveaux in Victoria Day

Zisele's explores mother-daughter relations with laughs

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Zisele, the Israeli production from Tel Aviv's Beit Lessin Theatre, had its North American premiere at Luminato, the Toronto arts festival, earlier this month.

Moria Zrachia's humorous, high-spirited and edgy celebration of mother- daughter relationships was produced in association with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company of Toronto.

Through dance, mime and the music of Chava Alberstein and the Barry Sisters, audiences were treated to an enjoyable evening.

It was well worth the trek down to the Jane Mallett Theatre at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts.

Performing to the rhythm of a sentimental Yiddish musical score, nine performers, all but one of whom were women, struck up expressive poses for more than an hour of fun.

The principals were four dowdy Jewish mothers in flowing dresses and black shoes carrying trademark black vinyl purses.

They were by turns loving, affectionate, controlling, overbearing, sly and manipulative, practising oneupmanship in pursuit of their daughter's interests

The girls, wearing short brown skirts and beige blouses, were winsome, sexy, obstreperous and mischievous.

Not unexpectedly, the lone "boy," clad in shorts and bespectacled, looked a little bewildered, like a child who has lost his way.

As they pranced and danced on the bare stage, to the accompaniment of traditional Yiddish songs that reflected such themes as family, love, joy and sorrow, the performers exuded an infectious *joie de vivre*.

Zisele explored the complexity of mother-daughter relationships with energy, mirth and panache.

A scene from Zisele. **[Beit Lessin Theatre photo]**

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Reviewer to 'perform' Man Booker-nominated book

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Robert Adams has a great gig. The 72-year-old Montreal resident has spent the last 25 years getting paid to talk about his favourite books, and just recently returned from a 3-1/2-month world cruise doing just that.

"Yeah, it's not bad," the former English teacher admits.

Adams returns to Hart House at the University of Toronto on June 22 and 23, where he will review Mr. Pip, by Lloyd Jones, a 2007 Man Booker-nominated book.

"It's 90 minutes long," Adams says of what can best be described as a performance. "I do a short précis of the book, act out bits of it, talk about its history and geography and talk about what the author is trying to do." People have described him coming off stage with his shirt drenched in sweat from the effort he puts in.

Robert Adams

It all began about 25 years ago when he was approached by a friend to speak at an ORT fundraiser. At first, he wasn't sure what he would talk about but finally decided to review a book he had just finished reading, Bernard Malamud's The Assistant.

The reading was a success and he was asked to do more. "Soon I was doing 40 to 50 reviews a year."

Adams lectured to sold-out audiences for 11 years, both in Montreal and Toronto. His lectures were broadcast on TV Ontario and still air on Book TV. He has published two compilations of his lectures, one of which, A Love of Reading, was a bestseller. He decided to retire from this about four years ago because he was exhausted.

"But my wife [Pearl, who also acts as his manager and publicist] doesn't like to see me idle, and she thought, 'What about if we did a cruise?'"

They hooked up with Crystal Cruise Line, and he now lectures around the world several times a year aboard the ship. Recently, he has decided to return to the lectern doing what he loves, just a few times a year.

Obviously, Adams loves books, and estimates he has 20,000 in his house. "I used to read a book a day, but now I read four or five a week. I can think of no book that I haven't finished reading. Even if it's a bad book, like Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code, I will keep reading hoping the good part is at the end."

Though he is no Oprah, he's been known to add at least 3,000 copies to the sale of any book he talks about.

Adams was born in Wales. He converted to Judaism while on a trip to Israel to mark Pearl's (who is Jewish) 50th birthday.

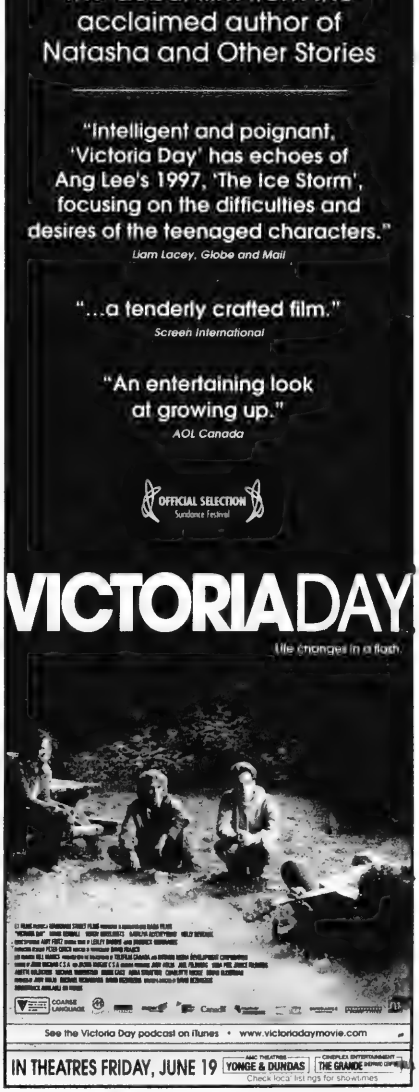
Mr. Pip is set during the Bougainville rebellion in Papua, New Guinea, in the 1990s. The rebellion began as a dispute over land and alleged environmental damage between islanders and multinational copper-mining companies and became a brutal war of independence involving government forces, well-armed militias and foreign mercenaries.

Mr. Pip tells the story of a man who during this time chose to teach the island's children from the only book available to him, Charles Dickens' Great Expectations.

"I chose it because it's an extremely well-written coming-of-age novel about a little girl. It's a marvellous story set during a little-known event."

While on the world cruise, Adams got a chance to meet the New Zealand author of the book and discuss its finer points. "That's the sort of thing I like to pass on to my audience," he says.

Adams reviews Mr. Pip on June 22 and 23 at 8 p.m and 2 p.m. respectively. Tickets are $35 and available at 416-978-8849 or uoftix.ca.


The debut film from the acclaimed author of Natasha and Other Stories
"Intelligent and poignant, 'Victoria Day' has echoes of Ang Lee's 1997, 'The Ice Storm', focusing on the difficulties and desires of the teenaged characters."
Liam Lacey, Globe and Mail
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Books & Authors

Award-winning author bears an affinity to Laurence

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

The White Space Between, the novel by Montrealer Ami Sands Brodoff that won the 2009 Canadian Jewish Book Award for fiction, focuses on Willow Ives and her mother, Jane Ives, a Czech-born Holocaust survivor formerly known as Jana Ivanova, and Willow's need to understand the persistent gaps in her mother's past.

Much of the story unfolds in Montreal, where Willow, following in her late grandfather's footsteps, becomes a talented professional puppeteer; she creates a diverse family of marionettes that she gives life and voice to, seeming to need this imaginary world as a child needs dolls. Because her mother has kept much of her wartime experiences a blank, Willow knows hardly anything about her father, who becomes a mythic figure in her imagination.

When her mother (who had been living in New Jersey) decides to return to Montreal to testify for the Witness Foundation, Willow feels mixed emotions. "She is unnerved that her mother would now decide to tell her story to strangers, a story Willow has been told only in bits and pieces, fragments that don't quite fit into a whole. And yet in truth, she has been afraid to hear this story, as much as she longs and needs to, settling up here in Montreal to sleuth it out on her own."

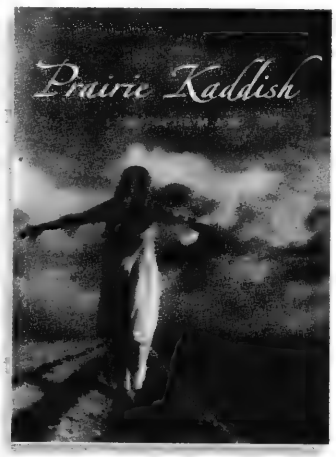
Willow's quest takes her to the top of Montreal's mountain and also to Prague; she eventually solves the riddle of her paternity and fills in many of the white spaces in her psychic identity card. The book offers a good example of what Toronto poet-essayist Kenneth Sherman meant when he described the two opposing impulses of Holocaust literature, the simultaneous imperatives to hide and yet to tell, as "void and voice."

For the first three decades or so after the Holocaust, relatively few writers seemed willing to venture into that dark and largely uncharted literary terrain. Then, shortly after the groundbreaking TV series, Holocaust, in the mid-1970s, Elie Wiesel commented that once no one wanted to talk about the Holocaust and suddenly everyone seemed eager to do so..

That eagerness continues: today Holocaust lit still dominates Jewish letters. A century from now, how many of these books will be read? We like to believe that the best – by authors such as Wiesel, Anne Frank, Primo Levi and Aharon Appelfeld – will survive, while less notable works will submerge into literature's invisible bedrock.

In my reading of The White Space Between, the book seemed to start slowly, but the characters became more sympathetic and intriguing with each turning page. Brodoff's prose bears an affinity to the work of Margaret Laurence in her exploration of the mother-daughter relationship, her periodic insertion of old photos and memory capsules into the narrative, and her search for the basic humanity in people. Brodoff, who has published a previous novel and collection of short stories, is a writer worth watching.

* * *



The Diary of Laura's Twin, by Kathy Kacer, took the youth literature prize at the 2009 Canadian Jewish Book Awards. Like The White Space Between, it is published by the remarkable Second Story Press of Toronto.

Part of that publishing house's successful series of Holocaust Remembrance Books for Young Readers, The Diary of Laura's Twin tells the story of a modern-day Jewish girl who is "twinned" with Sara Gittler, a child from the Warsaw Ghetto. The narrative alternates between Laura's and Sara's diametrically different worlds, which are at least 60 years apart, and is illustrated by many photographs of the latter.

Again we see the familiar pattern of a young protagonist, Laura, who fills in the void of her unknowing by reading Sara's Holocaust diary, then speaks about her "twin" at her bat mitzvah ceremony. Inspired by Sara's bravery, Laura finds the courage to act after learning of a friend's silence after possibly witnessing the desecration of a Jewish cemetery.

Holocaust remembrance that sparks social justice: a winning formula for mass-market juvenile fiction. No doubt the book will be popular with young Jewish and gentile readers alike.

Kacer also just won the prestigious 2009 Yad Vashem Prize for Children's Holocaust Literature for her book Hiding Edith.

* * *

Isa Milman's Prairie Kaddish, winner of the 2009 Canadian Jewish Book Award for poetry, seems to redefine the meaning of poetry. Here we have a book of remembrance, a sort of historic scrapbook about the former Jewish agricultural settlement of Lipton, Sask., and the picturesque graveyard that remains.

Milman includes maps, photographs, letters, lists of names and Yiddish subtitles between her free-form poetic creations. In poems such as Immigrant Song, she documents her discovery of Lipton's Jewish past, right from the moment of her first visit to the cemetery.

As if I heard a drum
struck by an invisible hand,
as if after 30 years in Canada
the grass sang me a welcome song.
As if those Jewish bones called me
meydele, said they'd waited for me so long,
as if they laid their hands on my eyes
to unblind me, and pulled me close to listen
as they whispered fragments of their stories,
slices of their dreams…

The poetry is vibrant and accessible, and has caught on like a prairie wildfire after a recent review in Forward. A rarity for a book of poetry, Prairie Kaddish has already gone into a second printing. The publisher is Coteau Books of Regina (www. coteaubooks.com).

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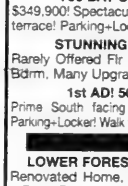

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Soccer team preparing for Maccabiah by getting hot

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Maccabiah Games kick off on July 12 and one thing athletes competing in Israel can count on is that it will be hot. As in, relentless, sun-drenched 30 degree hot.

With that in mind, the coach of the Canadian women's soccer team, has instructed all 16 players to prepare for the games by practicing hot yoga. That's the exercise discipline where participants go through a series of postures and stretches in a studio heated to 40 degrees celsius. It's designed to limber up the body while expelling nasty toxins through sweat.

The hot yoga experience is part of a preparatory regimen designed by coach Chris Lewis that includes gym workouts and reminders to stay hydrated. That preparation will hopefully give the women's team a leg up when they compete in Israel.

Maccabi Canada has never sent an open (adult) women's team to the games before though four years ago a junior girls team won the bronze medal in a three-country competition.

This year the Canadians will face contingents from Britain, the United States, Australia and Israel, said Jacqui Markowitz, manager of the women's team.

"I don't know the competition but I expect it to be stiff," she said. "But we have some very good players on the team and we have so much heart. The team has this wonderful spirit about it and that can take you far."

The team will rely on a handful of college varsity-level talent, including Markowitz's daughter, Nicole, who plays for York University, Anne Friedland, who earned a soccer scholarship at Brown University in the NCAA, and Leah Peric, goalkeeper for the University of British Columbia.

The others are good players recruited across the country with a variety of soccer backgrounds, including Nicole's sister Jesse, who played on the junior team four years ago. Lewis, their Winnipeg-based coach, has led three women's teams to Provincial Cup championships and has twice coached women's teams at the Canada Games, Markowitz stated.

Goalkeeper Leah Peric, above, and Sari Mogul, going down to her knee on right, are key members of the women's team.

Rachel Lowenstein, 20, is a midfielder from Vancouver who has been playing soccer since she was a kid. Twice a provincial high school champion with Point Grey Secondary School, she also was on the Vancouver team that competed at the JCC Maccabi (youth) Games in New Jersey six years ago.

That team "did not do that well," she recalled.

Four years ago she made the cut for the junior team that went to the Maccabiah, but other commitments did not permit her to go.

This time she's one of four British Columbia players to make the team.

"I think it's an amazing opportunity to come together with other Jewish athletes from around the world," she said. "It's great that this is the first time there's a Canadian women's team."

Lowenstein has visited Israel before as part of a Biluim youth trip. Formerly of Toronto, she attended United Synagogue Day School before her family moved to British Columbia seven years ago.

Her teammate, Nicole Markowitz, is a veteran of the Maccabiah sports experience. A member of the junior team four years ago, she recalled the games as "an amazing experience. It was my first time going.

"The opening ceremonies were amazing. It was like nothing I was expecting. They went all out, the performance, tons of people watching. It was a really good surprise."

As part of the Maccabiah experience, the team was taken on tours of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

They also mingled with athletes from around the world: "It was cool meeting people from all different countries" and making long-term friends with other girls on the Canadian team, Markowitz, 20, said.

She's been training four days a week in preparation for the games, working out with the team she played for last year as a midfielder/striker, the Lady Lynx, as well as York U.

On July 5, Maccabi Canada's five soccer teams – open men and women, junior boys and girls and Masters (35+) – will gather for a four-day training camp at various fields in G. Ross Lord Park.

The women's team was selected from more than 40 women who tried out last summer, Jacqui Markowitz said. To commit to the games speaks to their "joy for Israel and their Jewish identity. To my mind, these are our future leaders."

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Our first dinner party

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

We lay in bed, silently tense. "So, when will you be up to it?" Meir asked, finally. "It's been a long while, now," he added.

"Oh, all right already," I responded sharply. "But only two couples!"

You see, it's been a while since we've hosted friends at home. It's not that I don't like hosting, it's that I hate it.

But during the many months we've been here, we've been entertained quite generously. So be it.

Meir is giddy. If it were up to him, coming home every night from work and finding 50 people holding cocktail glasses in his house would mean living his dream.

We start to make a list. I hate everybody. I mean, I'll fall in love with you when we're at a restaurant, or at a show, but you're forever my rival once I have to ask: "Carol, would you like decaf or regular?"

When (after a bloodied battle) the list is done, Meir, in a dreamy voice, starts talking about the menu: "I feel like trying my rich beef stew with fried onion, rosemary, mushrooms and honey sauce."

"I'm so out of here," I think to myself.

To elevate my crabby mood, I take the kids to the Promenade Mall (plus, I can't stand watching Meir cleaning, with his bad back and all). I meet Shira, an acquaintance, in the food court. I take my trays and my kids, and I sit next to her.

I notice she's very quiet.

Finally, she says: "My husband told me he had heard Meir talking about some party at your place. Thanks a lot for *not* inviting us. And after you've eaten three meals at our home. I mean, after all... never mind."

I reply instantly: "Silly you! Of course you're invited! What were you thinking?"

Shira is all smiles. "Great. My kids really miss yours."

Kids?

"Who needs kids?!" I shout at my husband when I get home.

After he calms down, he explains: "We've always been invited as a family."

During the next week, Meir tries not to make direct eye contact with me, as the list grows and grows. It's not that we know so many people, but rumours circulate quickly among lonely Israeli-Canadians.

Later in the week, we stroll around the posh supermarket, filling our cart – here another smoked salmon, there another steak, and everywhere words like, "Don't be cheap, Nina."

It's not that, I swear! It's the hosting thing!

We also pay a visit to the wine store.

At home, my job is to e-mail everybody with party details. Meir only needs to cook and to clean.

After I send the e-mails – to 43 people, minus their kids – I feel relaxed. Content, even. Meir is happy with my new state of mind.

Meanwhile, I'm stealing Belgian bonbons from the kitchen and taking a mental break. You see, I wrote the wrong date in the invitations. I've invited everyone to our house on the day before the occasion, the same day that Meir was planning to take us to the movies in order to relax my nerves before the dinner party.

So, if you came last Tuesday and no one was home, please understand. I simply couldn't.

I promise I'll invite you when I'm ready. So don't hate me. God knows Meir does.

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1/2 tsp cumin
1 tbsp fish sauce
3 tbsp fresh lime juice
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Prepare sauce by combining ingredients together. Season chicken breasts with salt & pepper; brush with vegetable oil and grill until done. Place chicken breast on baguette and pour sauce over each 'burger'.

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Balance and core strength

FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Recently, I attended a conference called Ageless Motion, where I spent two days learning about the relationship between core strength, balance, stability, speed of movement and quality of life.

You need core strength simply to cross the street before the light turns green without losing your balance or falling. You would never expect that the ability to contract your core muscles and take a step at the same time would be the determining factor in balancing, but it is.

The conference was incredibly exciting for me because of my personal experience – I've had two back surgeries. I have been training through my core for more than eight years, so that I can remain pain free, maintain mobility and prevent further injury.

Now the newest research tells us that as we age it is not only essential to strengthen the core muscles to reduce chronic back pain and improve posture but also, more importantly, to maintain a high quality of life, which includes independent living.

The core consists of 30 muscles, both large and small, that stabilize the torso from shoulders to pelvis. These muscles, working together, allow fluid movement of our limbs. The core controls the transfer of energy and the shift in body weight of every movement.

A strong core means your body can effectively distribute the weight-bearing stresses of everyday living, from reaching for a glass in the cupboard and walking upstairs to getting out of a chair. All movements, from the simple to the most complex, originate from the core – without it we are powerless.

Who would have thought that performing regular body-weight squats would affect your ability to climb a flight of stairs 10 years from now, but it does and how!

A weak or an unbalanced core is linked to chronic hip and back pain that can lead to immobility, which in turn leads to a lower quality of life.

The most important piece of information I walked away with from this year's conference is that no matter what your age, fitness level or limitations, move, and if you don't know how, hire an expert to teach you.

Want to learn more? E-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Honour thy father and mother

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

The Ten Commandments state, "Thou shall not kill." That makes sense as killing undermines, more than any other action, one's relationship with God and the community.

God constructs a body and infuses it with a soul. It would seem therefore it is up to God to "taketh," not personkind. If murdering was sanctioned, respect for the ethereal and the here-and-now would dissipate and havoc would envelop the world.

Within that same set of laws exists the commandment, "Honour thy father and mother." Perhaps, this obligation stems from the same reasoning as "thou shall not murder" – that if we were to disrespect our parents, those who made us with God, we would be belittling the Creator, and creation itself. This would lead to disunity with our neighbours, community and humankind.

I recently received a note from a friend, in which she talked about her love and kavod (respect) for her parents. Her word reflects the importance and beauty of respecting your mother and father, and clarifies the necessity of honouring "thy father and mother."

My friend wrote that her mother is 81 years old and her father, 82. Her dad suffers from dementia, and her mom is tired and having a hard time coping with the day-to-day challenges of taking care of her spouse.

The saving grace, however, is that my friend and her children live with her parents, which makes it "easier for me to tend to what they need and to ensure someone is always in the house."

She writes that this setup, one which used to be the norm in most cultures, is hard on her children. Her 22-year-old takes her grandparents to appointments when her university schedule is clear. That can be tough.

"It is hard emotionally, but I wouldn't have it any other way," my friend adds. This is respect.

She says that the only thing her parents ever asked of her was to be happy – "because when one is happy, everything else falls into place." She says they were always there for her; the door was forever open with no questions asked. Essentially, they created an environment where respect and love thrived.

She tells me that her father is a Holocaust survivor and lost his entire family when he was only 13 years old. Now he is suffering from dementia, and he is forgetting his second family and wonders "how HaShem could take another family away from him." How deeply sad. My friend has a hard time coping with this and says it weighs heavily on her.

My friend has a beautiful spirit, a child-like one, which is reflected in this statement: "When I am sick with a migraine or have a bad day, I go straight into my mom's room and lay down on her bed.

"When my sister says, 'I am coming to your house Friday,' I always say, 'You mean, mom and dad's.'"

She adds that often she watches TV with her father, just to be with him. "They are my world," she says.

"My father showed me his tallit, I cried. My mother talks about Baycrest for my dad, I cried." She is the "sensitive" child and therefore could not attend the meetings dealing with moving her dad into Baycrest. "It is painful," she writes.

My friend told me that the thought of her parents leaving her forever is too much to bear and "life is the best when they are around. My parents are gifts from God, and I treat them as such." This is respect.

Honour thy father and mother.

Visit Avrum's blog at http://avrum.net/Darfur?

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Israel: 61 Years of Independence

The Canadian Jewish news

52 Pages | Thursday, May 30, 1991 | Sivan 17, 5751 | 65¢ .61¢ + 4¢ GST

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This will be a familiar sight as families of Ethiopian Jews reunite.[IPPA photo]

"We won't abandon Jews"

Solomon's heirs airlifted home

JERUSALEM (JPFS) —

Israel made history last Saturday, completing a massive, dramatic airlift that rescued virtually the beleaguered Ethiopian Jews from Addis Ababa to their ancestral homeland in a mere matter of hours.

Operation Solomon, conducted by the Israel Army and Air Force under the direction of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, with the full cooperation of the American government, brought [illegible] Ethiopian Jews in [illegible] flights.

[illegible] said one El Al ground-crew worker as he helped an infeebled old woman onto one of the hundreds of buses that transported new arrivals to absorption centres and hotels around the country.

"We dreamed, we fought, we waited for this day to arrive," said Rahamim Elazar, a longtime community activist. "I always believed Israel would save them and it did. We applaud this country for its great heart."

go flight — and at least one flight by Ethiopian Airlines.

There were no seats in the jumbos, and the new immigrants sat packed together in what seemed like a human carpet. One army bus driver commenting on the new world record, said: "You could never dent with pedigo Russians and Israelis with five suitcases in each hand."

They are then these Ethiopians [illegible] powerful, bring anything more than a small bag of belongings, in order to maximize space and passenger comfort.

imperative that allows for violations of the Sabbath in order to save Jewish lives.

"We dreamed, we fought, we waited for this day to arrive," said Rahamim Elazar, a longtime community activist and director of Israel Radio's Amharic broadcasts. "I always believed Israel would save them, and it did. We applaud this country for its great heart."

Although planning for a rescue operation began over a year ago, when thousands of Ethiopian Jews from the remote north flocked to the compound of the Israeli Embassy in Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Shamir did not give the final go-ahead for the Friday-Saturday operation until the previous Tuesday, after Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam fled his country as rebels closed in on the capital, an informed source said.

The prime minister stood at the ramp of the first plane, an unmarked [illegible] arrived at

Israel an unreal dream for excited newcomers

By LEORA FRUCHT
JERUSALEM —

As dusk enveloped Jerusalem, the first busloads of Ethiopian Jews arrived in the city that had been the object of their yearnings and prayers. It was seven o'clock on Friday night, and as dark descended on the city, they stepped off the buses silently, some 800 men, women and children, most of them [illegible] in white robes, in what

teer. "They said I must be lying."

For the children, too, the meaning of the plane ride and their new surroundings evaded them. An Ethiopian boy waving an Israeli flag eagerly told strangers, "I live in Addis Abada."

Anxious to show off his few words of Hebrew, he added with a proud grin "I

study at the Israeli Embassy in Addis.

While the more boisterous children raced barefoot around the lobby of the hotel their faces beaming with excitement, their more haggard-looking parents and grandparents sprawled out on the sofas

[Cont'd. on page 6]

. . .But

'We thank God for Israel'

Editorial

The "equivalent" Canadian experience today would entail bringing approximately 100,000 men, women and children, non-stop over Friday and Saturday, to the country's largest airport from a land centuries behind Canada's standard of living.

Canadians can only imagine the feeling. We have never lived through such an epochal moment. We have never received that jaw-dropping news bulletin interrupting "regular programming."

Nor have we ever been summoned by conscience or duty or heart in the manner that summoned the people of Israel on May 24 and 25, 18 years ago.

Through the methodical course of 36 heart-stopping hours, the Jewish state rescued some 14,500 Jews from their precarious homes in Ethiopia.

The following small sampling of brief excerpts from the news reports in The CJN of May 30, 1991, tries to convey how and what the tiny country felt on the day the rescue mission was announced.

* * *

"This is the reason why Israel exists," said one El Al ground-crew worker, as he helped an enfeebled old woman onto one of the hundreds of buses that transported new arrivals to 46 absorption centres and hotels around the country.

* * *

"We dreamed, we fought, we waited for this day to arrive," said Rahamim Elazar, a longtime community activist. "I always believed Israel would save them and it did. We applaud this country for its great heart."

* * *

By Saturday, the exhaustion and fatigue gave way to other emotions. As word spread about Operation Solomon, Israelis began to converge on the hotel. They brought bags bursting with clothing and shoes, having heard that the Ethiopians had arrived with only what they were wearing. They distributed toys and sweets to the children.

* * *

One seasoned reporter, who couldn't help periodically bursting out in tears, said later that he had never seen such warmth and fraternity among the hundreds of sabras involved in the operation. "The singing and clapping and pure joy was the kind of thing that makes you forget about all the trials of living in this country."

* * *

Toward the end of what turned out to be a transcendental day for thousands of Israelis and new Israelis, two veteran Ethiopian immigrants, young women who were among the hundreds of volunteers lending a hand, sat on the curb of a street a few hundred yards from the air force airfield. "Thank God," said Pennina Oshuter. "We thank God," said Desta Usef. "We thank God for Israel."

◊◊◊

This tribute supplement commemorating Israel's 61st year of independence is dedicated to the anniversary of Operation Solomon, that secret rescue mission 18 years ago. It is hard to imagine any other country on earth caring enough about a "lost" kinfolk to undertake a similar rescue.

In the words of the two young women who helped bring the Jews home, "We thank God for Israel."

— The Editor

The 40 flights of Operation Solomon

On Nov. 19, 1984, the government of Israel commenced the airlift of Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. The mission was called Operation Moses. It was kept entirely secret from the public and intended to "bring home" on eagles' wings, as it were, the entire community of some 25,000 Jews in Ethiopia to Israel.

But the operation came to an abrupt end on Jan. 5, 1985, prematurely curtailed, in part, by leaks to the media.

Once the fact and the scope of the rescue became known, Arab governments brought extreme pressure upon the Sudanese government, through whose territory the Jews journeyed, to stop facilitating the Israeli airlift.

During the six weeks of the rescue some 8,000 Jews were brought to Israel. But more than 15,000 Jews – the Beta Yisrael, as they called themselves – were left behind in Ethiopia.

Some 6-1/2 years later, on May 24, 1991, in a carefully orchestrated clandestine mission of about 40 flights – code-named Operation Solomon – that lasted less 36 hours, the remaining Beta Yisrael came home to Israel.

When the last of the 40 planes had brought its precious cargo to Israel, the president and the prime minister of the Jewish state issued the following statements.

'We witnessed the loftiest mission of Zionism'

"The remainder of Ethiopian Jewry has been brought to Israel in a complex airlift rescue campaign – carried out in the dead of the night and concluded a mere few hours ago – which will be engraved in the history of contemporary Zionism. This small community, whose years of exile are as long as the suffering of the exile of the Jewish people, has been brought to secure shores: entire villages, women, the elderly and children.

"Before our eyes, we witnessed the realization of the loftiest mission of Zionism and of the sacred goal for which the Jewish state was established.

"The finest forces were harnessed for this daring operation and, to them, I extend our praise and gratitude. To the new immigrants, we extend an adoptive hand and we welcome them. May their speedy absorption heal their suffering and bring an end to their wandering."

May 25, 1991

President Chaim Herzog

'The airlift brought about 15,000 immigrants'

"The evacuation to Israel of the remainder of Ethiopian Jewry was concluded today within the framework of Operation Solomon. With this, another glorious chapter in the history of immigration to Israel has ended.

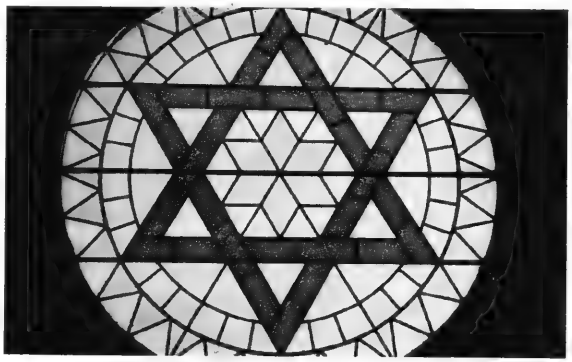
"Since yesterday morning [Friday], an airlift from Addis Ababa to Israel was set in motion. The airlift brought about 15,000 immigrants in about 40 direct flights.

"The operation was undertaken with the approval of the Ethiopian authorities and with their active assistance. Among other things, planes belonging to the Ethiopian national airline transported some of the immigrants. The [Israel Defence Forces] was charged with co-ordinating and operating the airlift. Planes belonging to El Al were also used. Israel expresses its gratitude to the government of the United States for its assistance in Operation Solomon, and it extends special thanks to U.S. President George Bush for his assistance over the past few years in the rescue of Ethiopian Jewry.

"Government and public sectors – including the IDF, the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry and the Jewish Agency – participated in Operation Solomon and contributed to its successful conclusion today at 16:30."

May 25, 1991

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir



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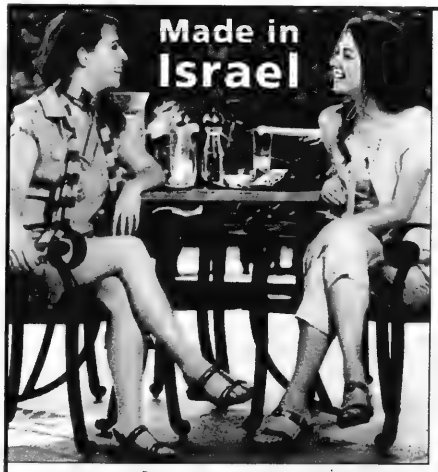

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The state of Zionism

Canadian youth discover Israel in programs such as Birthright - Taglit that Rabbi Poupko urges must be supported.

By RABBI REUBEN J. POUPKO

Recent studies surveying the attitudes of American Jews have revealed a decline in identification with Israel among the young. The starkest contrast is between those over 65 and those under 35, with only 20 per cent of the younger group being "highly attached" to Israel, a designation the surveyors attach to more than 40 per cent of the older demographic.

The reasons for this decline are rather obvious. Attachment to Israel is invariably linked to overall Jewish identification, and when general identification decreases, there is an expected drop-off in attachment to Israel. By all criteria of measurement, many Jews in the United States are incredibly disaffected and view their ethnic identity as compelling no particular obligation of lifestyle.

Much of the community's distress over the younger generation has to do with expectations that are not always reasonable. Jews who are over 50 came of age in a time of great Israeli leaders and momentous Israeli accomplishments. Jews of that generation were inspired by Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, Menachem Begin – larger-than-life figures who inspired honest admiration and awe. The Six Day War, the dramatic turnaround of the Yom Kippur war, the Entebbe rescue and the ingathering of Jews from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia were events that inspired pride in Israel and emboldened Jewish identification throughout the Diaspora.

Jewish students entering university today have grown up in an entirely different universe. They grew up in the aftermath of then-prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Their first memories of Israel are of intifadah, retreat from Lebanon and disengagement from Gaza. Every prime minister of Israel in their memory has been investigated for criminal misconduct. They have seen a president resign and a former defence minister convicted of deplorable personal behaviour. Sadly, this list of recent political scandals in Israel is far from complete.

When older Jews stop to consider what they found so inspiring about Israel, and contrast their memories and experiences with their children's and grandchildren's, they may be more forgiving of the attitudes of the younger generations.

It is perhaps useful as well to reflect on the dramatic changes in the Israeli advocacy agenda. Throughout the '70s and '80s, the agenda was simple and well-defined. The Jewish community enjoyed relative unanimity in opposing negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its leader Yasser Arafat, and were unified on insisting that Jerusalem remain undivided. There was a broad consensus on the legitimacy of Zionism and pride in the story of its founding and development.

Since Oslo, however, young Jews are left with very little to fight for. The PLO and Arafat were heralded as "partners for peace," Jerusalem has been put on the negotiating table and the Palestinian narrative has been granted undue legitimacy. The campus advocacy agenda today is hardly more than being against apartheid week – cause for which one is hard-pressed to inspire passion.

The pathology that animates the attitudes of some Jews doesn't simply end with a lack of Zionist passion and conviction; sometimes it descends into something much more insidious and has deeper roots in Jewish history than one might initially imagine.

Many insightful observers of Israel and its opponents have made the persuasive case that current anti-Zionism and classical anti-Semitism have much in common. They describe how Israel has become the new "Jew." They go on to illustrate that the dynamic that plagued individual Jews and their communities in eastern and central Europe is alive and well among the virulent detractors of Israel today. The same accusations, using nearly the same vocabulary, that were levelled at the Jews in Diaspora are directed at the State of Israel. The obsessive fascination with Israel's alleged shortcomings and the bizarre alliance between the ultra-left and radical Islam defy a reasoned response. This alliance – ubiquitous in Europe and present on North American campuses – has led too many of the left to embrace causes that represent a profound betrayal of their own putative values.

Continued on page B5

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The story of Israel still inspires our young

Continued from page B4

The painful reality, as well, is that these alliances are almost always fronted by Jews claiming to speak for "real" Jewish values. That these are the only times they do anything as "Jews" has escaped attention. (The Jewish critics of whom I speak of do not include those Zionists on the left who dissent from particular Israeli policies but never question Israel's basic legitimacy or call for boycotts and disinvestment.)

The argument that the classical anti-Semitism has morphed into today's anti-Zionism needs to be taken one step further. Given that today's anti-Semitism is directed at Israel, we can also draw a direct line from Jewish responses to classical anti-Semitism and the response of some to anti-Israel advocacy today.

Canadian youth in Jerusalem after arriving from Poland on the March of the Living.

In places like Germany and Hungary in the 19th century, there was a widespread movement of conversion to Christianity by Jews seeking to escape the stigma of being Jewish and the burdens of anti-Semitism. When being Jewish was primarily a religious designation, apostasy was religious in nature. Now that Jewish identity and Zionism are nearly one and the same, apostasy becomes a political act. Those Jews who lead anti-Israel campaigns in Europe and on North American campuses are the spiritual descendants of the apostates of the late 19th century.

After I spoke at a downtown Montreal pro-Israel rally during the recent Gaza offensive, a Jew in his 30s, part of a tiny anti-Israel counter-demonstration, yelled at me, saying, "Thank you for causing anti-Semitism."

There have always been Jews who believed that the surest way to to end anti-Semitism is to stop being Jewish, or in today's categories, stop being a Zionist. On that score, history speaks for itself.

All of the negative, however, is far outweighed by the positive. The State of Israel still represents the greatest story of self-liberation in history. Understood correctly, it is the story of an aboriginal people defying the normal course of history and throwing off the yoke of exile and imperialism to return home. It is a story of a small country in a hostile region defending itself against adversaries, while at the same time, maintaining a vibrant democracy, a vigorous free press, an activist supreme court and assiduous attention to human rights.

The record of Israel and the conduct of its army are morally superior to those of any other country and army in analogous circumstances. The continuing success of Israel, devoid of substantial natural resources, in high-tech and medical research defies comparison. The story of the Jewish People is the most dramatic reversal of fortune on record. This story still inspires our young six decades after Israel's founding.

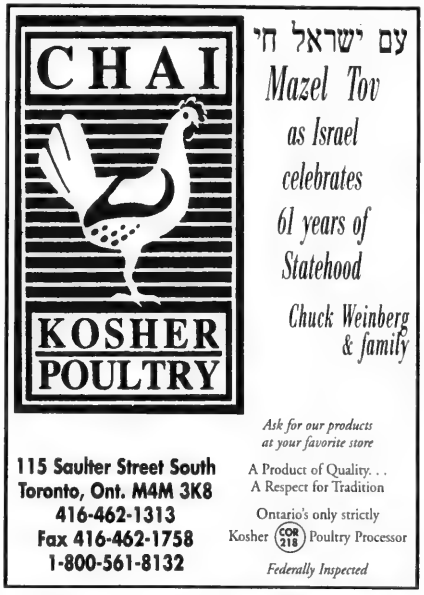
What the earlier-cited studies also make clear is that travel to Israel and Zionist education have a dramatic impact on the attitudes of young Jews. When they are allowed to see Israel with their own eyes rather than having it filtered through the media, they demonstrate the same level of commitment to Zionism as previous generations.

Our young are better than previous generations in that without witnessing glorious events or heroic leaders, they are still as committed to Israel as their parents and grandparents, when they have a chance to see Israel for themselves.

Jewish communities, regardless of economic circumstances, need – for their own survival – to redouble support for Birthright, March of the Living and any and all programs that take students, young couples and future leadership to Israel. It is demonstrably possible to keep the passion for Israel alive if we permit our young people to see and breathe Jewish history in its places of origin and its natural environment.

I am a Zionist. The best thing about me is that I am a Zionist. Most Jews who are Zionists believe that too about themselves and will continue to believe it.

Rabbi Reuben J. Poupko is the spiritual leader of Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation in Montreal.



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Is Obama betting on wrong horse in Abbas?

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

As the United States presses for progress in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, U.S. President Barack Obama is redoubling Washington's efforts to strengthen Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Analysis

The thinking is that with strong U.S. backing, Abbas will be able to carry the Palestinian street and deliver a workable peace deal with Israel.

But some analysts question whether Abbas has the clout to cut a deal that will be accepted by most Palestinians. They reckon Obama is betting on the wrong horse.

In his meetings last month with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Obama made one overriding demand: that Israel evacuate illegal West Bank outposts and freeze all construction in existing Jewish settlements. The move is calculated to enhance America's standing in the Arab world, bolster Abbas' flagging support on the Palestinian street and prevent the growth of what Washington considers obstacles to peace: Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Abbas left Washington gratified and emboldened, saying he would not accept any modifications to the 2002 Arab peace initiative, which proposed trading peace for Israel's return to its pre-1967 borders and a deal on Palestinian refugees. Earlier, Abbas said he would not meet with Netanyahu until the Israeli leader accepted the two-state solution and agreed to freeze all settlement construction, per Obama's demand.

The new American approach has left the Israeli side deeply concerned.

Israeli officials argue that the fate of settlements should be decided in a final peace deal and that, in the interim, normal life in those communities should be allowed to continue – including construction to accommodate natural growth.

In the Israeli view, many of the settlements will remain under Israeli control in any peace deal.

The Bush administration had supported that position. Last month in London, an Israeli delegation led by cabinet minister Dan Meridor reminded U.S. special Middle East envoy George Mitchell of the 2004 letter from President George W. Bush that promised to help Israel retain large settlement blocs.

The Israelis asked: what's the point of freezing construction in communities that by all accounts would remain on the Israeli side of any future border?

They said they were surprised to discover that the new administration apparently doesn't intend to honour the Bush commitment.

Some pundits believe Obama may be withholding that commitment as leverage to press Netanyahu into accepting the two-state model for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Obama also hopes to encourage the Jewish state to make concessions for peace by bolstering Israel's sense of security.

For more than two years, U.S. Gen. Keith Dayton has been training Palestinian Authority forces in the West Bank to keep the peace and fight terrorism. The idea is to provide stability to the West Bank and create a situation in which Israel can feel confident about withdrawing its forces from the area.

Obama has also promised to invest $400 million in developing an improved Arrow anti-missile system and, according to Netanyahu aides, told the prime minister in May that he won't press Israel on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Israelis on the left and the right are critical of the Obama approach.

They say the focus on settlements could divert attention from actual peacemaking, and as Israel and the United States tangle over bricks and mortar, the peace process will suffer. They also argue that Obama is making a huge blunder in trying to construct an ambitious new Middle Eastern peace edifice with a Palestinian partner who cannot deliver, due to Abbas' political weakness.

Part of the problem is that the Palestinians have never been as disunited as they are today.

It's not only a question of Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank (six people were killed in a gunfight between Fatah forces and Hamas earlier this month in the West Bank city of Kalkilya). Fatah itself is deeply divided, both between veterans and the young guard, and on key issues.

For example, Abbas heads a group that advocates advancing Palestinian goals by political means only; a second group holds that there should also be non-violent civil struggle; while a third group says the possibility of resorting to armed struggle or terrorism should be held in reserve.

And whereas Abbas is for the immediate establishment of a Palestinian state, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and a small group of leading businessmen argue that first there should be a long period of institution-building to ensure that the state isn't established on a foundation of corruption.

The upshot of all these divisions, says Menachem Klein, an expert on Palestinian affairs at Bar-Ilan University, is that Abbas and the Fayyad government have little support in Fatah or on the Palestinian street. Only a Fatah-Hamas national unity government with wide popular support can provide a Palestinian partner that can deliver, Klein says.

For the past several weeks, Fatah and Hamas have been negotiating on a national unity government in Cairo, with little success.

Egypt has said it will give the parties until July 7 to come to an agreement. If they fail, it would mean more trouble for Palestinian unity – and for hopes for progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front.

File photo of presidential candidate Barack Obama meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. [Isranet photo]

Bar-Ilan president heads new 'brain gain' effort

By RAPHAEL AHREN
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

RAMAT GAN — Israel should take advantage of the economic crisis and its adverse impact on universities abroad to turn the recent brain drain into a "brain gain," Bar-Ilan University President Prof. Moshe Kaveh said recently.

Now would be an opportune time for the government and the universities to expand efforts to recruit immigrant scientists and returning Israeli academics, Kaveh said.

Moshe Kaveh

"In the last seven years or so, we lost about 700 to 800 academic staff at different levels – basically an entire university," Kaveh told Ha'aretz. "The danger is, once they are abroad, they don't come back."

Each year, thousands of university-educated Israelis are lured to pursue their careers overseas by greater professional opportunities and higher salaries, especially in the United States. Bar-Ilan estimates that there are more Israeli scientists in universities abroad than in all seven Israeli universities combined.

To combat that trend, Kaveh is spearheading a nationwide effort to bring 500 researchers back to Israelis universities by 2014.

He said that since 2006, local institutions of higher learning have absorbed a few dozen academics. He believes the current crisis presents "a unique opportunity" to expand the campaign initiated by the President's Circle, comprising the heads of the seven local universities.

"After every major crisis, Israel saw a surge in researchers," the renowned physicist said. "After the Six Day War [in the late 1960s], many scientists came to Israel. The same happened after Perestroika in Russia [in the late 1980s]. Now, the financial crisis presents us with a third great opportunity. The universities outside Israel suffer and cannot absorb new researchers – especially those who came from outside the U.S., like Israelis – which makes it the perfect time for us to call them home."

Kaveh said he and the presidents of the other universities are trying to convince senior cabinet members to increase the state budget in favour of the universities. "True, the crisis has also hit Israel in some respects, but the enrichment that comes with the absorption of new researchers will yield a return of that investment five to 10 times more," Kaveh said. "If we miss this opportunity, it won't come back for a long time."

During the past three years, Kaveh said he spent a lot of time recruiting potential returnees at Ivy League schools.

"What I noticed there is that many [academics] are Zionist," he stressed. "They would like to come back, but they want to be able to do research. If we give them a chance to do that, they'd be very happy to come back."

One recruit who returned despite taking a pay cut is Sol Efroni, 38, who recently joined Bar-Ilan's Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences after having spent five years at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland.

"I want them to have the same kind of experience that I had, and I want them to be surrounded by their family," Efroni, a computational biologist, said of his three children, all of whom are U.S. citizens.

"It would have been easy to stay in the States," he said. "It's easier to find a job and the pay is much higher. But then I noticed that the kids gave up on their Hebrew – they are talking English among themselves. They were definitely out of tune with Israeli society. They were becoming Americans. That's when I decided to go back."

Orit Shefi, 40, was hired by Bar-Ilan's school of engineering after more than three years at the University of California, San Diego. She, too, is earning much less. "But I feel my roots are here," she told Ha'aretz.

"Our connections to Israel were stronger than my career ambitions. In the States, you just feel like it's the centre of the scientific world."

Yet Shefi, her husband and their three sons together decided they wanted to live in Israel. "If my salary were my main motivation in life, I wouldn't have gone into research," she said. "I decided long ago that my life wouldn't just be about making money."

Mazel Tov

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Toronto dentist Arthur Dunec, left, with a dental assistant, sees a patient at the Dental Volunteers for Israel clinic in Jerusalem.

Torontonian volunteers at free Jerusalem dental clinic

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Toronto dentist Arthur Dunec recently returned from Israel, where he volunteered at Dental Volunteers for Israel (DVI) for the sixth time.

"It feels great to be able to help the poor children of Jerusalem, and there are so many of them in need," Dunec said.

Holocaust survivor Trudi Birger founded DVI in 1980, when she recognized the need for dental care and dental education among disadvantaged children living in Jerusalem.

The dental clinic is open to children and teenagers aged five to 18, regardless of their race or religion.

The clinic program recently expanded and now includes six dental workstations, an X-ray unit and a preventative unit, where children receive oral hygiene education.

Dunec, who volunteered at DVI for the first time in 1990, said that the dental program operates with the support of visiting dentists from around the world who volunteer for one or more weeks. Over the past 29 years, more than 4,500 dentists have volunteered at DVI.

Dunec said that since its inception, the free clinic has treated more than 400,000 children.

"I am constantly learning new techniques from other volunteer dentists and from the clinic director," he said.

"This is appropriate, as dentists are perpetual students – always striving to learn new methods and improve."

He said that, over the years, he has seen a significant improvement in the dental health of the clinic's patients. "The free clinic's preventative programs have made a positive impact," he said.

His schedule at the clinic also allows him plenty of opportunity to sightsee and explore Jerusalem and other areas in Israel.

"As a Jew, I feel that everywhere I go in Israel, I am among family and I belong," he said.

He urged other dentists to volunteer at DVI. "You will be glad that you came," Dunec said.

Stan Jacobson, chair of Canadian Friends of DVI, told The CJN that DVI sponsors an annual classical musical soirée in the fall to "raise money for this worthwhile charity."

For more information or to volunteer, visit www.dental-dvi.org.il.

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Camp Kadimah to host Sderot teens

By JOEL JACOBSON
Atlantic Correspondent

Ten youngsters from Sderot will spend six weeks at Camp Kadimah in Nova Scotia this summer.

The children, who are ages 13 to 16 and from an area in Israel under constant missile attacks from Gaza, will experience "a closeness to nature and the outdoors, a means to be closer with themselves and their feelings, without the barriers and conceptions they deal with at home," said Hedai Offaim, director for Israel programs with Canada Israel Experience (CIE) of UIA Federations Canada (UIAFC).

"Another benefit is the opportunity to interact with Kadimah campers and staff. From past experience, we see by the end of camp that the strength of the bonds will be incredible," he added.

Offaim said most of the children have not had the opportunity to travel before. "Camp Kadimah leadership is making an extra effort to allow this incredible gift that will benefit the children from this experience."

In the each of the last 10 years, Kadimah has hosted four children from the north of Israel. Two summers ago, two children from Sderot were at the camp near Barss Corner, about 100 kilometres south of Halifax.

"This year, we decided to make a larger commitment to the southern area," said Michael Pink of Halifax, co-chair of the Camp Kadimah committee, with Victor Goldberg and Jim Spatz, also of Halifax. "This is what Kadimah is all about – forging relationships between children from Atlantic Canada, many from Ontario, plus those from Israel."

He said this venture piggybacks on Atlantic Canada's longtime partnership with the north of Israel, from which have come campers in their mid-teens, several of whom have returned as staff members.

"In addition, our post-counsellor-in-training-age teens spend a summer in Israel and reconnect with those who've been at Kadimah," Pink said.

He said the funding for the Sderot children comes mostly from the Atlantic Jewish community. "While the UIAFC Israeli branch and the Jewish Agency are co-ordinating the camper recruitment, we're absorbing the cost of the summer tuition [about $4,500 per child] and are canvassing our alumni and the community to support tuition and also airfare [between $20,000 and $30,000]. We've raised about half the airfare."

'We see by the end of camp that the strength of the bonds will be incredible'

Offaim said other Canadian camps sponsor Israeli youngsters. "However, Kadimah's effort is unique because, [Atlantic Jewish Council] executive director Jon Goldberg is personally involved with the selection process in Israel and the smooth absorption in camp. His involvement is extremely meaningful for the parents and the local communities surrounding Gaza, in knowing that their children are taken care of by him personally. That adds to the credibility of the program and lessens the worries to the parents."

He said Kadimah has included another unique element to the program.

"An adult Israeli chaperone/educator will be in charge of the kids during the entire stay. This creates the most supporting and secure environment for the kids and helps them cope with a new, and strange, experience."

CIE, the informal educational arm of UIAFC, is responsible for the entire process and creates both an educational and logistical environment. CIE staff and educators meet with the participant and parents, lead an educational process prior to camp as well as after their return to their homes, and take care of all the logistical and security arrangements.

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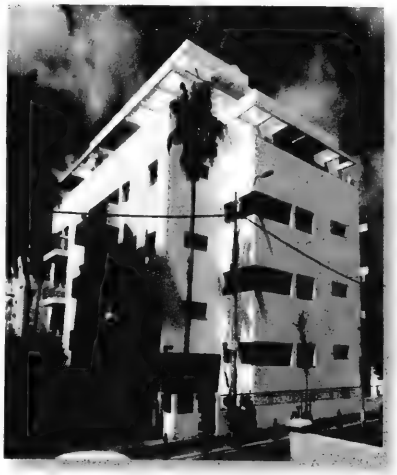
Tel Aviv celebrates 100 years



Tel Aviv has been designated as the White City by UNESCO for its unique Bauhaus architecture from the 1930s.

[Israel Sun and Israel photos]

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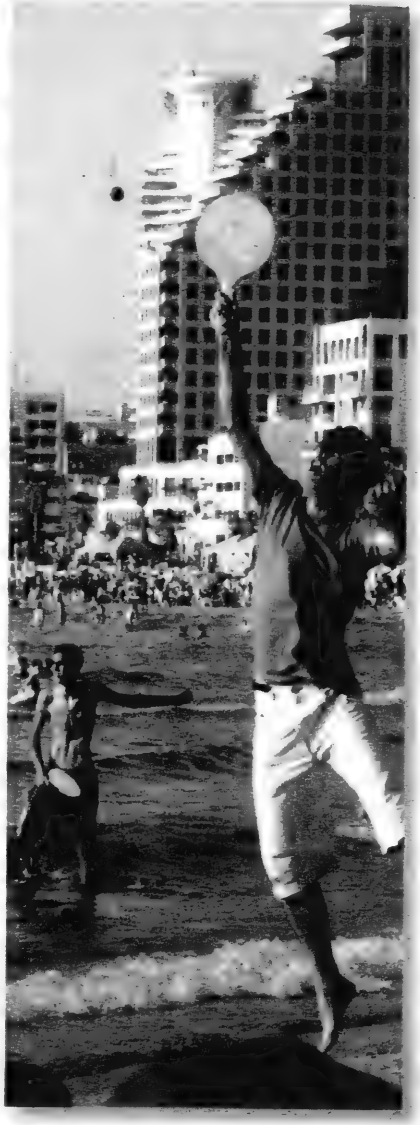
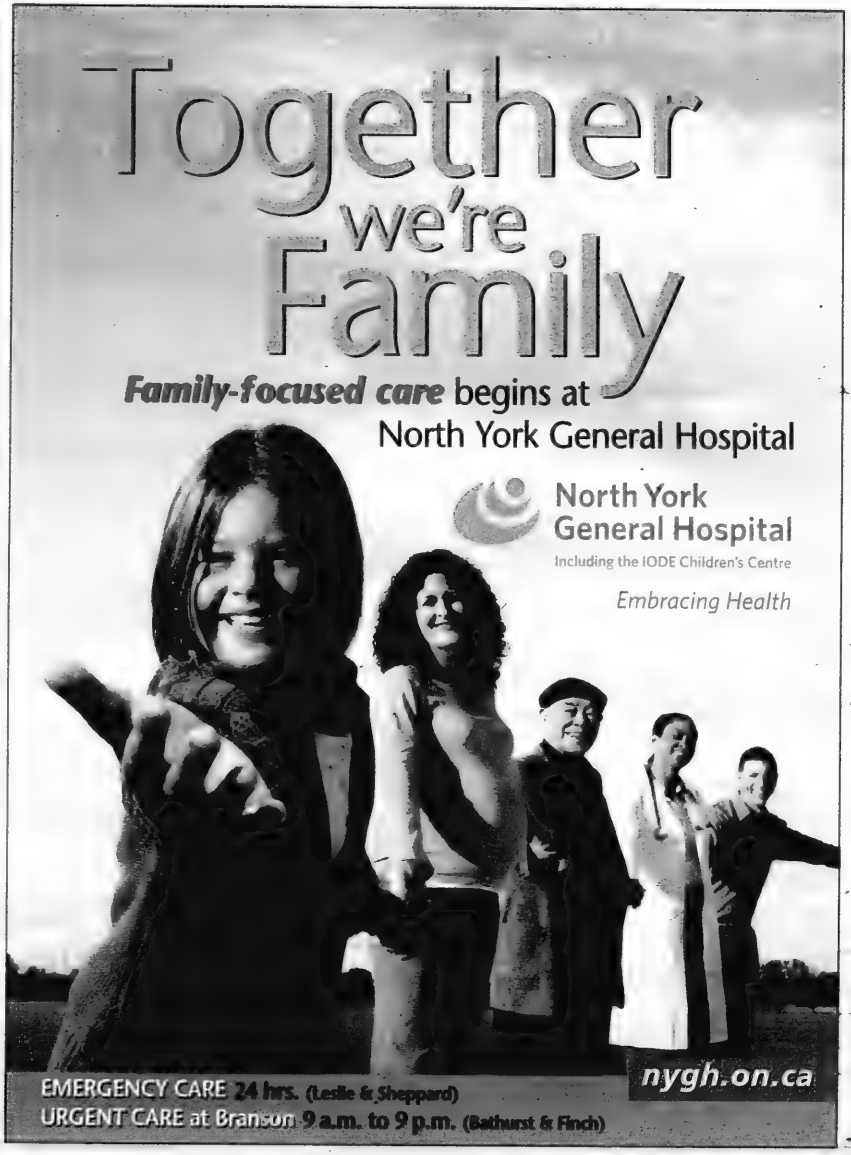
Israel: 61 Years of Independence

The recent anniversary party at City Hall.

The famous scene of the allocation of property lots by Meir Dizengoff in 1909 on the sand dunes north of Jaffa.



The beach in summer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Tal-Ya Water makes the most of dew

By KARIN KLOOSTERMAN
Israel21c

JERUSALEM — The ancient Israelites used stones to collect dew from the air, and now the modern ones are taking the idea further.

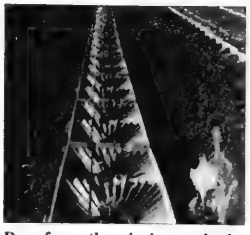
Avraham Tamir, the founder of a new Israeli company, Tal-Ya Water Technologies, has developed a technique that uses dew to water crops, a method that can be used where water resources are scarce.

Tal-Ya grows plants, at the cost of $1 each, in reusable trays that are placed on the ground. Made of recycled and recyclable plastic with UV filters and a limestone additive, the trays do not degrade in the sun or after the application of pesticides or fertilizers.

An aluminum additive helps the small trays – which are about 70 by 70 centimetres in the case of a pepper plant – respond to shifts in night and day temperature. When a change of 12 C occurs, dew forms on both surfaces of the Tal Ya tray, which funnels the dew and condensation, through a hole in the centre, straight to the plant and its roots.

The trays are also made in larger sizes for trees, Tamir told ISRAEL21c.

"Using our system has a number of benefits," Tamir said. Farmers don't need to worry about weeds because the trays block the sun, so weeds can't take root.



Dew from the air is caught by Tal-Ya Water Technologies' plastic trays and funnelled straight to the plant.

"Farmers need to use much less water, and in turn much less fertilizer on the crop," he added. Fewer fertilizers and pesticides means that less groundwater contamination takes place.

According to tests done by the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, up to 50 per cent of irrigated water can be saved by using the Tal-Ya system.

"Dew collection starts at night," Tamir said. "The critical mass goes down below," he added, pointing to the serrated edges of the trays.

"If it rains, we can amplify one millimetre of rain so that it equals 27 millimetres."

Water from dew and condensation is, in effect, distilled water. Adding it to the soil alleviates the salinity caused by irrigation.

> ***'Farmers will need much less water'***

The trays also protect crops from extreme shifts in temperature, which occur in such countries as Canada or the United States, where late and early season frosts put some crops at risk.

"The amount of water collected depends on location," Tamir said. Humidity factors, temperatures and precipitation are important to consider.

Research to help build Tal-Ya, which means "God's dew" in Hebrew, was done by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Volcani Institute and Ben-Gurion University.

Tal-Ya launched its new watering system at the Agritech exhibition in Tel Aviv in May. Tamir said he is now selling the method to Israeli farmers, and he hopes to get international customers from the United States.

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Torah teacher who 'reintroduced the old'

By SHOSHANA KORDOVA
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

We've all been told not to judge a book by its cover, but as it happens, the cover of Nehama Leibowitz: Teacher and Bible Scholar is quite instructive, especially when compared with another recent book on the same subject.

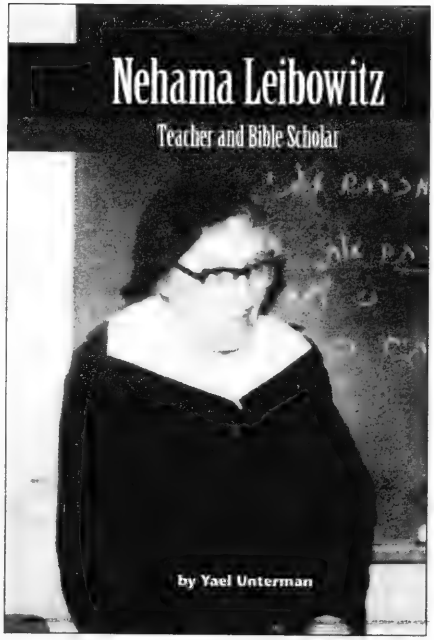
On the front of Yael Unterman's English-language book (Urim Publications) is a fuzzy photograph of an elderly Leibowitz standing in front of a blackboard, her face dominated by the thick black rim of her glasses and her hair modestly concealed beneath her signature beret.

By contrast, the cover of a recently published Hebrew-language biography features a crisp image of Leibowitz as a young, smiling woman, her heavenward gaze unmediated by spectacles as a breeze ruffles her unrestrained hair.

And indeed, Hayuta Deutsch's Hebrew book Nehama: The Life of Nehama Leibowitz (Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books, 2008) allows the reader to see just how the old woman, the one remembered, respected and loved by the many former students quoted in Unterman's book, went from being the young Nehama facing the wind to the venerated, yet eminently accessible Torah scholar and role model she became.

Though Deutsch's book more or less glosses over Leibowitz's role in Diaspora Judaism, it is much more of a classical biography than Unterman's: it progresses in chronological order and puts Leibowitz's accomplishments squarely in the context of her family (including her outspoken and controversial philosopher-scientist brother, Yeshayahu Leibowitz) and of the events and prevailing trends in her native Europe and adopted homeland of Israel, lending an added depth to the reader's understanding of where Leibowitz was coming from.

The first section devotes a single cursory chapter to Leibowitz's youth, from her birth in Riga, Latvia, in 1905, all the way through to her early years in Mandatory Palestine, where she moved in 1930 with her husband, her father's younger brother, Yedidyah Lipman Leibowitz. (Though there has been much speculation about the reasons behind Nehama Leibowitz's marriage to an uncle three decades her senior with whom she never had any children – including the possibility that she was motivated by an altruistic decision to take care of him without violating the religious strictures that would otherwise have prohibited her from touching him – Unterman concludes that the two married for love.)



Unterman's book, however, is in part a kind of oral history based on the memories of English speakers who knew Leibowitz. In that sense, it resembles a 2003 English-language book called Tales of Nehama: Impressions of the Life and Teachings of Nehama Leibowitz, by Leah Abramowitz (Gefen), which Unterman cites. Though the new volume is the more sophisticated and analytical of the two, both authors make it clear that their books reflect, as Unterman puts it in her introduction, "more than how Nehama actually was, how she is remembered – a composite remembering based on each person's own Nehama." (Unterman explains in a reader's note that her use of Leibowitz's first name "is not meant disrespectfully, but is in keeping with her own insistence that she be called 'Nehama' by all.")

Continued on page B14

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'What's bothering Rashi?'

Continued from page B13

Unfortunately, some of the people she cites are identified (at least initially) only by name, leaving it to the reader to guess whether the people being quoted were students of Leibowitz's and whether they are reliable sources. They are sometimes identified more fully later on, and there are references to quotes, biblical passages and ideas that are distractingly repeated throughout the book, giving rise to the suspicion that after almost a decade of grappling with the subject matter, Unterman had difficulty figuring out exactly how to structure all the material.

The reader gets the impression that various sections of the book were moved around throughout the writing and editing process, without the final product getting the vetting necessary to make for a smoother read.

Even though identification of the interviewees is often scant to non-existent, those who travel in English-speaking modern Orthodox circles will probably recognize at least some of the names in any case (two former teachers of mine were quoted at length and, in the interest of full disclosure, let me say here that my husband's name appeared in the rather extensive list of acknowledgments).

The more biographical section of Unterman's book, which is the third volume in Urim Publication's Modern Jewish Lives series, also discusses some of Leibowitz's major achievements, like her *gilyonot*, the worksheets in which she posed questions of varying difficulty on the weekly Torah portion and which she mailed out to respondents all over Israel and abroad.

This was significant in that it provided a forum for Torah study, not only for the learned, but also for those who were unwilling or unable to attend traditional Torah classes, including soldiers deployed to Israel's borders, avowedly secular kibbutz members and working-class people like the cabdrivers who played a prominent role in the many stories Leibowitz liked to tell as a way of bringing her lessons to life with dramatic flair.

"In her day, Nehama functioned as a bridge between two worlds, connecting religious and secular Israeli populations to one another's values – to Zionism and to tradition, respectively," Unterman writes. "She introduced secular Israelis to traditional commentaries, demonstrating to the university-educated that the Tanach [the Hebrew acronym for Torah, Prophets and Writings] could be an accessible and enlightened text, while those from very traditional homes, such as the members of the old Yishuv [Jews living in Palestine before the Zionist settlement] and the simple Zionist labourers, had their eyes opened to the riches of the Tanach and to analysis of the commentaries, as well as to modern ideas and scholars."

The extensive time and effort Leibowitz spent marking the answers to thousands of worksheets mailed to her over several decades, asking only for postage so that she could send back her responses, was a sign of her dedication to her students, many of whom she had never met, and to her steadfast encouragement of Torah study.

She began producing the *gilyonot* in the summer of 1942, when young immigrant women she had taught over the year asked her for more work. Though she stopped creating new ones in 1971, she continued to send and receive existing worksheets, and had marked more than 40,000 of them by 1986.

The *gilyonot* also showcase a major element of Leibowitz's educational philosophy, in that they asked questions that challenged people to think for themselves. A teacher of teachers, Leibowitz – a professor in Tel Aviv University's education department and the recipient of the Israel Prize in Education in 1956, though she modestly downplayed her scholarship and disdained honours – was unabashedly critical of teachers who bored their students by asking them to regurgitate factual information.

She was renowned for popularizing the question "What's bothering Rashi?" and compelling students to look behind the words of the medieval biblical commentator and critically examine both the exegesis and the passage being interpreted, in order to uncover the textual difficulty that prompted Rashi's remarks.

Unterman quotes Israel Rozenson, the rector of Efrata Teachers College in Jerusalem, as saying of Leibowitz: "She played a vital role in the battle to prevent the decline of traditional commentary into an assortment of random explanations often left to the mercies of various sermonizers; and in turning it into a 'science' with stringent methodological requirements."

"From this we learn," Unterman writes, "that not all revolutions introduce the new – Nehama's revolution reintroduced the old, though in a new way."

Indeed, Leibowitz played an important part in "restoring the Tanach to its rightful place in the centre of Jewish study," at a time when it was relegated to a few pages of Talmud in the yeshiva world, to archeological and historical aspects in the secular world, and to the secular curriculum even in religious public schools in Israel.

"The widespread interest she generated in Tanach and commentaries and her new approach to them was tantamount to a movement," Unterman writes, noting that this particularly benefited women, who were barred from the world of Talmud when Leibowitz began teaching.

"She receives much credit for the fact that today, Tanach and commentaries are widely studied in schools and private homes."

This "movement" affected Jewish studies both in Israel and abroad. Though Leibowitz was adamant that Torah classes be taught in Hebrew, and she regularly turned down speaking invitations abroad because she didn't want to leave Israel, she did teach many native English speakers who are themselves teachers, thus extending her influence to the next generation.

And though Leibowitz was initially resistant to writing her Studies series of insights into the weekly Torah portion and to having her writing translated from the Hebrew, the English translation of the series has resulted in a widespread familiarity abroad with Leibowitz's name and work, to the point that whereas her brother, as Unterman points out, is the more well-known Leibowitz in Israel, hers is the better-known name abroad.

Continued on page B15

'Legendary for her warmth, humour, humility'

Continued from page B14

It can be argued that Leibowitz has also done an enormous amount to show women that they too can be recognized as Torah scholars in the Orthodox world. She was in favour of women studying Talmud, which has since become de rigueur in some Orthodox institutions, and refused to be treated any better than other women, announcing upon arrival at a yeshiva where she was about to give a class that "if all the women are over there behind the curtain then I must join them!" – at which point, the women moved into the men's section so the lesson could begin.

In addition, Leibowitz never took an interest in cooking or cleaning, leaving it to her housekeepers, with whom she developed close relationships.

But at the same time, she rejected the idea of women taking on commandments or practices that are customarily seen as the man's province. She refused to speak from the synagogue dais, was strongly critical of women's prayer groups and could not understand why women would want to wear tzitzit or lay tfillin.

Unterman writes that "in Nehama's own eyes, she was not a feminist of any stripe, and she adamantly refused to be classified as one. She saw herself as a teacher, and any other title or agenda was extraneous."

Leibowitz also explicitly said she would have given up a life devoted to scholarship in order to have a child, and responded to a disparaging comment regarding women who choose children over career by saying: "Do you think I'd be writing these *gilyonot* if I had children?"

Whether or not Leibowitz can or should be seen as a feminist role model, she was certainly seen as both a pedagogical and a personal one, legendary for her warmth, humour, humility and a material simplicity that shocked many of the American students seeing the cramped apartment of her later years for the first time. ("She slept on a shelf!" Unterman quotes one astonished student as saying.)

The question of whether Leibowitz – who died in 1997 at the age of 92 – can or should be seen as a Bible scholar in the academic sense, given university Bible departments' emphasis on the biblical criticism she opposed, is rather less interesting, but the author devotes three chapters to the subject.

Leibowitz did address the seeming repetitions and contradictions in the Bible (as did the commentators she analyzed), but she did so by reading the text closely to draw psychological and ethical insights from the differences and similarities of different passages relating to the same subject.

While Leibowitz – whom Unterman describes as a literary Bible scholar rather than a critical one – operated from the traditional Jewish assumption that the Torah's source is divine, some Bible critics use such textual difficulties to bolster their theory that the Bible was authored by different people at different times.

The length of the author's discussion of this issue is presumably related to the fact that, as she notes, much of the material comes from her thesis for the Israel branch of Touro College, where Unterman earned a master's degree in Jewish history; she also has a master's in creative writing and a bachelor's degree in psychology and Talmud, all from Bar-Ilan University.

Overall, Unterman's familiarity with her material, extensive interviews and clear writing come through in her book, though those qualities do not preclude the need for a more tightly edited volume. Those who can read Hebrew and are interested in a comprehensive and telling biography of Leibowitz's life are advised to pick up Deutsch's book. But Nehama Leibowitz: Teacher and Bible Scholar is a worthy read for English speakers looking for a critical and in-depth analysis of Leibowitz's beliefs and writings, as well as insight into the way her students viewed their revered teacher.

Shoshana Kordova is on the editorial staff of Ha'aretz English edition. Her blog, The 90th Minute, can be found at www.shoshanakordova.com.

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A vision of a scientific superpower

By EHUD GAZIT
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It's still hard to write about Prof. Ephraim Katzir in the past tense. Very few people kept their wits and deep desire for science at such an advanced age and in such difficult physical condition. I vividly recall our talks in his last few months, in which he evinced amazing expertise about cutting-edge scientific developments in nanotechnology and brain science, and astounded me with his clear and precise insights.

It is said of the sages that "as they age, their wisdom grows," and Katzir was truly a scholar who grew in wisdom.

But that's just one aspect of his complex personality. He was a scientific genius who laboured for the defence of the State of Israel far from the ivory tower; a man who lost his beloved brother, Aharon, in a terror attack, yet remained committed to peace; a man who outgrew his socialist adolescence and founded Israel's defence and biotechnology industries; an outstanding researcher who was at home in the world's most prestigious scientific institutions, as well as in the ORT Braude Academic College of Engineering in Carmiel; and finally, a true academic who answered the prime minister's call and became a president and statesman.

One of Katzir's most special and impressive traits was his ability to blend vision and action. He viewed the Zionist enterprise and the establishment of the State of Israel as the central mission of scientists and researchers. Even though scientific research was his main pursuit and a cornerstone of his identity, he understood the importance of integrating science into the country's institutions and government.

As a military man he served as commander of the scientific corps. He invented the post of chief scientist in government ministries, served as the Defence Ministry's chief scientist and was involved in establishing the National Council for Research and Development.

Ephraim and Aharon Katzir also understood the importance of maintaining an intimate and ongoing relationship not only with the state's institutions and government ministries, but also with the political echelon. They were in direct and close contact with politicians and didn't hesitate to engage in party activism.

President Ephraim Katzir listens intently to prime minister Menachem Begin. [IGPO photo]

Aharon Katzir was instrumental in drawing up the platform for David Ben-Gurion's new Rafi during the 1965 Knesset elections, in which the party called for the "scientification" of the State of Israel, due to its lack of natural resources but wealth of human capital. Despite the contributions of such great minds, Rafi won only 10 Knesset seats and found itself in opposition, and well before its time, scientification was reduced to a pragmatic ideology best known in history books.

What aspects of Katzir's legacy can we implement today? The most important thing is to understand that the scientist's role is serving the public. As important and fascinating as it may be, science is only part of an academic's job. Our role as scientists is to be at the forefront of Israeli achievement in every realm: education, research, industry, policy and security.

We must pass the scientific knowledge we are developing on to society and industry. A society where academics are active partners in running the country is a better society, and can bring prosperity for the State of Israel.

Prof. Ehud Gazit is vice-president of research and development at Tel Aviv University and chairman of its nanobiology department.

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New group hopes to make peace through business

By DANIEL BEN-TAL
Israel21c

JERUSALEM — Most Israelis raise an eyebrow when they learn how much Israel already trades with the Palestinian Authority: of some 15 billion shekels (about $4 billion US) worth of sales in 2008, about 13 billion shekels was with the West Bank and an estimated 2 billion shekels was with the Gaza Strip. Sales in the opposite direction account for less than 20 per cent of bilateral trade.

"Israeli companies sell millions of dollars of merchandise to the Palestinians," says Ofir Gendelman, CEO of the new Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce (IPCC).

"Most of the products sold in Palestinian markets are Israeli. West Bank supermarkets stock mainly goods made by Israeli companies, such as Osem, Strauss and Elite. Some Israeli companies rely on the Palestinian market. For the Palestinians, most trade at the end of the day is with Israel. The two economies are already interdependent," he says.

"Our job is to facilitate trade between Israel and the Palestinian Authority – to help Israeli businesspeople find Palestinian partners," he adds.

The idea of setting up an Israeli-Palestinian chamber of commerce was first discussed eight years ago, but as Gendelman, who is fluent in Arabic and English, says: "There was always a political reason not to do so."

The chamber was finally established on paper last October, registered as a private non-profit organization with the backing of 30 prominent Israeli businesspeople.

An incubation process followed, led by the Peres Center for Peace and later developed through cooperation with the Federation of Israeli Bi-National Chambers of Commerce and support from the Portland Trust. Founders include former MK Dalia Rabin, daughter of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and former Israel Defence Forces chief of staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

In February, the Peres Center organized a successful business conference on the road to the IPCC's establishment, the first in a planned series of meetings between Israeli and Palestinian professionals.

About 60 businesspeople from both sides attended the event, from the importing, exporting and shipping sectors. Participants including representatives from Ashdod Port Company, Israeli Customs and the Civil Administration allowed for information sharing on common issues of concern.

The new chamber became operational in March, and recently held its inaugural gala dinner at a Tel Aviv hotel, attended by dignitaries including President Shimon Peres; the Quartet's envoy to the Middle East, former British prime minister Tony Blair and his wife Cherie; foreign ambassadors, and Palestinian and Israeli business leaders.

The chamber's job is to function as a focal point for Israelis interested in penetrating the Palestinian market – that means focusing on the nitty gritty of doing business, while maintaining close government contact on the economic, legal and commercial facets in order to ease barriers to trade.

"We have already organized several business-to-business meetings on both bilateral and tri-national tracks. Sometimes it's easier for all sides concerned to work through a third party," Gendelman, who previously served with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 11 years as a career foreign service officer, explains.

He points out that the chamber of commerce is already working with the Canadian and Japanese embassies in Tel Aviv and will hold a trilateral business-to-business event in co-operation with the Canadian Embassy this month, and a similar event with the Japanese Embassy in July.

Trust is a crucial issue.

"Sometimes it's better to work with a chaperone," Gendelman explains. "It makes them feel more relaxed. If there is real chemistry, companies can work together. We're exploring this model, but eventually we want to work on the bilateral track alone.

"You cannot detach commerce from politics," he adds, bluntly.

At the recent inaugural event, Blair, the keynote speaker, spoke of a three-tier vision of economics, politics and security for both Israelis and Palestinians, adding that the economic dimension is critical for peace.

"Economic growth and enterprise could play their part in the realization of [peace] aspirations," he told delegates. "Business can transcend the divide."

At the event, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Regional Development Silvan Shalom addressed the importance of reaching peace with the Palestinians, noting that economics and politics should work hand-in-hand and moderate Arabs must be supported. "Today, we are making history," he said.

Gendelman envisages the IPCC operating along similar lines to that of the 45 other bi-national chambers of commerce operating in Israel, so as to enhance two-way trade and investment between Israelis and Palestinians.

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An organic utopia for people with special needs

By KARIN KLOOSTERMAN
Israel21c

People with developmental difficulties are often handed the short end of the stick in life. Facilities to accommodate their needs and help them become full members of their society are improving, but still fail to give them the options that most of us take for granted.

This is not always so in Israel.

A new model for helping people with developmental disorders based on the Israeli commune idea has emerged over the last decade from the ruins of a crumbling kibbutz. Called Kishorit, the village in northern Israel has become a utopia for about 150 people with varying degrees of developmental difficulties, who have all found a home for life.

Some have autism spectrum disorders, some have schizophrenia, but as much as they can, they are all steering their own careers and planning their own social time, family life and destiny. They don't focus on their disability, but rather on what they *can* do.

The organic goat farm at Kishorit is the largest in Israel that sells "fair trade" milk to Harduf, the largest organic food supplier in Israel.

Members run and operate a TV station and produce films; they've built the largest organic goat farm in Israel, possibly the entire Middle East; they plant, tend to and eat food from their organic garden; and they are developing lines of toys, some of which were sold to Baby Gap last year.

Whether residents choose to live with a mate, with a friend or alone, the popular community where they live, eat, learn, work and play has become so popular that the directors no longer keep a waiting list.

Kishorit accepts and employs all members of the Israeli community, and you can find Israeli Jews, Arabs and Druze working there and enjoying the pastoral setting.

Tipper Gore, the wife of former U.S. vice-president Al Gore, came to Israel last summer with her husband, and she made a point to stop in at Kishorit, just a few miles from the Lebanese border. As a clinical psychologist, Gore was impressed by what she saw.

"This is a good model for people to know about so they can make it in other countries. In the United States, we'd love to have places like this," she said.

Dita Kohl-Roman, the director of resource development at Kishorit, is a personal friend of Tipper Gore's. Kohl-Roman says she would not have "dragged" Gore all the way to Kishorit if it wasn't something exceptional to see.

"It's not about arms or high-tech," says Kohl-Roman, who left a job working in the Israeli Foreign Affairs office to promote Kishorit.

When she first saw the community, she tells Israel21c, "it brought back the colour to my Israeli cheeks, because something here is being done right. The place resonates with so many aspects of how to do things right. It's quite fantastic."

Her brother, who has Asperger's syndrome, is now a happy member of Kishorit.

Younger members attend the Ziv Kishorit Democratic High School, the only school of its kind in Israel serving Jewish and Arab adolescents with developmental difficulties.

Recycling in the home is encouraged, and a recycling plant that produces paper bags from recycled newspapers is just one of the many "green" efforts the collective is working on.

Developing a new line of toys, possibly eco-friendly, to be marketed and distributed in the United States and Canada, is also a source of income.

In addition, Kishorit runs a large organic egg farm that produces 250,000 eggs per year for an eager market, generating extra income for the village. They have a dog kennel that produces prize-winning dogs, and horse stables for providing animal therapy to the residents and day program participants. The list goes on.

Noam Dichek, 30, was one of the first to join Kishorit. He arrived at the kibbutz 12 years ago. "When I first came, there wasn't anything," he tells Israel21c. "I started the first newspaper we have, and I built the goat farm. We have about 3,000 organic goats."

Continued on page B19

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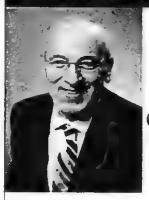

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We need to pay back

Continued from page B18

Over the years, he has helped the kibbutz select the goats they would raise, and he now looks forward to making organic wine, a boutique wine, that Dichek says the kibbutz will produce in about four years when the vines can be harvested.

"People from the community will be making the wine," he says.

Now working in communications but still living on the kibbutz, Dichek takes on creative jobs like making movies and writing articles about his community in a monthly newsletter. Being there also helped him fulfil a lifelong dream of publishing a book, something he'd been working on since he was five years old. Called My Soulmate, the Hebrew book is based on a diary that he kept over the years.

A dog kennel at Kishorit produces prize-winning dogs and also provides animal therapy to the residents and day patients.

It was Dichek's family who pushed the government to include the kibbutz in its subsidy basket, and today members' disability subsidies go to maintaining their daily lives, while additional income from the factories and farms helps them build new programs and infrastructure.

The government of Israel also recently agreed to provide funding to build new infrastructure for an Arab kibbutz, built along the same concepts, to serve the distinct language and community needs of Israel's Arab population.

While Dichek is a busy and active member of the kibbutz, not everyone there has the ability to work, he explains. "Most of the members are working in plastics or in toys, or with the goats or horses. But not everyone works. My best friend sleeps," he says.

He also makes it a point to mention that his social worker is from the Druze community and that he has Arab friends from throughout the Galilee region. This is exceptional considering that, in most cases, the Arab and Jewish communities in Israel tend to remain distinct and separate.

Some parents enjoy the Kishorit community so much that they are planning to build their own community for staff and family nearby.

Kishorit was founded in 1997 by Shuki Levinger a social worker by training, and Yael Shiloh, an artist. Shiloh had married a man with a developmentally disabled son who was a patient of Levinger's.

Remembering the warm community she'd been brought up in at Kibbutz Kfar Szold in Israel, Shiloh wanted to build a similar environment for people like her husband's son, to give them the sense of community they did not have.

"There are a few angles here," Kohl-Roman says. "Everything comes out from this foundation of special needs, but [this community] is much bigger than special needs. Through them, we go to [issues of] sustainability, ecology and coexistence with our neighbours. The people who established Kishorit did it because they wanted them to live like you and I."

Kohl-Roman believes Kishorit is a model community that everyone could dream of living in.

"People with special needs are here to give us some kind of a lesson: we need to pay back and we need to give them more than we are giving ourselves," she says.

As a home for life, including old age, which is a very comforting promise to the parents of the members, Kishorit is now building a facility to accommodate seniors.

"A very important basic here is the community," Kohl-Roman says. "Every member is doing what they can. They will choose their work and will move to different professions until they find something that fits.

"At every point in their life, they will get what they need. The community here is the sum bigger than its parts. You belong in a place you are proud of, you can find what you like to do."

Recognizing a connection between environmental health and the increased incidence of disorders such as autism in children, the founders of Kishorit believe it's important that the members are exposed to the highest quality food, esthetics and environment.

Building with, on and from the local environment, Kohl-Roman expects this special community for special people will be copied widely in the United States and around the world.

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This Week

National

Report urges York to clamp down on intolerance *Page 3*

Program can help infertile Orthodox women conceive *Page 18*

Stir Crazy

Eating well and promoting a healthy lifestyle. *Pages 21-24*

Heebonics

Social networking for a good cause. *Page 26*

Arts & Travel

Millie Perkins reminisces about playing Anne Frank. *Page 34*

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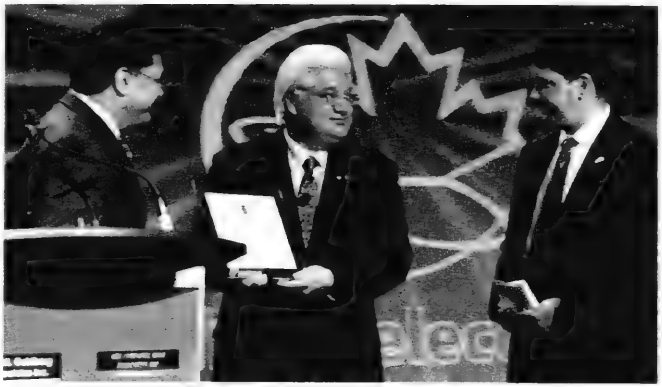

ISRAEL HONOURS RIM FOUNDER: Last week at the Canada Telecom Summit, representatives of the government of Israel presented Michael Lazaridis, centre, founder and president of Research In Motion (RIM), with a certificate recognizing the Waterloo, Ont.-based company for its role as a strategic partner for Israeli high-tech firms. In presenting the document, signed by Israel's science and technology minister, Daniel Hershkovitz, Israel's consul for economic affairs Jonathan Levy, right, said Lazaridis and RIM are "synonymous with innovation, excellence and years of vision and success." The presentation took place prior to Lazaridis' keynote address at the Toronto conference, which brought together more than 500 industry leaders. Pictured with Lazaridis and Levy is Israel's consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin. Please see story on page 14. *[Michal Tomaszewski photo]*

Italian deputies learn about Jewish refugees

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi was in Italy last week, ostensibly to mend fences and pave the way to improved diplomatic and economic relations.

While the Italian government has pledged $5 billion (US) to Libya as restitution for the colonial period, Jewish advocates were wondering why the North African country has not done the same for the Jews it mistreated.

Last week, a foreign affairs committee of the Italian Chamber of Deputies (parliament) heard testimony outlining how Arab countries – including Libya – disenfranchised and expelled their Jewish citizens following the creation of the State of Israel.

Continued on page 31

File photo of Algerian Jews starting their lives in Israel. *[JGPO]*

Israel says Iranian bomb possible in two months

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Iran's nuclear weapons program may be closer to completion than anyone realizes.

Leading a diplomatic delegation through Toronto last week for official meetings, Jonathan Miller, bureau head and senior deputy director general for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told The CJN that the world now faces "an extremely decisive moment," because within the year, Iran will likely be producing nuclear weapons-grade uranium.

Miller said that according to intelligence reports, speculation is that Iran could have enough fissile material for one nuclear bomb in as little as two months time.

A recent International Atomic Energy Agency report stated there are more than 7,000 centrifuges in Natanz, Iran. Out of those, around 5,000 are operational, which represents a leap in Iran's capability to activate its centrifuges and enrich uranium at an increased rate, Miller said.

Those centrifuges have theoretically now produced 1,339 kilograms of low-enriched uranium, just under the amount – anywhere from 1,500 to 1,700 kilograms – that experts say is needed to create enough "military-level enriched" uranium for a nuclear bomb, according to Miller's calculations.

"In the next few months, [Iran] will have enough fissile material for a 'breakout scenario'" wherein it could, if it chose to, declare itself capable of producing a nuclear weapon. "This is a very significant landmark," he said.

News reports last week cited the head of the Mossad, Meir Dagan, as speculating that Iran could "have a bomb to launch by 2014" if its program doesn't experience "any glitches," seemingly contradicting Miller's claims.

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Clinton and Lieberman express settlement differences – see page 33

The News in Brief

Canada

Senate Passes Bill

OTTAWA — A private member's bill that would add suicide bombing to the Criminal Code definition of terrorism passed the Senate unanimously last week. The bill, introduced by Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein, now moves to the House of Commons, where it appears to have the support of the Liberals and Conservatives. Supporters of the bill, including Canadians Against Suicide Bombing, are seeking all-party backing to ensure it passes quickly.

World

Jews Cancel Events

TEHRAN — The Jewish community in Tehran cancelled social and educational programs out of safety concerns during ongoing unrest. Sources close to Iran's Jewish community told JTA via e-mail that there have been no injuries or threats to Jews or Jewish property, but the measures were precautions after protests following President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent re-election.

'Kosher' Web Search

JERUSALEM — A new "kosher" Internet search engine omits material not acceptable to haredi Jews. Koogle, a play on a traditional Jewish food and the search engine Google, was launched recently in Hebrew with an English mirror site. Koogle.co.il links to news and shopping sites that filter out items prohibited by haredi rabbis, including TV sets. It doesn't operate on Shabbat.

A Mini Madoff ?

SYDNEY — A South African-born Jewish businessman accused of defrauding hundreds of investors is rejecting comparisons with U.S. pyramid schemer Bernie Madoff. Barry Tannenbaum, 43, who now lives in Sydney, Australia, says he rejects as "conjecture and speculation" the "wild allegations" that he swindled more than 300 local and foreign investors out of $1.2 billion (US) in what's being called South Africa's biggest corporate fraud. His alleged Ponzi scheme offered up to 200 per cent annual returns. He said an audit will prove his innocence.

Group Defends Pius

ROME — A New York-based foundation says it has documents showing controversial wartime Pope Pius XII worked to aid Jews during the Shoah. Pave the Way Foundation president Gary Krupp, who is Jewish, said June 16 that 2,300 pages of documents, dating from 1940 to 1945, were found through the foundation's private research and give "strong support to the argument that Pope Pius XII… worked diligently to save Jews from Nazi tyranny." Many of the documents were found in an Italian monastery.

Abella Gets Honorary Degree

The Université de Montréal gave Supreme Court justice Rosalie Abella an honorary doctorate at the university's recent PhD convocation ceremonies. Pictured with her at the event is U de M rector Luc Vinet.

Flu Hits U.S. Camps

NEW YORK — Swine flu has hit at least three Jewish camps in the United States. The Reform movement's Camp Newman-Swig in California delayed its opening several days after 14 of 160 staff members tested positive for Influenza A. The California health department told camp officials the counsellors most likely have swine flu. The sick staff are under a seven-day quarantine at the camp. At the Conservative Camp Ramah Darom in Georgia, several campers have come down with flu, and at least two tested positive for swine flu. And at Reform's Camp Coleman in Georgia, at least 15 staff became ill, delaying that camp's opening.

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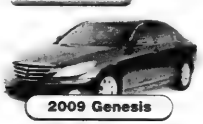
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The Canadian Jewish news

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Report urges York to clamp down on intolerance

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish volunteers and students who formed a commission last month to address an increase in anti-Jewish and anti-Israel incidents at York University say they hope the administration will consider its proposals to improve the quality of life for all students on campus.

In March, in the wake of increasing tensions on campus around Mideast issues, York formed the Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community, headed by Osgoode Hall law dean and incoming provost Patrick Monahan. Its mandate is to examine tolerance and diversity on campus.

Last month, the task force asked members of the university community to submit recommendations on such issues as whether York's policies on the use of community space are appropriate and how the university should respond to intolerant behaviour that doesn't respect diverse views.

In response, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), Hillel at York and Hasbara at York formed a 10-person commission to offer Jewish community members a chance to have their voices heard on the issue.

Panel addresses anti-Israel 'crisis' on campus

Please see page 27

The commission's report, which was submitted to York's task force on June 15, made reference to "episodes of intimidation, harassment, ridicule and virulent anti-Israel sentiment" and expressed concern that the "overriding campus focus on the Israel-Palestinian conflict threatens to undermine the educational excellence of the university."

Included in the 10-page report were suggestions such as prohibiting the use of Vari Hall rotunda – York's main indoor public space – for political purposes and instead advocated using "alternative spaces for political expression."

It suggested that York "strongly sanction those responsible for any such unauthorized use," and that York's security should be empowered to issue tickets to students who violate York's code of conduct or other university regulations.

The report also referred to "abuse of the lecture podium" to call attention to professors and teaching assistants who use class time to posit personal points of view "on issues unrelated or marginally related to the course at hand, or personal opinions based on incorrect facts.

"While it is the role of a teacher to encourage critical thinking, it is not his or her role to require explicit or implicit adherence to any particular political ideology," the report said.

Daniel Ferman

York spokesperson Alex Bilyk said that Monahan would not comment separately on submitted reports, but task force members will "review [the Jewish community's proposals] in the context of their mandate.

"As you can well appreciate, there are many things going on at year-end, and we would want to give these recommendations due consideration," Bilyk said.

UJA Federation spokesperson Howard English, who was a member of the Jewish community commission, said that while all the recommendations in the report are vital to improving the atmosphere at York, the suggestion that Vari Hall become neutral territory is one of the more important suggestions.

Continued on page 41

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The summer of Iran's discontent

From the editor's desk...

The streets of Tehran have become the foundry for the possibility of regime change for Iran.

Thousands of demonstrators – young, old, religious and non-religious, men and women – are trying to forge a new government for themselves.

The manipulation and rigging of the June 12 election were the original reason the masses took to the streets. Like an erupting volcano no longer able to control the mounting pressure of suppressed internal energy, the angry populace spewed onto the streets and some onto the rooftops like hot, flowing lava.

It is clear that the fraudulent results of the election are now but a pretext for the ongoing demonstrations. The issue has become far larger for the Iranian people than the incumbency of the president. It is now the question of changes to, if not also change *of*, theocratic rule.

The story emerging from Tehran is a rolling one. Events are still unfolding. That the protests have not abated more than a week after the election is shocking. No one predicted the massive manifestations on the street. The ruling mullahs certainly did not.

The ruling elite have demonstrated their willingness to exact the blood of their countrymen and women to bring the protests to an end. The police, the army, the religiously based Revolutionary Guard and the Basij (secret police) are wielding batons, teargas, power hoses and guns. As of this writing, at least 50 people have been killed by the government, according to JTA. Whether the blood continues to flow will be decided by the courage and resolve of the protesters and the willingness of the police and the army to continue their roles in the fratricide.

We can expect the mullahs, however, to find religious and political justification for bludgeoning the people, even as they did for condoning the corrupt election results.

Of course, until the mullahs restore order in their domain, they will point accusatory fingers at others as well as create distractions to diffuse and diminish the West's focus on the protests.

Therefore, it was not surprising that after the outbreak of the opposition demonstrations, we read the following news reports in JTA:

• In his first public address after the elections, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei blamed the "Zionists' evil media" for instigating the protests.

• Iran claimed to have foiled an election day plot linked to Israel to bomb crowded sites in Tehran. Iran's intelligence ministry also linked the plot to America and other "foreign enemies" of Iran.

• The Iranian air force announced it would begin an extensive exercise this week in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman to raise "its operational and support capability. The air force officers made sure to announce that the exercise entails long-distance flights of around 3,600 kilometres along with sophisticated aerial refuelling and low altitude flying over the waters of the Gulf to a distance of 700 kilometres.

The message in the announcement of the ranges and the altitudes of the flights was intended to reach the defence establishments of Europe, the United States and Israel: we can and we are ready to strike your targets!

International media have been barred from covering the demonstrations. And yet, due to the bravery of the protesters, the news is getting out. One of the items reported soon after the commencement of the demonstrations was that the Iranian government is using Palestinian Hamas members and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters to quell the street protests in Tehran.

According to Voice of America, there are up to 5,000 Hezbollah members bashing the heads of the protesters. A high-ranking Palestinian security official in the West Bank confirmed that Palestinian Hamas members carrying Jordanian passports were also in Tehran. There were also reports out of Tehran that Venezuela has sent anti-riot troops to Iran to suppress the protesters.

Western leaders have been unequivocal in responding to the false election results and to the fighting on the street.

Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Canon said he was "deeply troubled by the current situation in Iran. The allegations of fraud in last week's presidential election are serious and need to be answered. The Iranian people deserves to have its voice heard, and we call for a fully transparent investigation into electoral discrepancies.

"The banning of opposition protests and security forces' heavy-handed treatment of demonstrators throughout the country are also matters of grave concern," Cannon added.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was the first western leader to publicly call for a recount, urging Iran also to refrain from using violence against demonstrators. "Germany is on the side of the Iranian people, who want to exercise their rights of freedom of expression and free assembly," she said in a statement last week. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has been stinging in his criticism of the Iranian government. French President Nicolas Sarkozy described the Iranian government's handling of the street protests as "brutal and totally disproportionate.

Ironically, but not totally surprisingly, U.S. President Barack Obama's responses to the situation have been more muted than those of his western colleagues. On the weekend, he called upon Iran to halt "all violent and unjust actions against its own people." He said the United States "stands with all who seek to exercise those rights [of assembly and free speech]."

All our eyes are on the streets of Tehran in this, the summer of the Iranian people's discontent. — *MBD*

See JN

ZAREINU GRADUATION

Lieut.-Gov. David Onley, on motor scooter, was on hand at Zareinu Educational Centre June 17 for Zareinu's 19th annual graduation ceremonies. He presented Zareinu's first ever awards of merit to Rick and Yvonne Goldberg for their work on behalf of Zareinu's children and to Wanda Gascho-White, the head of Zareinu's music therapy department, who is one of Canada's foremost music therapists and one of the longest serving Zareinu staff members. Pictured with Onley, from left, are student Rafi Danzinger; Onley's aide de camp, Maj. Alex Moseanu; Zareinu executive director Randy Spiegel, and board member Ezriel Reichman.

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Zareinu launches vocational program

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Zareinu Educational Centre, in conjunction with JVS, plans to launch a vocational program for high school boys with mild to moderate cognitive challenges in September.

The program is apparently the first of its kind at a Jewish school in Toronto, and likely in Canada.

"One of the things I'd like to do is make sure our high school boys, when they graduate from our program, have a set of marketable skills," the school's principal, Mitch Parker, told The CJN.

The program is for boys "because that's the population we have [for September]," he said.

Mitch Parker

As well, although the school is a community school, currently all the boys at the senior high school level are from the Orthodox community. Their curriculum next year will include half a day of yeshiva-style Jewish studies – rabbinic texts and Jewish law.

The other half of their day will have three components: vocational skill training (in areas such as job interviews, resume-writing, reading want ads), literacy training (work-related reading and math), and co-op placement in accordance with students' skills and abilities. Co-op students will have a shadow or mentor at their placements, at least initially.

The school doesn't have facilities such as metal or woodworking shops.

The Zareinu high school program, which has students ranging in age from about 14 to 22, "doesn't operate by grade," Parker said. Its senior students range from about 18 to 22 years old.

Explaining the need for the vocational program, Parker said, "This is a group of students who come from a background where study of Jewish texts is very important for them, but they don't have the skills to do it intensively.

"We wanted to make sure they would be productive members of that community."

Without a program like this, some graduates would end up being cared for by their families or in a group home, Parker said. Others would find jobs – if possible – through family connections, he added.

JVS has many years' experience supporting individuals with disabilities who are working toward employment, Reena Kronitz, JVS' chief psychologist, told The CJN.

However, "typically people come to us out of school as adults who may not have the pre-employment skills," she noted.

"By starting to equip students with a broad range of life skills and pre-employment skills, what we're trying to do is give these students a head start."

JVS is, to a large extent, developing and delivering the vocational aspect of the program, while Frontier College will be be involved in the literacy and numeracy components – reading, math and computer skills – of the program.

"I think it will be a good shidduch," said Parker, who conceived of the idea and proposed a partnership with JVS.

"It's an expensive program, but we've budgeted so that the costs [to parents] will remain the same."

Kronitz told The CJN she thinks the program is unique, exciting and "quite cutting-edge."

A vocational program that was being considered at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto a few years ago did not get off the ground because of funding issues, according to Paul Shaviv, the school's director of education.

Shaviv lauded Zareinu for its initiative and noted that vocational-type courses "can also be very valuable" for students who do not have special needs.

He added, however, that it is more difficult in the Jewish school system because of the Jewish studies curriculum that has to be covered along with general studies.

Student wins writing contest

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Sometimes it can be hard for us to hear the cries of those in need. Sometimes these people may not make any sound at all. Arielle Wasserman wants us to pay particularly close attention to those silent moments.

That's the 15-year-old's message in her essay Silence Has a Sound, the winning submission in the province-wide Holocaust Arts and Writing Contest, sponsored by the Holocaust Centre of Toronto. The theme of this year's event was silence.

"Silence is tangible, almost like an object. Think of it as a wide open chasm. It can be a dazzling white expanse of possibility, filled with pregnant pauses, and thoughts on the cusp of becoming words. This kind of silence is powerful and exhilarating. It is beautiful," the Grade 10 Ulpanat Orot High School student wrote.

"However, more often than not, silence is a dark, ominous cloud, stifling all that should have been said, filled with lives that never were, choices that were never made.

Continued on page 13

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Three years

Three years ago today, June 25, seven Hamas terrorists crossed the border separating Gaza and Israel, killed two Israeli soldiers, injured four more and kidnapped 19-year-old soldier Gilad Schalit. He has remained in captivity ever since. In violation of the requirements of international law, not to mention the most rudimentary requirements of human decency, his Hamas captors have refused to let the Red Cross or any other aid group visit him.

Pathetically, the International Committee of the Red Cross last week pleaded with Hamas to allow Schalit's family or a humanitarian aid organization to establish contact with their captive. The Red Cross admitted both to its own impotence and to Hamas' sadism when it said that it has asked Hamas repeatedly to allow contact between the young soldier and his family, including requests "at the highest level, but these and all others have been refused." The organization knows nothing about Schalit's condition.

The organization thanked Jimmy Carter last week, the self-appointed envoy for many of the world's dictators, for trying to make contact with Schalit. "We welcome the fact that former U.S. president Jimmy Carter handed Hamas a letter from Gilad Schalit's family to him," Beatrice Megevand-Roggo, the Red Cross' head of operations for the Middle East and North Africa, said in a statement. "However, this cannot replace the regular and unconditional contacts with his family that Gilad Schalit is entitled to under international humanitarian law. The ICRC regrets that in his case, political considerations are judged more important than the simple humanitarian gesture of allowing a captive to be in touch with his family after three years of separation."

What Megevand-Roggo euphemistically calls political considerations we prefer to call simply brutality. Hamas' calculations toward Schalit are of a piece with their calculations toward the Jewish state: brazen and brutal hatred.

At a news conference in Egypt last week, after meetings with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman and Egyptian Defence Minister Hussein Tantawi, in which the subject of Schalit's release was undoubtedly raised, Israel's defence minister, Ehud Barak, said there were no new developments to report concerning progress on Schalit's release.

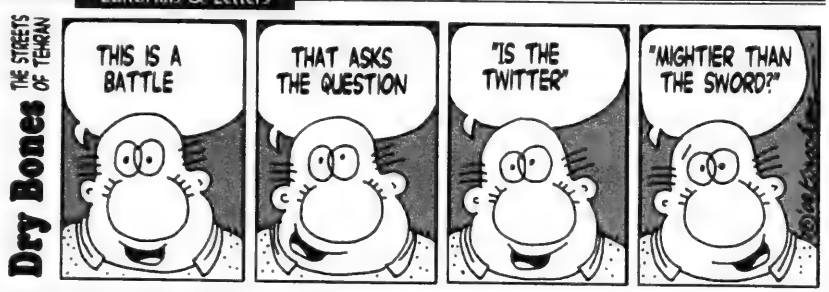
Israel has offered to release 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in return for Schalit, to no avail. Hamas has threatened that the Israeli will "remain imprisoned by us for eternity."

It offends the conscience, but no longer surprises, that the accusatory circles that incessantly hector and target Israel make no demands of Hamas. They shout no opprobrium at the rulers of Gaza. They shrug off the ruthlessness of the kidnappers' paymasters.

But we will never be indifferent to the fate of Gilad Schalit. Nor will we ever recoil from pointing to the hypocrisy and moral vapidity of Israel's accusers who are also Hamas' apologists.

25 years ago in The CJN

Judith Resnik, the first U.S. Jewish astronaut and only the second American woman in space, went on the maiden voyage of the orbiter Discovery. In January, 1986, she was killed in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.



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Jewish gays, lesbians not supported

Like many other Jewish supporters of Israel, I was dismayed to read that an anti-Israel group will be marching in the Pride festival this year ("Jewish gays fight anti-Israel messaging at Pride Parade," CJN, June 11). But I think the solution to this problem lies not in the route of censorship or trying to punish Pride organizers by trying to pull their public or corporate funding. It involves a good look in the mirror for the Jewish community. Why is there only one Jewish group marching in Pride this year? Why have they only now decided to march as proud gay, Zionist Jews? Why is the Montreal Jewish Gay Pride group a only a "fledgling" organization? If as a Jewish community we had marched with gays and lesbians for years in Pride – or in the family-friendly section of Pride – under our many community banners, and if we had supported and funded Jewish gay and lesbian outreach organizations, as well as openly welcomed gays and lesbians into our shuls, schools and organizations, I think we would not be in this unpleasant situation now.

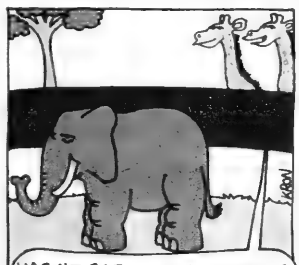
Aurora Mendelsohn
Toronto

* * *

Seven Jewish Children

While columnist Yoni Goldstein is obviously sincere in his beliefs about the play Seven Jewish Children, he is wrong ("The play isn't the problem," CJN, June 11). Just two points. Saying, "Don't tell her that" does not negate what was said before: "Tell her we killed the babies by mistake… Tell her I laughed when I saw the dead policemen. Tell her they're animals living in rubble now. Tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out… Tell her we're better haters. Tell her we're chosen people." In the context of the script, it simply means what it says: that the parent's true feelings are to be hidden from their child. The parent's diatribe is clearly the author's perception of how all Jews feel about Palestinians. This is reinforced by the lack of a countering statement from another protagonist. The statement about "another, newer genocide of the Palestinians perpetrated by Israel" is outrageous and fallacious. There is no such genocide. Genocide is the deliberate extermination of a race or a nation. Hamas is genocidal, as are Muslims who state publicly that Israel should be wiped off the map – actually, it's not on many Arab maps – and that Jews are parasites and should be dealt with accordingly. Israel's Gaza withdrawal should be enough to demonstrate the fallacy.

Stephen Dreezer
Toronto



Rabbis fast for Darfur

On June 18, I joined rabbis across the country in a fast of solidarity with the people of Darfur. My fast is one that thousands of people, from 35 different countries, have participated in since actor Mia Farrow started the fast on April 27.

It has been almost three months since humanitarian groups were expelled from Sudan. Across Sudan, communities that relied on aid groups now suffer without adequate food, sanitation or medical supplies. The imminent onset of the rainy season will likely lead to mass migration and water-borne disease epidemics in internally displaced persons' camps, risking the lives of more than one million people. Children will be disproportionately affected. Reports have shown sharply escalating instances of rape as a weapon of war. And in southern Sudan, recent violence threatens the stability of the whole country.

Fasting is a traditional part of Judaism, used to focus the mind on the memory of a great tragedy or to express deep repentance. But this fast is different. It's meant to address a crisis happening in our time and is an active response to ongoing tragedy. We know that it is only our failure to act for which we will have to atone.

The United Nations is working to restore humanitarian aid to Sudan and to bring about lasting peace there, but they need an international community of leaders to help them. As rabbis around North America fasted together, let us hope that our community of moral leadership will be replicated on the world stage and result in lasting relief and peace in Sudan.

Rabbi Stephen Wise
Shaarei-Beth El Congregation
Oakville, Ont.

* * *

People search

I wish to trace my uncle, Ovidiu (Ovide) Feldman. Born in Iasi, Romania, in 1910, he left Romania in 1932 for higher education. He was an intern at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Bourges and obtained an MD degree from the Paris Faculty of Medicine in 1940. The last address I have for him is 25 rue Laceped, Paris. We last heard from him in 1940, from Aisne, a city north of Paris. We don't know if he was there as a private doctor or in the French army. He disappeared that year without a trace. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who has information about him.

Dorel Feldman
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LET THEM GO…

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Perspectives

The mystique of Winnipeg's Jewish community

By ALLAN LEVINE

Allan Gotlieb, the former Canadian ambassador to Washington, who was born in Winnipeg in 1928, was once asked at a party (according to a story related to me by McGill University sociologist Morton Weinfeld) to explain the astounding accomplishments of the city's Jews, who have never been more than five per cent of the total Winnipeg population. (And that was in 1931. Today, the Jewish population of Winnipeg is about 15,000, in a city of 650,000 people.) How did he account for the success of people such as John Hirsch, Monty Hall, David Steinberg, Izzy Asper, Gerry Schwartz, Sol Kanee, Samuel Freedman – the list seems endless? To the question, "Why Winnipeg?" he answered, "Why Athens?" Was it geographic isolation or something else?

Anthony Astrachan, the foreign correspondent for the Washington Post, thought he had figured out the enduring power of Winnipeg's Jews after visiting the city in the early 1970s. He later wrote in the U.S. Jewish magazine Present Tense that the community's celebrated vitality was based on five key ingredients: "political activism, radicalism, a vital Yiddish culture, mixed with universal Jewish devotion to education, a prairie mystique and a geographic isolation that has made Winnipeg the centre of its own Diaspora."

This had been the same thought of another notable recorder of Manitoba's Jewish past, Rabbi Arthur Chiel, spiritual leader at the Rosh Pina Synagogue during the early 1950s, who authored the first work of scholarship on the subject in his 1961 book, The Jews in Manitoba. An American, Rabbi Chiel first visited Winnipeg in 1944 and right away understood that he had arrived somewhere special. The city was, as he later put it, a "*Yiddishe shtot* [a Jewish or Yiddish town or village] unlike any that I had contact with in the U.S." What dazzled him was not only the number of synagogues and Jewish organizations that existed. It was also the diversity of Jewish life and opinion in this remote prairie metropolis.

Jews are "the most institutionally complete minority group in [Canada]," says Weinfeld. "For Jews, the network of such institutions spans cradle to grave (Jewish day care centres and schools to old age home and cemeteries) and all manner of cultural, social, fraternal, recreational and political interests. Nothing is left to chance."

That was as true of Winnipeg's community 100 years ago as it is today. "For a small community in the middle of nowhere, we do a heck of a job," says transplanted American Abby Morris, who has been involved with the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg for many years. "We provide the kinds of services that a community of 30,000 Jews would expect. We don't have 30,000 Jews. We have significantly fewer than that."

To outsiders, the members of the province's community were all "Hebrews." In reality by 1920, the Jews were representative of all classes and ideological orientations. Many were religious, others less so. There were Zionists who campaigned for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, socialists who fought for the rights of workers, and liberals who advocated that Jews assimilate into Canadian society. Each particular segment (and some, such as the socialists and Zionists, were internally divided) had its own associations, mutual aid societies, schools, synagogues and political clubs.

"Winnipeg was a Jewish world," reflected the well-connected lawyer and community *macher* Sam Drache in 1961, "that had small cells of every intellectual, controversial Jewish movement represented within it, and it had leadership – it could have one man, two men, three men, small cells but they were here and they all gave expression."

With this variety and intellectual ferment, however, came divisions, bickering and personality clashes of monumental proportions. Whether it was about synagogue prayers, kosher rules, Zionist policy, Jewish school curriculum, community governance, politics, or support for Israel, there was a definite certainty about one aspect of Jewish life in Manitoba: there was always plenty of arguing. Or, as the great Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem pointed out, "two Jews have three opinions. When one says this, the other says, 'Yes, but not like that.'"

Chief Justice Samuel Freedman

At the root of many of these disputes was the age-old question of how to be Jewish in a non-Jewish world. The first wave of immigrants who reached Manitoba, mainly those who came from Russia in 1882 and during the ensuing decades, tended to be more traditional. They stubbornly stuck to their religious practices. This was not so much because they were more devout than other immigrants or the Anglo and German Jews who had come before them. Rather, it was an integral component of the cultural baggage they had so desperately clung to on the ships that brought them over. Moreover, they never relinquished it. They understood that success meant accepting a strong degree of assimilation – that refusing to work on Saturdays, for example, was a hindrance – but they persisted in practising their customs, regardless of the consequences. Poverty also defined them, and their ongoing adjustment to Canadian life was a difficult challenge.

After the failed 1905 Russian Revolution, the Jewish immigrants coming to Winnipeg and North America were imbued with the spirit of the Bund, the Jewish worker's political and labour movement established in Russia in 1897. They had a tremendous impact. Many of them brought a faith in Marxist and socialist principles, a love for Yiddish language and culture, and a secular rather than religious orientation to Judaism. They were the first and only generation of a true Jewish "proletariat" and were prepared to stand up for themselves in the factory, whether their boss was Jewish or not. Some were dedicated radicals. Others embraced the socialist principles of their leaders only because it provided them with the chance that their miserable lives would improve.

By the first decade of the 20th century, Yiddish had come to denote the culture, politics and passion of the newcomers. "All over North America, in the larger centres where Jews were clustered, New York, Montreal, Toronto, Yiddish books, newspapers and theatre flowered, and a lively cultural traffic took place," Harry and Mildred Gutkin have observed. "Concert artists, theatrical companies, lecturers on history, literature, philosophy, politics – all performing in Yiddish – made the rounds of Jewish communities, and Winnipeg, on the edge of the Canadian hinterland, welcomed them all with avid and overwhelming hospitality."

The one issue upon which Winnipeg Jews formed a united front was in fighting the prejudice and discrimination they faced. For more than a half of the 20th century, there were two separate worlds coexisting in the city – a Jewish one, mainly focused in Winnipeg's North End around Selkirk Avenue, and a non-Jewish one around the business district of Portage Avenue and Main Street, and points east, west and south where Jews were not invited or wanted.

As discriminatory as the anti-Semitism was, it's also true that the great irony of Jewish history is that anti-Semitism, although by no means the only factor, played a major role in Jewish survival. Without property and club restrictions, ethnic quotas and the spreading of hate propaganda, assimilation likely would have occurred at a much faster rate. At the same time, by constantly reminding at least two generations of Jews that their "Jewishness" defined them, the community's leaders and elders kept pushing, challenging the status quo and slowly advancing the cause of social justice.

Elementary students line up at Talmud Torah School on Matheson Avenue.
[Photos from Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba, published by the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada]

As anomalous as it now might seem, the appointment of Samuel Freedman in 1952 as a judge of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench was by all accounts one of the most significant events in Manitoba Jewish history. Freedman's subsequent appointment as the first Jewish chancellor of the University of Manitoba in 1959 and his elevation to the Chief Justice of Manitoba in 1971 cracked open the doors that had been shut to Jewish lawyers and other professionals – and to Jews generally – for far too long.

With these progressive developments came changes in community attitudes, institutions and structures, not all of them welcome. The Yiddish immigrants, who populated the North End were so successful in badgering their children to obtain a solid education and enter the ranks of the professional middle class that they laid the foundations for the eventual diminution of the very Yiddish world that they had so proudly established. Hence the opening of the impressive Asper Jewish Community Campus in 1997 – and the relocation of schools, libraries and other organizational offices to the wealthier southern part of the city– was an event that was hailed by many Jews in the city, but it was also condemned by others as an omen that North End Yiddish culture was gone forever.

So to return to the baffling question, "Why Winnipeg?" One answer is simply found in the characters of the people who have lived here. They worked hard and succeeded – with many amassing fortunes beyond their wildest dreams – and they unselfishly built the Jewish community brick by brick. You can accuse these leaders of elitism and even arrogance (as many still do), but without them, there would be nothing to talk, reminisce or kvell about.

Winnipeg writer and historian Allan Levine's most recent book is Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba, published by the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada in association with Heartland Associates. For more information, visit: www.jhcwc.org.

Jew-hating Jews

Whether it's protesting at a Jewish National Fund tribute dinner in Ottawa or London, sponsoring anti-Zionist speakers on our university campuses, calling for a boycott of Israeli wines outside an LCBO in Toronto, organizing an illegal sit-in at the Israeli consulate or vilifying Israel at supposedly academic forums on health care in Gaza and the West Bank, they are there, these deceitful Jews.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

Israel-bashing of such intensity by Jews readily translates into a pattern of behaviour that has the ingredients of what has come to be recognized as Jewish self-contempt. It's an anomaly that is becoming increasingly prevalent not only in Canada, but across Jewish communities worldwide.

Nor is this a new phenomenon. During biblical times, and ever since, there have been pockets of Jews who have chosen to side with the enemies of their own people.

"Their successors," according to British writer and commentator Melanie Phillips, "[are] almost always on the left [politically], very often, but not always highly secularized, and with a tangential or deeply conflicted relationship with their Jewish identity, they are in the forefront of the movement to demonize, delegitimize and destroy Israel… They do it to no other country; only the expression of self-determination of their own people inspires in them such frenzied and obsessive self-loathing."

Author David Solway goes one step further in characterizing what has been described as the "pathology" of Jewish self-abhorrence. "Masking the syndrome of self-contempt as a quest for justice, these Jewish turncoats seek redemption in a denial of both history and genealogy," Solway says. "Diagnostically speaking, it is not so much a mental illness or clinical aberration we are witnessing, but a sickness in the soul supple enough to contort itself into a spurious idealism, a simulacrum of ideological nobility."

And, indeed, when engaging such Jews in any discussion of their motives and objectives, what comes across is a particular self-righteousness: they know what's good for all of us. They "claim to represent authentic Jewish morality as opposed to the supposed corruption of those principles by Zionism and Israel," Phillips writes. "They do nothing of the kind. Their claim merely advertises their profound ignorance of Jewish ethics and history, which they so badly represent."

At a time when the very fabric of Zionism is under such mounting attack and when the world's hostility toward Israel is escalating as perhaps never before, it is so sadly counter-productive to have in our midst individuals who present themselves as "Jewish" but who so relentlessly and unashamedly empower those who wish harm on Israel and anyone who supports the Jewish state.

Bibi must articulate a clear settlement policy

Since coming to power, the Obama administration has made itself clear regarding West Bank settlements. The narrative reads as follows: settlements are central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and doing away with them will greatly advance its resolution. A link has even been made between the settlements and America's ability to deal with the threat of a nuclear Iran.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

Obama reiterated this position in his speech in Cairo on June 4, declaring that the "United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

Ten days later at Bar-Ilan University, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated his position on the issue, proclaiming that Israel has "no intention of building new settlements or of expropriating additional land for existing settlements," but he added that "there is a need to enable the residents to live normal lives, to allow mothers and fathers to raise their children like families elsewhere."

Netanyahu's speech received much attention, because in it he acknowledged the Palestinians' right to a state, albeit demilitarized, while making several other important policy statements. He rightfully demanded Palestinian recognition of Israel as the Jewish state and expressed his view that Jerusalem will remain forever united, and that the Palestinian refugee question must be resolved outside of Israel.

However, in months ahead, settlements will remain central in discussions within Israel and between Israel and the parties trying to advance peace with the Palestinians, and the subject must be addressed more thoroughly.

Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan declarations won't suffice. He must place his settlement cards squarely on the table and bravely play out his hand. The alternative is having the United States or the Palestinians lead the way, with Israel playing catch-up, as has too often been the case in the past.

Engaging a clear and comprehensive vision doesn't mean acquiescing to those who would uproot every settler from the pre-1967 West Bank or to those who view any possible territorial concessions as sacrilege.

It will require a realistic re-sketching of Israel's borders, given our biblical connection to the land, security considerations, demographics and our own interest in ending more than 40 years of military control over two million West Bank Palestinians and some of their lands.

Skeptics will justly say that this is easier said than done, that it takes two to tango and that the Palestinians don't dance the same steps. They will also assert that supporters of a "Greater Israel" will rebel violently against any concessions.

It won't be easy, but my experience, primarily in my military posting as legal adviser to the Israel Defence Forces in Judea and Samaria, has made it clear to me that this issue must be embraced.

To start, Netanyahu must express the understanding that large tracts of Judea and Samaria won't remain in Israeli hands in the long term. In that vein, the message should be clearer regarding Israel's intention to allow natural growth in places that most Israelis believe will never be turned over to the Palestinians, such as the blocs around Jerusalem, the Ariel corridor and two large haredi towns, both just a half kilometre beyond the Green Line. Conversely, this policy should not be applied to settlements in the heart of the West Bank with no viable future, mostly those beyond the security barrier.

Netanyahu must also dismantle illegal (or unauthorized) outposts and take appropriate steps to ensure they're not rebuilt. They're a blemish on our society, where the rule of law must be supreme. Self-respecting states can't allow groups of citizens, as self-righteous as they might be, to dictate policy adverse to that of their government.

These outposts sprouted throughout the West Bank partly because of settler frustration, with no alternatives available to them in existing communities. Many were thrown into the waiting arms of extremists inhabiting the hillsides. A policy that gives most of them hope about their future in Judea and Samaria, as suggested, will bring some back into the fold.

Netanyahu's speech is being hailed as groundbreaking by some, as a beginning by others and as a non-starter by the Palestinians. To show that he's a true visionary, he must engage these settlement issues quickly, with integrity and candour.

Are Israel's religious wars calming down?

I am happy to report signs of tentative progress in the peace process – no, not between Netanyahu and Obama, Israel and the various Palestinian factions, or at York University.

Rather, what appears to be slow but positive movement is taking place on the haredi-secular front, which has long been a source of conflict, particularly in Jerusalem. Recent battles over the opening of a municipal parking lot on Shabbat for visitors lasted for only a week, far less than the months and sometimes years of warfare that had been waged in the past on what is supposed to be a day of rest.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

The previous skirmishes were fought over stores that tried to open on Shabbat, or new roads near religious neighbourhoods (and drivers from Tel Aviv who sometimes went out of their way to provoke the black-coated residents on the seventh day).

But the underlying factors are political and social, as young leaders on both sides use the polarization to gain recognition and support in their own communities. Apparently the long hot Shabbat summer days add to the steam pressure that pushes out the young men of Mea Shearim and nearby neighbourhoods into the streets to join the violence. And in their wake, a parallel process takes place among secular groups, which form counter-demonstrations.

But this time, the new (traditional but not haredi) mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, refused to play the game. He closed the parking lot, at least for two weeks, while negotiations take place and other solutions are sought. Although he was criticized for capitulating, this may be a clever strategy to take the wind out of the sails of the young hotheads. They will probably try to find a new issue, and Barkat will need to continue to manage this social and political conflict.

The effort to reduce the level of social conflict on this issue – which has erupted periodically since, and even before, Israeli independence – extends to other areas of Israeli life. The difficulties and questions raised by re-establishing a Jewish state 2,000 years after the last attempt ended in failure (and not for the first time) are huge – and there are no good precedents.

Unlike the United States, which was founded as a secular state, for Israel, the separation of church and state is far more complicated. And among our neighbours, with various forms of Islamic regimes and very little democracy (other than Turkey), the examples are also not very helpful.

Many religious Israelis saw, and still see, the return to Zion in religious and even messianic terms. In these communities, rabbis maintain their traditional leadership roles while the secular state is viewed as a hostile force. They see religious law – or their particular versions – as binding, not only on their own communities, but also on other Jews, particularly in the areas of kashrut and Shabbat, as well as conversion and marriage. As a result, their relationship with the modern and secular democratic process, based on majority rule, is awkward, at best, and often hostile.

In contrast, many secular Israelis want to escape what they see as the limitations of religious and rabbinical authority. They want to be able to take the bus to the beach on Shabbat, or to drive their cars to Jerusalem, find a place to park, and spend time in the Old City.

Non-religious Israelis also strongly resent the stranglehold of the rabbinical establishment in the realm of "personal status," particularly marriage. As a result, many choose not to get married at all, or to leave the country to have a civil marriage, which is then recognized upon return. This is particularly true when recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union are involved.

With such difficult and divisive issues to deal with, it may be unrealistic to expect compromise and peaceful coexistence. But as time passes, there are increasing efforts to escape this cycle of conflict. We have more than enough challenges in the complex Jewish renaissance taking place in Israel, and the religious wars have become tiring.

The Kirshner File

Polish literature and the Holocaust

The Nazi genocidal plan to cleanse Poland of three million Jews was so diabolically successful that 90 percent of Poland's venerable Jewish community, once the world's second largest after that of the United States, was methodically eradicated during an abysmal six-year period.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

More than six decades after allied armies liberated German concentration camps, how does Poland pay homage to the Holocaust? Dorota Glowacka, a 48-year-old Polish scholar affiliated with University of King's College in Halifax since the mid-1990s, has taken more than a passing interest in this topic.

In 2006, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada gave her a $56,000 grant to pursue a project titled Jewish Memory in Today's Poland and the Polish National Narrative. She expects to finish a book on this subject this year.

Recently, she submitted a manuscript on representations of the Holocaust to Washington University Press. In 2007, Nebraska University Press published Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust, a volume of essays edited by Glowacka and Joanna Zylinska

During Holocaust Education Week in Toronto last November, Glowacka was invited to deliver a lecture on representations of the Holocaust in recent Polish literature.

Her talk was co-sponsored by the Lodzer Centre Holocaust Congregation and the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada.

Glowacka, who left Poland in 1989 after completing an MA degree in English literature at the University of Wroclaw, focused on the post-Communist era in her lecture.

But in an interview, she talked about the two different eras in which representations of the Holocaust figure in Polish literature.

The first period, lasting roughly from the end of World War II to the fall of communism in 1989, was supplanted by the current era, which really began in the mid-1980s but that picked up a head of steam after the collapse of the Communist system.

"There are significant differences between these two periods," she said.

Under communism, the few dozen works that touched on the Holocaust, ranging from memoirs to novels, conformed to communist/internationalist ideology and thus usually avoided direct references to Jewish suffering, said Glowacka, whose parents, Wiktor and Grazyna Jassem, were members of the ruling Communist party.

"There was a legacy of forgetting, aided by the communist policy of historical amnesia," she said.

Since 1989, however, restrictions on the portrayal of the Holocaust have disappeared.

To Glowacka, Polish-style communism tapped into a deep vein of Polish nationalism, which was infused with traditional forms of anti-Semitism.

For Jews who remained in Poland after 1945 and hoped that a new era of equality had finally dawned, the re-emergence of state anti-Semitism came as a disillusioning blow.

In her view, the Polish government's decision in 1956 to reintroduce Catholic religion instruction to the school curriculum was part and parcel of that process.

Jewish students were isolated by that development.

"Jews were cast as outsiders," said Glowacka, whose father was a Jew and whose mother was a Catholic.

During her youth, a pattern emerged in which Catholics writing on the Holocaust generally tended to ignore Jewish victimhood, while Jewish writers emphasized it.

Among the Catholic writers who delved into the Holocaust were Tadeusz Borowski, Jerzy Focowski, Czestaw Milosz, Zofia Natkowska, Jerzy Andrzewski and Zofia Kossak-Szczucka.

Borowski (This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen) was a political prisoner who was incarcerated in Auschwitz, while Kossak-Szuzucka was an anti-Semite before the war.

Of this group, Ficowski – a poet whose Jewish wife was smuggled out of the Warsaw Ghetto before its destruction– is her favourite pre-1989 interpreter of the Holocaust.

Jewish writers who dealt with the Holocaust from 1945 until 1989 include Julian Stryjkowski, Henryk Grynberg, Krystyna Zywulska (Sonia Landau), Bogdan Wojdowski, Adolf Rudnicki, Wladystaw Szpilman and Ida Fink.

The dissolution of communism coincided with a renewed interest in Poland's nearly extinct Jewish culture and I.B. Singer's winning of the Nobel Prize in literature. These events prompted Polish Catholic and Jewish writers, from Marek Bienczyk and Pawel Huelle to Hanna Krall and Wilhelm Dichter, to explore the Holocaust.

In bearing witness to the Holocaust, Catholic writers were an influential factor in ushering in attempts to "to revise dominant historical narratives and cultural paradigms, which were founded on the exclusion of the Jewish other," observed Glowacka in her paper to Holocaust Education Week.

Dorota Glowacka *[Sheldon Kirshner photo]*

"The perceptions of Jews throughout Poland's history have been often negative," she added. "Jews have been perceived as a threat to Polish national interests and to Polishness, which I understand, very broadly, as a mixture of fervent patriotism and strong Catholic values."

In general, even now, Poles feel uneasy about the Holocaust, said Glowacka.

"There is no comfort in it for Poles."

Although Poland, unlike France, did not have a pro-German collaborationist regime in place during the Nazi occupation, the majority of Poles were indifferent to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust, she said.

Yet other Poles were complicit in helping the Germans identify Jewish Poles, while still others went as far as to murder Jews, as in pogroms that unfolded in such towns as Jedwabne in 1941.

By contrast, some Poles participated in the rescue efforts of Jews. "Twelve Polish people, on average, were involved in rescuing one Jew," said Glowacka.

Due to these historical crosscurrents, the memories of Poles and Jews regarding the war clash.

As she writes in Imaginary Neighbors: "Polish national narratives of heroism, oppression and liberation… stand in stark contrast to the Jewish narratives of suffering, senseless death and betrayal."

Glowacka, who developed an interest in the Holocaust after leaving Poland and meeting Jews in the United States, discovered her Jewish ancestry after her father, a linguist, was expelled from the Communist party in the wake of the 1968 political upheavals.

News of his expulsion reached her school, where fellow students hurled anti-Semitic taunts at Glowacka, for whom the revelation of her Jewishness was nothing less than a rude awakening.

"My father kept my Jewish identity from me to protect me from anti-Semitism," she observed, saying that it was not until 1997 that they first talked about his background as a Jew.

Today, she noted, he takes an interest in Jewish affairs and the Holocaust.

Glowacka emigrated as communism in Poland tottered.

"I never felt at home in Poland," she explained. "I always felt I was somewhat different."

In addition, she was sick and tired of the corruption in public life and sought better professional opportunities abroad.

She began to identify with her Jewish side of her identity 15 years ago.

"For the first time, I was not ashamed to be Jewish," she said. "A lot of people like me had a deep inferiority complex on account of being Jewish."

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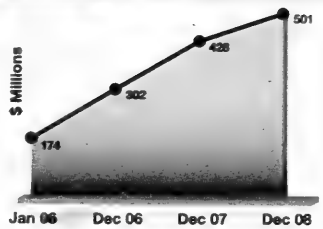

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Narayever votes in favour of same-sex marriage

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The First Narayever Congregation – an unaffiliated, traditional egalitarian synagogue and the largest shul in downtown Toronto – has voted overwhelmingly in favour of its rabbi officiating at same-sex marriages.

Of 175 voters on the same-sex marriage issue, which took place at the congregation's annual general meeting June 14, 164 people – 93.7 per cent – voted in favour, effective immediately.

No same-sex marriages are currently booked at the synagogue, but an aufruf is scheduled for next month. The couple will be married elsewhere by a friend, said Rabbi Ed Elkin, the Narayever's spiritual leader since 2000.

The Brunswick Avenue congregation, which began life as an Orthodox synagogue and was revitalized in the 1970s when the egalitarian services were first held, first faced the same-sex marriage issue when a lesbian couple approached Rabbi Elkin shortly after he became the shul's rabbi to ask if he would officiate at their wedding.

Instead of making a unilateral announcement, he "wanted to lead the congregation to a point where they were comfortable with it," the rabbi said in an interview.

The synagogue's board then struck a committee to examine the question of same-sex marriage.

Randal Schnoor, a Toronto sociologist whose PhD dissertation examined how gay Jewish men balance their Jewish and gay identities, recalled that the committee, which he sat on, met for a year to study Jewish texts and other literature on the issue, then issued a 40-page report.

The committee recommended to the shul's board that same-sex couples' milestones be recognized from the bimah, for example by offering an aliyah and wishing couples "Mazel tov." But there wasn't consensus on the issue of marriage, which was put to a general membership vote, as was the recognition issue.

The votes, held in 2004, resulted in an "overwhelming" majority in favour of recognition from the bimah, said Schnoor, a 40-year-old married father of two.

As well, there was a 71 per cent majority in favour of having same-sex marriages at the shul, but the constitution at the time required an 80 per cent majority. It has since been amended to 75 per cent for matters of ritual change.

Schnoor attributes the increase in acceptance of same-sex marriage in part to the December 2006 acceptance of a responsum – albeit a controversial one – by the Conservative movement's committee on Jewish law and standards that endorsed the celebration of same-sex unions in a Jewish context, as well as to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada in 2005.

"It's been a challenging issue for the shul," Schnoor said. "[But now that] it has such overwhelming support, I think it's not going to cause any further controversy."

The Narayever has "only a handful" of gay or lesbian congregants, said Rabbi Elkin, who was ordained in 1990 by the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College.

Demographically, the shul's almost 600 adult members range in age from their 20s to 90, but "I think we skew a bit younger than average," said the rabbi. "We have quite a few young couples, singles and young families."

"We daven from an Orthodox prayerbook, we do a full Torah reading, we daven Musaf, we have a kosher kitchen, we observe all the laws of Shabbat and Yom Tov – we don't turn lights on and off, we don't have photography, and there's no microphone," Rabbi Elkin said, explaining how tradition is expressed at the shul.

At the same time, women have "complete equality" in services and are counted in minyans along with their male counterparts.

"We're not terribly different from most Conservative shuls in the States," said the rabbi.

On the other hand, he added, "I don't know who else is exactly like us. We're kind of quirky."

It was a small group of young, heterosexual members, mostly in their 20s and 30s, who raised the issue of same-sex marriage for the second time, the rabbi noted.

Before this month's vote, the shul held two information sessions on the issue.

Rabbi Elkin told The CJN that early in his career, he wasn't sure what his stand would be on same-sex marriage.

"There were gays and lesbians in the class with us in rabbinical school. I felt they would make fine rabbis. I was glad I was studying at an institution that recognized that."

It wasn't until he attended the 2000 convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis – the Reform movement's rabbinic organization – that he reached a turning point, voting in favour of a resolution supporting the decision of individual rabbis to officiate, or not, at Jewish same-gender ceremonies.

Rabbi Elkin said he feels "very good, very proud," about the outcome of his shul's vote.

"I'm very pleased it passed so overwhelmingly, and I'm hoping that bodes well in terms of maintaining the unity of the congregation," he said. "It's a lovely, vibrant congregation. I hope and anticipate we'll continue in the same way, only we'll be fully including another segment of the Jewish community that has not been fully included to this point."

Bruce Rosebrugh, 54, who served as shul president for two years until the recent AGM, said that, "in the end, it was simple. This isn't a political statement… It's just an extension of what we are in terms of being a caring community."

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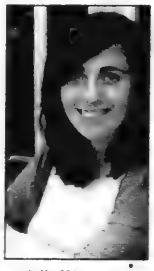
JNF AT DOWNSVIEW PARK: Ryan Ekstein, left, and Noah Titleman planted a tree last week at Downsview Park as part of a "twinning day" sponsored by the Jewish National Fund and Downsview Park Foundation. The two Grade 4 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin branch in Thornhill were among almost 1,300 students from Jewish and public schools at the event, held June 17, World Day to Combat Desertification. Participants also took part in litter clean-up and sports activities. As part of the initiative, trees are also being planted in the Toronto Community Forest in Yatir, Israel. Opening ceremonies included remarks from local MPP Monte Kwinter, who offered greetings on behalf of Ontario's premier, Dalton McGuinty. [Frances Kraft photo]

Ulpanat Orot student wins writing contest

Continued frompage 6

This kind of silence feeds off regret and fear, off questions that went unanswered and dreams that were unfulfilled. Silence is powerful. Silence can kill. In 1939, it almost killed a nation."



Arielle Wasserman

Regarding the world's silence during the Holocaust, Arielle wrote: "It was then that the Jews realized no one would speak for them. They had to speak for themselves."

The governments of Canada and the United States currently condemn anti-Semitism and support Israel, but she wonders if that could change.

"My only concern is that Canada and the U.S. support us now. And right now, they're great – they're pro-Israel, they're pro-Zionism. But when things get harder, when things get scarier, who knows what they're going to do?" she told The CJN.

"What was so shocking and petrifying about the Holocaust was that Germany was a civilized, westernized country – they were technologically advanced and they were well-respected. They were people just like us – it could've been any other country," Arielle said.

She said that it's also important to remember the five million non-Jews who perished during the Holocaust. "But at the same time, six million Jews makes this huge impact. And the whole point of talking about the Holocaust is to make sure it never happens again.

"Unfortunately, [many] people don't care about the 700,000 Gypsies or the blacks or the homosexuals, because it's more unrelatable, so I think we have to be incredibly careful not to diminish the enormity of the Holocaust."

Arielle said the Holocaust can help to teach future generations about the consequences of hatred and intolerance. The first part of the learning process doesn't necessarily have to be through understanding, but rather through remembering, she said.

"As long as they've done their part in remembering and therefore ensuring that it never happens again, however they get to that point is up to them."

Arielle takes advanced placement university courses in English at Ulpanat Orot. She hopes to attend Columbia University after finishing high school, both for the quality of its programs and because she loves New York.

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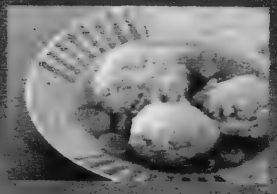
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Israel honours RIM founder at Telecom Summit

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

For the second year in a row, a handful of Israeli high-tech companies staked out territory at the Canadian Telecom Summit, hoping to lay the groundwork for strategic alliances and future business deals.

At the same time, the Israel Economic Mission to Canada took centre stage at the summit – Canada's pre-eminent telecom industry gathering – by presenting Research In Motion (RIM) founder and president Michael Lazaridis with a document recognizing his contribution to bringing together the Waterloo Region technology leader and Israeli firms.

"Michael Lazaridis and RIM are both synonymous with innovation, excellence and years of vision and success," said Jonathan Levy, head of Israel's Toronto-based economic mission.

"Israel's advanced technology industry looks upon RIM as a strategic partner," Levy told representatives of 500 leading Canadian telecommunications firms at the summit, which ran from June 15 to 17. "It, too, is perceived as cutting edge and visionary industry, and as such they are a natural fit for each other."

Levy told The CJN that the government of Israel "has identified the summit as an opportunity to forge alliances and relationships between our companies and Canadian companies."

The event provides "plenty of networking opportunities" for Israeli participants, he added.

Six Israeli telecom firms participated in this year's event, down from the eight who travelled to Canada last year. Israeli corporations still see the United States, Hong Kong and Europe as the main area for expansion, but Canada is increasingly on their radar screens, Levy said.

Last year's participation spawned specific business relationships, he continued. NexPerience, an Israeli firm, followed up its summit participation with "a road show" to RIM's Waterloo, Ont., offices, arranged by the trade mission.

It later inked a deal that saw it provide a solution for testing RIM devices, allowing "the BlackBerry developer community to test software on live BlackBerry smartphones using an Internet-based service," the NexPerience website states.

This year's Israeli participants included PerSay, RAD Data Communications, Radware, TeleMessage, TTI Telecom and Comverse Technology.

Duby Yoely, vice-president of marketing and solution engineering for TTI Telecom, said the summit provided the opportunity to network, "starting to talk, looking for opportunities. It was good."

TTI already has two prominent Canadian customers for its mobile network management product, Bell Mobility and Telus. TTI believes Canada has weathered the economic downturn better than other countries, providing opportunities for it and other Israeli firms.

"Canada is a very important market for us," Yoely said. "We already have two big customers here. Despite the world recession, we see Canada as a market that is quite promising."

Adding to the Israeli presence at the summit was a keynote address by Daphna Steinmetz, vice-president and chief innovation officer of Comverse. Her presentation focused on "Communications for the '@' Generation."

Israel's information and communications technology sector was responsible for $12 billion (US) in exports in 2008, accounting for half of Israel's high-tech exports and 15 per cent of Israel's total sales abroad. Trade between Canada and Israel totalled $1.8 billion (US) in 2008.

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Seniors Scene

Grant helps low-income seniors

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

When Harry Enchin's brother, Jonathan, died in 2005 at age 43, Harry wanted to do something that would have made his brother proud.

A year ago, he set up the Jonathan Enchin Community Fund, administered by Kehilla Residential Program and directed at low-income seniors.

Jonathan Enchin

Along with a matching one-time, three-year grant from the Weinberg Foundation, a U.S.-based charitable foundation – the grant proposal came from Kehilla – the fund allots 25 seniors $1,240 each per year.

Recipients are referred to Kehilla from Jewish Family & Child, Circle of Care, Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living and Jewish Immigrant Aid Services.

Lisa Lipowitz, Kehilla's director of community initiatives, said cheques go out quarterly and are usually timed to be delivered around the Jewish holidays.

"Many seniors live on fixed incomes. They can't afford to pay for rent, food and medical supplies, and practise Jewish customs such as keeping kosher," she said.

"This small increment can be a huge benefit. The holidays can be expensive."

Nancy Singer, executive director of Kehilla, called it a "feel good program. Harry's brother had an affection for seniors, and this is a meaningful way to honour his memory. I would like to see it keep going [after the three years.]

"Time passes quickly, and the recipients know it is a one-time grant. I'd like to see donors get interested. We now help 25 people. It would be great to be able to help more."

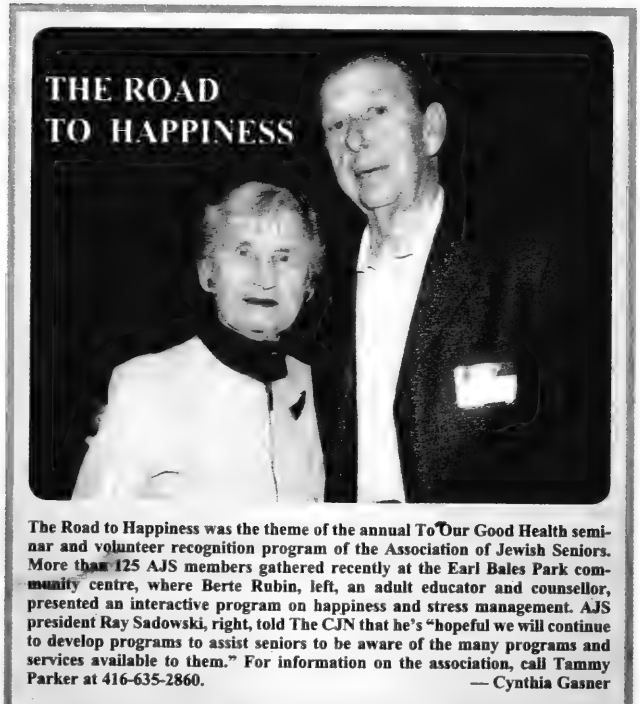
Enchin said his brother was particularly tuned in to the plight and needs of seniors.

"He helped them in his apartment building by shopping, running errands and generally looking out for them, and he volunteered at Baycrest," he said.

"This is something he would have done, if he had had the means. It is something that was near and dear to his heart. The money can help [recipients] buy some kosher food and feel a part of the community," Enchin said.

Several recipients have contacted Kehilla to thank them for the money, Lipowitz said.

One thanked Kehilla for helping that person to celebrate the High Holidays, and another said that it was touching "to get help from complete strangers. It is absolutely amazing that there are donors who care about [us]. This allowance will help enhance our lives."



The Road to Happiness was the theme of the annual To Our Good Health seminar and volunteer recognition program of the Association of Jewish Seniors. More than 125 AJS members gathered recently at the Earl Bales Park community centre, where Berte Rubin, left, an adult educator and counsellor, presented an interactive program on happiness and stress management. AJS president Ray Sadowski, right, told The CJN that he's "hopeful we will continue to develop programs to assist seniors to be aware of the many programs and services available to them." For information on the association, call Tammy Parker at 416-635-2860.
— Cynthia Gasner

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The gym is equipped with both cardio and weight training equipment, and along with a range of fitness classes, you can stay active and motivated in a safe environment. Daily activities are available, designed to inspire and ignite interests both old and new.

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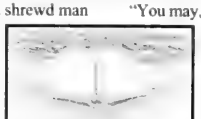
Jewish Life

Follow the leader – he needs you

By RABBI AVROHOM JACKS


Rabbinic Reflections

There was a time in the 1940s when Vyacheslav Molotov was Soviet foreign minister. He was a shrewd man and a hard bargainer, but he worked for Joseph Stalin, who was, without a doubt, the boss.

A reporter once overheard him talking to Stalin by trans-Atlantic telephone during the course of some very intricate negotiations with the West.

He said, "Yes, Comrade Stalin," in quiet tones, then again, "Yes, Comrade Stalin, and then, after a considerable wait, "Certainly, Comrade Stalin.

Suddenly he was galvanized into emotion. "No, Comrade Stalin," he barked, "No. That's, no. Definitely, no. A thousand times, no!"

After a while, he quieted and it was, "Yes, Comrade Stalin," again.

The reporter who overheard this was probably never so excited in his life. Clearly, Molotov was daring to oppose the dictator on at least one point, and it would surely be important to the West to know what that point might be.

The reporter approached Molotov and said, as calmly as possible, "Secretary Molotov, I could not help but hear you say at one point, 'No, Comrade Stalin.'"

Molotov turned his cold eyes on the reporter and said, "What of it?"

"May I ask," said the reporter, cautiously, "what the subject under discussion was at that time?"

"You may," said Molotov. "Comrade Stalin asked me if there was anything he had said with which I disagreed."

After an unsuccessful rebellion launched by Korach in this week's parshah was miraculously put down, Moses instructed each tribe's leader to take their staff and place it before the *mizbeyach* – the altar. The rods were left overnight. The next morning, Aaron's had miraculously sprouted blossom buds and bore ripe almonds. The staffs of the other tribes' leaders remained dry wooden sticks.

This was a clear sign once and for all that the mantle of leadership justifiably belonged to Aaron. Never again would this reality be contested.

Yet, the Sefas Emes notes a very interesting nuance in the text. In verse 21 of chapter 17, the Torah tells us that "the staff of Aaron [was] among their staffs."

Why is the Torah stressing this point? From the context of the story, it was obvious that Aaron's staff was included in the 12 staffs that were placed before the altar.

Perhaps the Torah is teaching us a profound lesson about leadership. While it's true that some people are born leaders, they can't accomplish anything without the help and support of the rest of us.

Someone once said that leaders are a lot like the letter "Q." They can't spell anything without "U"! As legs support the relatively more important organs of the upper body, so, too, must we support our leaders. For great things to be accomplished, we need the involvement of everyone.

One of the gravest mistakes a person can make is to say, "I'm not very talented. What could I possibly accomplish? I would rather leave the community activism to the people who wield the greatest influence and power."

When we think such thoughts, we need to remember that Adam, the first man, was created alone to teach us – his descendants – that we can't rely on others to do the job. We need to act for ourselves.

One of the central messages of Judaism is that we rely on our leaders to show us the way, but they rely on us, too. They rely on us to be their arms, eyes, legs and hands to get the job done. They rely on us to be the foot soldiers that wage the daily battles on behalf of all that is holy, true and right.

When they call, let us answer with a resounding, "Yes!"

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks is spiritual leader of Congregation Zichron Kedoshim in Montreal.

Summer reads for Jewish bookworms

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

Despite this chilling caution issued last year by Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple, that "it doesn't matter how good or bad the product is, the fact is that people don't read anymore," I'm going to venture forth with this year's summer reading suggestions for the Jewishly interested. As usual, I have tried to discuss books that are a bit under the usual radar in terms of popularity.

The Kogod Library of Judaic Studies continues to deliver books of high quality and thoughtfulness. One such offering is the just released Judaism and the Challenges of Modern Life, edited by Moshe Halbertal and Donniel Hartman and containing essays by well-known Judaic scholars. Divided into three sections covering what the editors term the challenge of ideas, of diversity and of statehood, this volume probes the relationship between Judaism and homosexuality, science, feminism, pluralism, war and peace, and human rights, among other things.

The Quest for Authenticity is an important elaboration of the life and work of Reb Simcha Bunim, one of the great chassidic masters. Written by Rabbi Michael Rosen, the beloved leader of the Yakar minyan in Jerusalem and published not long before his untimely death last December, the book not only illuminates this spiritual giant's ideas in a scholarly fashion, it's also accessible to the general reader's desire to know more about a remarkable 19th-century figure.

With Israel always in the news, and the war in Gaza provoking constant streams of argument and counterargument even now, it's worthwhile to find the time to step back and analyze Judaic perspectives on issues of war, ethics and leadership. One insightful contribution is Law, Politics and Morality in Judaism, edited by Michael Walzer, perhaps the pre-eminent theorist of just war in the world today.

Prof. Walzer's own essay on commanded and permitted wars should be perused by anyone who wishes a sober and reflective understanding of the difficulty of using the Torah to map out current geopolitical strategies. Other essays in this volume address related complexities of Jewish sovereignty.

Students often ask, sometimes with no small measure of patronization, why the Bible is worth their time and attention and whether a modern person should be engaged by a text reflective perhaps of the "prejudices of antiquity." In Created Equal, Rabbi Joshua Berman addresses, with academic deftness, the revolutionary character of the Bible. Berman's reading reveals a book that precipitated a sea change in the history of political thought and laid the groundwork for a radically egalitarian worldview unknown elsewhere in the ancient world.

Many of the critiques levelled against traditional Judaism that are by now de rigeur were anticipated and articulated by philosopher Baruch Spinoza in the early 17th century. A beautifully written account of Spinoza's context, both the world he inherited and the one he left us, is provided by Rebecca Goldstein in Betraying Spinoza. Spinoza's often difficult concepts are rendered lucidly (but not dumbed down) by Goldstein, who also captures in poignant ways Spinoza's own struggle with the Jewish community and the uncompromising rigour with which he pursued his vision of reality.

Jewish Life

Reflections on old age

Observations and witticisms about old age are ubiquitous. There is no escaping mortality, but evidently we can talk and laugh about it.

George Burns at 95 was asked what restrictions old age had imposed upon him. He replied: "I don't buy green bananas anymore."

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

Fred Astaire said that old age is like everything else – to make a success at it, you've got to start young.

A Pennsylvania German proverb teaches that if you pull out a grey hair, seven will come to its funeral.

There are a few areas of the world where people are said to live the longest: in the Ecuadorean Andes Mountains, in Hunza Land in the Pakistani Himalayas, and in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia. Residents of these remote areas live in high altitudes, breathe clean and healthy mountain air and engage in vigorous daily exercise.

But the true secret of their longevity includes a positive outlook on life, the ability to deal with stress and emotional upheaval and to benefit from a nurturing and stable extended family. They are made to feel needed, useful, vital and important. But perhaps, most important of all, the secret of their longevity is found in their loving and being loved. They flourish in communities where people really care about one another.

A psychologist at Boston University has done innovative research on the subject of unselfish love. He found that caring for others without concern about benefits for oneself is closely related to good health and longevity.

Hamlet said, while holding in his hands a skull: "To this favour she must come." The reality of our lives is that, as time goes on, if we can't find meaning and value in our later years, we reveal that our earlier years were hollow as well.

What is disheartening for the elderly – like myself – is the passing from the scene of classmates, congregants, colleagues and friends. The ties to the past grow weaker, and the future is a template of dwindling days.

In Oliver Goldsmith's play, She Stoops to Conquer, Hardcastle says to his wife, Dorothy: "I love everything that is old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine, and I believe, Dorothy, you'll own, I have been pretty fond of an old wife."

Successful aging not only retains the kind of quality that only old books, old wine, old friends can give – it also brings a seasoned wisdom to which the young can not pretend without betraying their youth.

In many ways, it is the old that are to be envied by the young. The old have so much less to lose that often they are capable of much more dedication and commitment to the values, ideals and principles that provide meaning to all our lives.

Rabbi Gunther Plaut concludes his wise and helpful book, The Price and Privilege of Growing Old, with the assurance that we who are old deserve to be seen for who we are: individuals who don't want to spend the rest of our days as society's offal, discarded and delegitimized.

He writes that most of us still have much to give. Rescuing our potential from thoughtless waste and making it available to all will be a common benefit. "The young will learn from the exercise, and the old will acquire self-respect. It is a win-win project."

A sage once taught that a human being is like a letter of the alphabet – to produce a word, it must combine with others. For the lives of the elderly to have meaning, there must be encounter and involvement. Only through such relationships does life display the fullness of its potential for depth and beauty.

18th Maccabiah Games, Pt. 1

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

In 1912 Yosef Yekutieli, a 15-year-old Russian-born immigrant to Palestine, was so inspired by the Olympic Games in Stockholm that he starting a quest to create a similar event for Jewish athletes. After years of Yekutieli's lobbying, Tel Aviv played host to the first "Maccabiada" in 1932. Next month, 7,000 athletes from more than 50 countries will participate in the 18th Maccabiah Games. **[tinyurl.com/maccab01]**

Where does the name "Maccabiah" come from? Here are two explanations from the Encyclopedia Judaica.

• The word Maccabi is formed by taking the Hebrew acronym of the words *Mi Kamocha Ba'ay-lim Ado-shem!* Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? **[tinyurl.com/maccab 02]**

• It was named after Judah Maccabee, famous for his role in the revolt against the Greeks in the story of Chanukah. **[tinyurl.com/maccab12]**

Several websites point out an interesting irony – that Judah Maccabee "strongly disapproved of athletic games and competitions, which were a clear influence of Greek culture and were introduced into Jerusalem by his staunch enemies, the Hellenising Jews." **[tinyurl.com/maccab04]**

That didn't seem to bother Zionist Theodor Herzl, when he exhorted a century ago: "Join together, young men, we need you. Train not only your spirit, but your muscles as well. Be strong and upright and study diligently. We shall need your strength and your knowledge. I believe that a new and wonderful generation of Jews shall arise in the country. The sons of the Maccabees will return to life!" **[tinyurl.com/maccab05]**

When those first Maccabiah Games took place in Tel Aviv, Mayor Meir Dizengoff made quite the entrance into the stadium astride a white stallion. As well, "the opening ceremony witnessed the release of 120 carrier pigeons, 10 pigeons for each of the 12 tribes of Israel, whose mission was to send to the world news of the opening of the first Maccabiah Games." Those first games welcomed 390 athletes from 18 countries. **[tinyurl.com/maccab06]**

Here's a great piece of trivia from the second Maccabiah in 1935: "In defiance of the British government's strict limitations on aliyah, many competitors took advantage of their being in the Holy Land and decided to stay. Such was the decision of the entire Bulgarian delegation, which unanimously decided to make aliyah and shipped their musical instruments back to Bulgaria instead of themselves." **[tinyurl.com/maccab07]**

By 1997, the Maccabiah hosted 5,500 athletes from 50 countries. But the 15th games will always be remembered for the tragedy that caused loss of life and numerous injuries. Four members of the Australian delegation were killed and some 70 others were injured when a footbridge collapsed as they walked over it to attend the opening ceremony. Four of the five officials found guilty of negligence for the bridge collapse were sentenced to prison terms. Australia's participation in the following Maccabiah had been in doubt until Israel agreed to pay $4 million in compensation to Sasha Elterman. The Australian tennis player had been near death after ingesting a poisonous fungus in the polluted waters of the Yarkon River. **[tinyurl.com/maccab08]**

This year, representatives from Australia were on hand for the dedication of a project aimed to rehabilitate the heavily polluted Yarkon River, the primary cause of the athletes' deaths. **[tinyurl.com/maccab09]**

Although the Maccabiah may not have the international profile of other sporting events, some athletes appreciate it for the value its founders tried to instil. U.S. swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg won three gold medals in the backstroke at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Before the 16th Maccabiah in 1991, he made waves when he announced that he planned to skip that year's World Swimming Championships in Japan, just so that he could compete at the Maccabiah. In addition, he said that he plans to work with Jewish and immigrant children. "I may be wrong, but there might be a perception that Jewish kids are not athletic. Maybe I can change that trend." **[tinyurl.com/maccab10]**

If you've dreamed of competing on the international stage but aren't quite ready for the track, the pool or the rugby pitch, you may still be in luck. The Maccabiah has long featured events that require both brawn and brain. That means you, bridge and chess masters. **[tinyurl.com/maccab11]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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New IVF program helps Orthodox Jews conceive

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — An unusual collaboration between religion and science is making it possible for Orthodox Jews to undergo infertility treatment in Montreal.

The Jewish Community Council of Montreal (Vaad Ha'ir) and the McGill Reproductive Centre, located at the Royal Victoria Hospital, have officially launched a program that strictly adheres to Halachah while offering the latest technology, including in vitro fertilization (IVF).

The program has been a year in development, while the Vaad and the staff of the clinic train a volunteer corps of Orthodox Jewish women observers, who are present at all times when either the egg or sperm of an Orthodox Jew, or the resulting embryo, is exposed. This is to reassure a couple that it is, indeed, their reproductive material that is being used.

While a private infertility clinic offering supervision by observers trained by an institute in Israel was recently opened in Toronto, the McGill Reproductive Centre is the first university-based research institute in Canada to bear a certification from a rabbinical organization.

Previously, Orthodox couples often went to New York or even Israel to find this type of compliance with their beliefs.

The observers are known as mashgichot, a feminized version of the term used for men who supervise the kashrut of food. When on duty, they wear the same gowns, caps and shoe covers as everyone else at the clinic.

When no observer is present, the embryos are kept in one of two locked incubators reserved for the Orthodox program, and the eggs in two designated deep-freeze tanks that are also sealed, which were purchased with private donations from the Jewish community.

Only an observer and an embryologist normally have access to these containers.

The program came about by the coincidental arrival in Montreal from Israel within the past few years of Rabbi Yonason Binyamin Weiss, now chief of the Montreal Beth Din, and Dr. Hananel Holzer, an infertility expert who is in charge of the medical side of the program. He's the only other person who has access to the special incubators and tanks, and then only in case of emergency.

He and the centre's embryologists, who are specialized biologists, trained the observers in the medical aspects of assisted reproduction, while Rabbi Weiss trained them in Jewish law.

There are now eight observers, and another group will start being trained in a couple of weeks because of the demand for the program, Holzer said.

Rabbi Weiss, a Chassid from Bnei Brak, is an authority on the halachic interpretation of medical and bioethical issues. Holzer, an obstetrician and gynecologist, was deputy director of the IVF unit at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem for 12 years, as well as founder and director of a fertility unit in the city of Modi'in, where he had a lot of experience working with haredi communities.

Holzer, who is not Orthodox, worked closely with many of Israel's top rabbis to ensure that treatments met the letter and spirit of Jewish law.

Holzer said that two embryologists always normally witness the handling of any eggs, sperm and embryos. The Vaad-certified observers offer Orthodox patients, for whom lineage is of utmost importance, an extra level of comfort.

The couple is given the name of an observer, whom they make contact with themselves.

All of the staff at the centre have been instructed in Jewish law by Rabbi Weiss, and all may work with the eggs, sperm or embryo of Orthodox patients.

The program appears to be accepted by the even the most religiously rigorous communities in the Montreal area.

Currently, infertility treatment, which can be very expensive, is not fully covered by medicare, but a bill was tabled in April in the National Assembly would make IVF reimbursable.

There are other considerations in treating Orthodox couples for infertility besides providing observers, Holzer said. Due to prohibitions on masturbation and contraception, the only way to obtain a semen sample from the man is to provide him with a special condom with a small hole at the end.

After intercourse, the condom is brought to the clinic. None of the semen is disposed of. After analysis, it's always used in a treatment, thereby conforming to the biblical injunction against "spilling seed in vain," Holzer said.

He also has to work around laws governing when a couple must abstain from intercourse, namely the seven days following the end of a woman's menstrual period. Sometimes, medication is needed to ensure this is respected and that ovulation takes place at the right time.

Due to the strong imperative to have children, Orthodox Jews have generally embraced the new technology, Holzer said, and, in many ways, have a liberal attitude to its possibilities. In Israel, they were among his first patients for IVF.

Success rates for IVF have improved dramatically, he added. "In 1996, only 17 to 20 per cent of IVF treatments resulted in pregnancy. Today, it's up to 60 per cent."

"The Orthodox call me the shaliach [emissary] of God," he said.

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Iran will continue its attempts to 'gain legitimacy'

Continued from page 1

When asked about this, Miller said Dagan's statements were based on Israeli intelligence analyses that indicate "Iran has not gone to all this trouble and confrontation with the international community in order to break out and create an extreme crisis… for the sake of one single bomb. The assessment is that they will expand and broaden their technological and nuclear industrial base and then have the capacity to produce five or more bombs simultaneously. For this they will need a few more years, around 2014."

Until then, he said, Iran will seek to consolidate its power bases around the world and grow ever bolder in its quest to become a global Islamic "superpower."

Miller said Israel is "seeing a change in the [power] balances between regional parties [in the Middle East]. The dividing lines are changing. And Iran plays a dominant role."

Despite the ongoing grassroots protests in Tehran calling for a recount of the June 12 vote, which saw Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad re-elected, Miller said that short of full-fledged regime change – Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khameini and his Guardian Council of Islamic jurists wield the real power in Iran and govern based on their messianic interpretation of the Qur'an – any swap in leadership would be inconsequential, Miller said.

Over the weekend, Khameini threatened to quell the protests by employing the Basij – a militia loyal to the Guardian Council – to attack those calling for the democratization of Iran.

Nineteen protesters were killed Saturday, and ABC reported that 13 were killed Sunday. More than 50 protesters have been killed, although some reports estimate the number to be well over 100. Police in Iran say they have rounded up 170 reformist leaders.

Appearing Sunday on NBC's Meet the Press, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that while Israel and much of the world support the protesters and want a change in government in Iran, it's most important to prevent the sitting government from developing nuclear weapons.

Miller said Iran will continue its attempts to "gain legitimacy by exporting its radical ideas… of revolutionary terrorism. The president is a figurehead."

He cautioned those in the West who assume Iran is only the Middle East's problem to think again.

Beyond controlling its Hamas and Hezbollah proxies, "Iran today, if you look at Iraq, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Columbia, Africa, Indonesia… plays a role. [And] the Gulf states are very concerned about Iranian domination," he said.

He added that for years, Iran's confidence in its growing power has increased, and if nuclear capability is added to that mix, "you will get an Iran that will feel absolutely unstoppable.

"Iran is a master of delay tactics," Miller said, adding that the longer the world allows it to hold off sanctions and pressure through political gamesmanship, the closer it will get to realizing its goal as a nuclear power.

To try and prevent this scenario using peaceful methods, he said, Israel has embraced the new "engagement" approach put forth by U.S. President Barack Obama, calling for "regional reconciliation in the Middle East, something our government has adopted fully."

Beyond this, Miller asked western nations to understand that while Israel might be the Iran's "first target," its ballistic missile program has progressed to the point where it can also reach into western Europe, Russia and China, among others.

He warned that the international community must start cracking down now on Iranian proxy companies and organizations that funnel money back to the Islamic Republic, circumventing existing international sanctions.

"Dealing with Iran should be the top issue in the world," Miller said. "If Iran goes nuclear, the non-proliferation treaty would collapse."

Miller also praised Canada's efforts on Iran and terrorism in general, saying Israel "highly appreciates" Ottawa's stance on the Middle East, and hopes that it would use its influence in the upcoming G8 July summit in L'Aquila, Italy, to convince other states of the necessity to band together on Iran.

"Canada can make sure that the Iranian issue is given prominence."

He said the world will need to make a "serious assessment" on Iran by the time of this year's UN General Assembly meeting in New York in late September.

Israel's message to the world is that it needs to "wake up" to the Iranian threat, Miller said, and that it must accept there will be a short-term economic price to pay – likely in the price of oil – to isolate Iran politically and economically, and tamp down its belligerence.

"Iran does not want to be a pariah state. For its ideology to succeed, it needs to be a part of the international community," Miller said, suggesting that measures such as bans on travel for its diplomats and professionals, as well as oil embargoes, among other non-military tactics, can "drive the message home to Iran."

"The price [the international community] will pay today, will be much less than it will need to pay in the future when dealing with a nuclear Iran."

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Israeli real estate marketed in Toronto

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The investment potential of Israeli companies, particularly those of the cutting-edge high-tech variety, is not exactly a closely-guarded secret anymore.

But it turns out there's another kind of Israeli investment that has done quite well in recent months, holding its value as stock markets around the world tumbled.

Israeli real estate has done better than most other ventures, and it turns out people from around the world see it as a legitimate asset to add to their portfolio. Last weekend, potential investors in Toronto got to view what their counterparts in London, Milan, New York, Johannesburg and Los Angeles have already seen – a spiel by a number of Israeli developers and law firms extolling the virtues of Israeli residential properties.

Israeli real estate firms Ezorim, Gindi Holdings, Dimri Building & Development, Pollock Real Estate and Ashdar Building Company were among the participants at "the largest Israeli real estate exhibition" at the Park Hyatt Hotel.

The event marked the first time Israeli developers offered their product directly to Toronto investors, said Ainnat Lifshitz, director of marketing and sales of Bayit4U, coordinator of the event. Organized in conjunction with Bayit BeIsrael, an Israeli real estate consulting company, the event "brings companies to Canada, including bank representatives and lawyers, who give a panoramic view of Israel and cover all aspects of real estate, including legal, financial and availability issues," she said.

The focus of the exhibitors was on residential properties, which have been good performers as of late. In the last quarter in Israel, housing prices rose five per cent. Demand for homes was up 14.6 per cent in April 2009 over the same period in 2008, Lifshitz said.

"People realize that Israeli real estate [values] stood still during this economic crisis," she stated. "That's because of Israeli consumer behaviour and because Israel is small and there are not enough projects for the country."

For people in the Diaspora, purchasing a second home in Israel fulfills a dream of residing in the Holy Land while others see it in financial terms. Still other investors see it as a hedge against local anti-Semitism. Bayit BeIsrael has been quite successful in marketing Israeli product, with the exhibition in London generating interest that eventually led to 100 purchases, she said.

Whether that level of success is duplicated in Toronto remains to be seen.

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מה יהיה

בפגישה עם הילארי קלינטון הצהיר שר החוץ אביגדור ליברמן שישראל תמשיך לבנות בהתנחלויות. דברים אלה מתפרשים אצל האמריקאים כניגוד להצהרתו של נתניהו בנאום בר אילן, וכעדות לכך שהישראלים אינם אנשים הגונים. המשוואה מאוד פשוטה: נתניהו הולך על חבל דק, כשמצד אחד הוא חושש להפסיד את האמריקאים, ומצד שני הוא חושש שליברמן יעזוב את הקואליציה שלו. נתניהו גם יודע בבירור שאובמה איננו מתכוון לרדת מן הנושא. לו הייתי נתניהו-הייתי מתכנן איך להפטר מליברמן ולהחליפו בקדימה בראשות לבני. הרי הכרתו של נתניהו בשתי מדינות לשני עמים היתה התנאי של לבני להכנס לקואליציה- עכשיו כשתנאי זה קויים-עדיף לנתניהו ללכת על הסכמה רחבה ככל שאפשר, מה עוד שליברמן סולד ממנו באופן אישי ולא יהיה בהכרח נאמן לו באופן מתמשך.

אלא שאני אינני נתניהו, ונתניהו מבחינה אידיאולוגית מסכים עם ליברמן.

ועל כן-האיש היחיד שיוכל להזיז את הדברים הוא אובמה. מה שמעצבן יותר מכל, זה שהכל מילא הארטה בארטה, כי המלשתינאים מעולם לא יסכימו לוותר על שיבתם ליפו, וממילא ההמאס לא מכיר בישראל. אבל יכולתו של נתניהו לעצבן את אובמה ואת רוב אנשי העולם החפשי בעניין ההתנחלויות מעבירה את תשומת-הלב למקום הלא רצוי לישראל. חשוב מכל-רוב הישראלים תומכים בקונספט של מדינה פלשתינאית ואינם מעוניינים בהתנחלויות. אבל בשיטת הבחירות הנוכחית-ישראל קיבלה את הממשלה שעושה את ההיפך מזה.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

דודו טופז

אינני מתכוון להוסיף תילי תילים של דעזוע על המקרה הפלילי והחולני של דודו טופז. מה שהתעוררה אצלי בעקבות המקרה היא תובנה יותר עמוקה על מה שקורה לכל אחד מאתנו "אחרי השיא"- יום אחרי היציאה לגמלאות, יום אחרי הפיטורים, יום אחרי ההפסד של משרה יוקרתית או מעמד, או אפילו חבר טוב. אלה הם מצבים מאוד קשים להסתגלות, אך רובינו מסתגלים, בעזרת משפחה, חברים, וכמובן הזמן עושה את שלו.

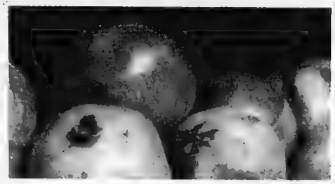
הינה דוגמא לכמה שהמשבר הגדול של הפסד מעמד ויוקרה יכול להיות מסוכן: כשהייתי סטודנט לרפואה היה מקובל בבית החולים תל השומר שמנהלי מחלקות הם כמו אפיפיורים שמכהנים עד יום מותם. ואז הגהיג מנהל בית החולים הנמרץ והצעיר, מרדכי שני, חוק שהם חייבים לפרוש כמו כולם בגיל ששים וחמש. תוך שנה פרשו חמישה מנהלים אגדיים של מחלקות כירורגיות, ותוך שנים ספורות-רובם נפטרו.

מה שקרה לדודו טופז קורה בעולם הבידור כל הזמן-תכניות ואמנים מאבדים את חינם, חרייטינג שלהם יורד והם נסוגים לזכרון הקולקטיבי. הבעיה נוצרת כשמישהו, כמו דודו טופז, תלוי באהדה הזו ומכור, ל"אהבת ההמונים" כאויר לנשימה, ואז רמות הכעס שלו על אלה "שלקחו את זה ממנו " מתגברות ועלולות להגיע לפיצוץ. אצל אחרים, כמו אלביס פרסלי, זה מביא לא אחת להתמכרות לסמים. אנשים כמוהו, אם אין להם חוסן נפשי, ורחיים חברתיים ונפשיים מלאים ויציבים- הם עלולים להיגרר להתנהגות מסוכנת. אם הם תלויים באהבה הכוזבת של קהל ולא בתכנים עמוקים ונפשיים- הם אבודים.

ומה זה אומר לגבינו, "אנשים רגילים"?

חשוב לבנות מערכות סיוע וחברות, חשוב להתכונן היטב לימים שבו נפרדים מכבוד, יוקרה, יציאה לגמלאות, או כל אירוע אחר שמביא ליריעה בדמוי העצמי. והחשוב לכל לדעתי-לא לשים את כל הביצים בסל אחד- הכרחי לפתח עניין בנושאים אחרים, בתחביבים, בעזרה לאנשים אחרים. אבל שישאר בינינו.

Stir Crazy



'Indian food – no longer alien'

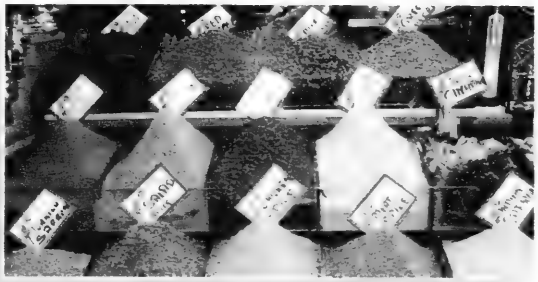
By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

When she first saw her mother-in-law's Shabbat table with the gefilte fish and then boiled chicken, Sarah Remer was slightly unnerved. The fare was as alien to her as the samosas and bhajis of her native Calcutta were to her husband's family.

Recalling that long-ago time, Remer chuckles, not just at the memory, but because her Jewish-Indian cooking eventually won new fans from unexpected quarters. "My mother-in-law took my recipes," she says.

Little wonder. Those recipes, fragrant with cardamom, cumin and cinnamon, bright with turmeric and sizzling with mustard seeds and shards of fresh ginger, are delicious without intimidating tamer palates. Indeed, a heaping platter of crispy samosas that she made recently for her granddaughter's Jewish school classmates was "demolished."

Since arriving in Montreal as a young woman with her family in 1961, Remer has kept to the style of cooking that has nourished centuries of her ancestors in India (on her father's side) dating back to around the time of the First Temple. When she married, she continued to cook the way her mother did: pilafs of rice and lentils, vegetable dishes known as bahjis and the one-pot triad of rice and vegetables with fish or chicken called baltis.



Vera Gillman photos

Exotic is in – even in kosher cooking – but 40 years ago, the spices and condiments integral to Indian recipes were not readily available here. How were authentic dishes replicated? Remer recalls that her mother would receive packets of spices from aunts in England or family still in India.

But the spice cupboard in Remer's airy kitchen reveals a diverse group of seasonings that have long since joined "mainstream" spice racks in supermarkets: garam masala, cinnamon sticks, whole cumin (destined for a coffee grinder), chili powder, ground coriander, turmeric, cardamom pods, anise, mustard seeds. In addition to "dry" seasonings Remer also makes liberal use of fresh leaves of coriander and mint, knobs of ginger and pudgy cloves of garlic. Even kosher coconut milk is no longer a stretch.

Much of what she cooks is pareve, marrying well with meat or chicken. For Shabbat lunch, the Remer household might enjoy turmeric-rubbed chicken scented with cloves, cinnamon and cardamom, cooked on a bed of basmati rice crisp with onions. It's a *chamim* dish (a slow-cooked Shabbat stew) prepared in a most unusual but stunning beaten-aluminum pot from India once used in the clay oven of the Calcutta home of her youth.

Continued on page 22

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Red lentils and basmati rice at home

Continued from page 21

On a recent spring afternoon, Remer, who likes to keep it simple, gives this visitor a cooking demonstration, and from the taste, it's easy to see why Indian cuisine has such star power in vegetarian kitchens. (For those who want to get started, Martha Rose Shulman's Spicy Vegetarian Feasts has several excellent recipes that tilt to the Indian table. There is also Mavis Hyman's Indian-Jewish Cooking, published in England).

• • •

For red lentils and basmati rice: toast one teaspoon of cumin seed in a little oil, add a sliced onion and saute until golden. Add four whole cloves, one two-inch stick of cinnamon, three minced cloves of garlic, half a teaspoon of turmeric and a little salt. Mix well and heat gently for a minute or two to release their flavours. Stir in 1 cup basmati rice, half a cup of red lentils and three cups of water. Bring to a boil, turn down heat and simmer, covered, for about 45 minutes. Remove cinnamon stick before serving.

For the vegetable: To a little oil heated in a deep skillet, add one teaspoon of mustard seeds and cover pan till they pop. (Keep the heat low to avoid burning.) When seeds are done, add a medium diced onion and three small potatoes cubed. Stir fry for 5-10 minutes, adding a little water if the mixture gets dry.

Now add half a teaspoon of turmeric, a diced large tomato, a small head of cut-up cauliflower, one teaspoon of cumin powder, one half to one teaspoon of freshly grated ginger and a little salt. Mix well, cover and simmer 15 minutes, adding water if necessary.

Serve this and the rice/lentils with fish.

'Genetic modified food safe – so far,' Israeli scientist says

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

An Israeli scientist defended the genetic engineering of food for human consumption as a means of improving the production and nutrition of plants, as well as reducing the need for pesticides.

Gad Galili, head of the Mel Dobrin Centre for Nutrition at the Weizmann Institute of Science, said no health risks have been associated with genetically modified (GM) crops after more than 10 years of commercial production on some 120 million hectares of land.

He was a guest speaker in Montreal at a panel discussion on nutrition and health, sponsored by Weizmann Science Canada and designed for women.

Galili was less definite in taking a position on whether GM foods will prove to be safe over the longer term.

"There is not a simple answer. Who can predict? We don't know the long-term effects," he acknowledged.

Despite his defence, Galili counselled the public to raise its concerns about GM foods, not to stop them, but to ensure that they are developed in a way that means the benefits outweigh any hazards.

Galili, chair of the department of plant science, urged that the controversial issue of GM foods be put into perspective. The development of these engineered crops can alleviate world hunger and malnutrition, he maintained.

Continued on page 23

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Fruits, veggies promote health

Continued from page 22

Breeding is not the solution because natural genes cannot be transferred between different plant species, he said. Usually, only one or two genes are added to a plant in any scientific intervention.

He also noted that fruits and vegetables marketed as organic are not necessarily any safer than regular produce, because they can harbour bacteria like salmonella if they are fertilized with manure.

The program's moderator, chemist Joe Schwarcz, director of McGill University's Office for Science and Society, noted that "unfortunately," the only GM foods in Canada are soy, corn and canola.

Generally, Galili encouraged the consumption of more and a greater variety of plant-based foods for the many different antioxidants they contain. Plants produce these compounds to protect themselves from threats coming from their environment. In humans, antioxidants counter the damaging free radicals produced in the body by oxygen, and they help to counter illness and aging, he said.

Humans have about 800 compounds per cell, while plants typically have 20,000 compounds per cell, and only a fraction of them are fully understood. "And there are probably many thousand more that we do not know about," he said.

Much more research is needed to also understand the metabolism that produces these compounds and the genes that regulate their production, he said.

Galili was joined by Dr. Richard Béliveau, author of the bestselling book Foods That Fight Cancer, who holds the chair in cancer prevention and treatment at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and chef and cooking instructor Shawna Goodman-Sone.

Béliveau said almost everyone over age 40 has microscopic tumours in their body, and diet is a major factor in whether they become "clinically relevant." Heredity is much less significant in getting cancer than is commonly thought, he said, and is a factor in less than 15 per cent of cases.

Maintaining a healthy body weight is also key in cancer prevention, he said.

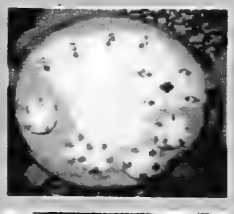
He strongly urges the consumption of a variety of vegetables and fruits, at least five servings a day, and seven for those over 50, as well as other plant foods like green tea, ginger and spices. Of course, one must also avoid or cut back on foods that can contribute to the development of cancer. Among these, he includes red meat. No more than a pound a week should be eaten, he said.

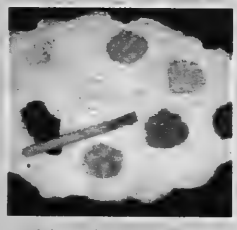
Goodman-Stone demonstrated how some "superfoods" can be incorporated into meals.

She helped design the luncheon menu, which included chickpea hummus, a red cabbage and grapefruit slaw, edamame (fresh soybeans), and a barley and lentil pilaf. There were also plenty of vegetables, and the animal protein –chicken – served more as a condiment than as the main feature of the plate.

Dessert was also healthy, consisting of a bittersweet chocolate shell filled with berries. The beverage during the meal was pomegranate juice, and green tea or coffee were served afterward.

Culinary artist teaches kids to cook





By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Her delicate pastry melts in the mouth. Her soft, chewy gingerbread tantalizes taste buds. Her light-as-air cupcakes are heaven on earth. Her treats are simply addictive.

Some order her rugelach by the dozen, while others count down to blowing out candles on her custom cake creations. To her family and friends and those who have discovered her business, she is a master of her craft. Once a budding baker, Julia Giddens is now satisfying sweet teeth all over the city.

Whatever the occasion, whoever the client, Giddens will please any palate. Whether she's making dreidel cookies frosted in blue and white for Chanukah or chocolate-dipped strawberries for Valentine's Day, she will find a way to combine creativity with flavour.

Continued on page 24

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Teacher combines baking and art

Cont'd from page 23

Ever since Giddens was a little girl, she found joy and comfort in the kitchen. Her earliest baking memory dates back to childhood – she was caught sitting on the counter covered in a mixture of flour and water that her brother had helped her prepare. The episode was documented on video, and to this day represents the 25-year-old's greatest passion.

It's fitting that Giddens' business is called Batterfingers (416-569-9337). From a hobby to a successful venture, her baking is becoming her career.

While she originally studied to be a teacher, Giddens has chosen a path less travelled. She's combined her skills with her love of children and created the perfect recipe – a lunch-time cooking class for elementary students. Run in schools across Toronto, the program allows kids to bake in a safe and sanitary manner, rewarding them with their goodies at the end of the hour.

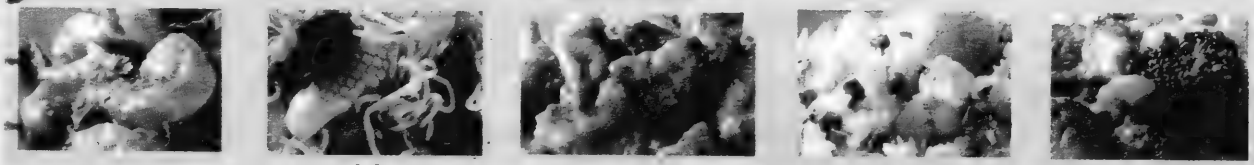
Giddens supplies the ingredients and the utensils, and guides the group with step-by-step instructions. In addition to making delectable desserts, she also prepares appetizers and main courses with the children, including personal pizzas, stir fry and lasagna.

She has recently expanded her cooking lessons to include birthday parties, adding an option of arts and crafts. Parents can choose which activities and foods they prefer – constructing tissue paper flower pots, decorating cupcakes or making salt sundaes are just a few possibilities. Giddens says her ultimate goal is to open her own studio, where those who are hungry to learn the art of baking can all come together.

Until then, Giddens will continue to whip up her treats in the home where her talent was born. She's declared the basement oven her own property, beause she's able to focus and avoid distraction there. Giddens ensures her workspace is kosher and that her goods are free of nuts (her candied almonds, however, are an exception). Since many children have food allergies, she's sensitive to their restrictions.

While the positive feedback keeps Giddens going, it's the artist in her that wants to keep flourishing. She looks forward to celebrating milestones and simchahs, as they give her an excuse to jazz up her baking. One impressive creation was a four-tier wedding cake she made for her cousin – not to mention the giant engagement ring cake she made for her brother.

C'EST BON



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Toronto entrepreneur creates social networking for a cause

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

Among the many victims of the economic crisis, charitable organizations have been particularly hard hit. But one innovative Toronto entrepreneur is stepping in to help fill the gap.

David Katz, a former communications and marketing consultant, launched Jackthedonkey.com in March as an online social networking site. Unlike most ventures of its kind, however, Katz's site donates more than half of its advertising revenue to non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.

"Even the charities that people might think are established, they're really struggling right now. These are the ones who are trying to make a better world for all of us, and I would hate to see them lose the momentum they've been creating," Katz said.

A graduate of the Schulich School of Business at York University, Katz spent 10 years working as a consultant while volunteering for organizations such as the Special Olympics. After a while, however, he found himself looking for a more meaningful full-time career.

"I was leading a fairly conservative life, you go to work, you go home, and I realized there wasn't a lot of value in what I was doing in the corporate world," he said.

David Katz

Inspired by his involvement with non-profit organizations, he hatched the idea for Jack the Donkey in September 2008, and decided to make it his main occupation.

"I see so many people spending so many hours a day on social networking sites, and it's such a good opportunity to make some money for charities," he explained.

Jack the Donkey started as a simple picture-sharing site, but based on the encouragement of its initial users, Katz decided to turn it into a full-fledged social networking venue. Now, in addition to sharing photos, users can meet and interact with others on the site, both those they know offline as well as those they don't.

"The whole idea was to create a social network where you just so happen to be making money for the charity of your choice," Katz said.

When users register, they are able to choose from a list of charities to benefit from their time online. Each page view generates two cents, Katz said, with 55 per cent of that going directly to charity. So far, 15 non-profit organizations and about 500 users have signed up.

In addition to reaching out to non-profit organizations, Katz also recruits advertisers himself, rather than relying on third-party agencies. So far he has drawn most of his support from local Toronto businesses, but he believes that as the site grows it will provide a unique advertising venue.

"The whole theory behind Jack the Donkey is that there are a lot of really rich corporations that sponsor golf tournaments or stadiums and so on. Here companies can sponsor on a smaller scale and have a big impact in terms of good will," he said.

Jack the Donkey founder David Katz lends a helping hand to struggling charities.

Online social networking sites are a hot-ticket item at the moment, but starting up a new one is not so simple. While Facebook and Twitter have become Internet juggernauts, the once-mighty MySpace has been losing ground and others, such as Friendster or Orkut, are barely even on the radar any longer.

Katz, however, believes that Jack the Donkey has an approach that distinguishes it from its more entrenched competitors, aside from the obvious draw of supporting worthwhile causes.

While Facebook has been the most successful social networking site to date, it doesn't provide users with enough of an opportunity to interact with those outside of their own social bubble, Katz said. Jack the Donkey, he believes, takes an approach that is more in tune with the frontier mentality of the Internet, where the possibilities of interaction are more open.

"My whole issue with Facebook is that I got bored with the same people seeing the same status updates. We're trying to push people towards meeting other people on the site," Katz said.

"We've created a website that provides you with a lot of the functionality of Facebook, but you're not going to be limited to your clique. There's an element of randomness, kind of a choose your own adventure, where once you click on one profile you are exposed to a new group you wouldn't have found as easily in some other communities," he added.

In this respect, Katz is inspired by Twitter, the micro-blogging platform that allows users to post updates of 140 characters or less.

"Facebook is where you go to meet people you know, whereas Twitter is where you go to meet people you want to know," he said.

With Twitter, however, Katz found it difficult to keep up with the high volume of updates, and he believes that Jack the Donkey can provide a more manageable middle ground.

"It provides you with that shotgun approach of Twitter, a much stronger opportunity to actually network and meet people. But on Jack the Donkey, it's not quite that hyper energy," he said.

Besides being useful and enjoyable for users and raising money for charities, Jack the Donkey also has a broader mission of getting people interested in worthwhile causes, as well as helping non-profit organizations reach out to a larger public.

"We want to use the whole soft-sell approach to get people involved in fundraising, activism, volunteerism," Katz said.

"There's so many different causes out there that are important. I think it's an opportunity for all of these different charities and causes to work together and create something special."

On Campus

Panel addresses anti-Israel 'crisis' on campus

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

A wave of misinformation is being used by the media and academics to attack Israel, according to a panel that spoke at York University recently.

Crisis on Canadian Campuses, a June 11 panel discussion organized by Hillel at York and hosted by Chabad Lubavitch, was held in advance of a two-day conference called Israel Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace.

The panellists expressed concern about what they said was the June 22-24 conference's agenda to push for a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which many fear would put an end to the Jewish state. They also discussed the hostile climate on campus between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian students.

Held in advance of York conference

Compared with the anti-Israel activities of the early 1980s, "the situation has [worsened] dramatically," said panel moderator Guidy Mamann, an immigration law specialist and a York graduate. "Today, when I spoke to some of the young students who were going [to York], they described incalculable fear on campus, and that is because things almost seem to be out of control."

University of Toronto associate professor of molecular genetics Sean Egan noted that many academic institutions have a long history of anti-western, pro-totalitarian ideologies, and he criticized what he said are the lack of legitimate credentials that are needed to be published on issues of foreign policy and race relations in academic journals.

"It's no coincidence that many of the most influential academics have achieved high stature through ideology rather than scholarship. We can call to mind famous academics trained in linguistics or English literature who have established fame and fortune by attacking Israel," said Egan, who was one of the signatories of an ad opposing Israeli Apartheid Week at U of T signed by 125 faculty members this spring and published in the National Post.

He suggested several steps that should be implemented in order to make not just campuses, but all public institutions and communities safer for everyone.

The first step, Egan said, is sensitivity training that would educate future generations about the positive contributions of Jews to world culture. He also believes it is necessary for Jewish and Christian organizations to unite in order to combat hostility toward Judeo-Christian values.

In addition, Egan suggested that free speech conferences on campuses that promote anti-western ideologies should be filmed as evidence of what actually transpires during these meetings.

"We need to get the university administrations to agree to film these events as the least they can do to provide a campus free of threat and intimidation," he said.

Eldad Zacksenhaus of the University Health Network cancer research institute said that the far left's agenda on university campuses is part of "a long campaign to delegitimize, dehumanize and eventually destroy Israel and its Jewish populace."

Zacksenhaus, who was also one of the signatories of the ad opposing Israeli Apartheid Week, said anti-Zionist hate speech is able to flourish on campuses because it is being "camouflaged" as free speech, mostly by Arabs and their left-wing supporters.

But despite the propaganda disseminated by the Muslim world, Zacksenhaus believes that anti-Israel Jews may be a worse threat.

"It is most frustrating to watch Israeli Jews bash Israel and call for the destruction of the State of Israel... We must stop acting as apologists to those who wish to destroy us," he said.

Ron Banerjee, director of the Hindu Conference of Canada, spoke about the unwavering support of the Hindu community for Israel and the Jewish community, as both nations can empathize with the struggles of the other.

"It is not enough just to say that India is a good friend of Israel. It is more accurate to say that the Hindu majority of India is a friend of the Jewish people," he said.

Banerjee compared the plight of the Hindu nationalist party to that of Jewish Zionists, and he assured the audience that organizations such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which together encompass tens of millions of Hindu nationalists, stand behind Israel's fight for justice.

"It is really the largest consolidated block of pro-Israel, pro-Zionist support anywhere on the planet," he said of the Hindu groups.

The fourth panellist was Meir Weinstein, national director of the Jewish Defence League of Canada.

On cjnews.com

An open, non-judgmental environment that embraces all affiliations is what Rabbi Tina Grimberg believes our community should be striving for. Rabbi Grimberg likens the attitude that the Jewish community should have toward LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gendered) individuals to the biblical story of how Abraham treated the three visitors to his tent, following his conversion.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Albert Socol, California, formerly of Toronto, turned 100 recently. Albert has 1 granddaughter, 3 grandsons, 2 great-grandsons, 3 great-granddaughters and another on the way.

Mazel tov Nathan Wolgelerenter on graduating from Grade 5 at Associated Hebrew Schools. With love from Mom, Dad and Noah!

Marc & Margie Socol announce the birth of Anna Margaret in Denver. Grandparents, Christina & Edward Slawinski, Elaine & Harvey Socol. Great-grandfather Albert Socol.

Mazel tov to Lauren Nightingale & Matthew Ginsburg on your recent engagement! Proud parents, Karen & Benny Nightingale and Karen & Jon Ginsburg.

Mazel tov Brandon on your graduation from CHAT. We are proud of your achievements. Good luck at U of T. Love Mom, Dad, Cassie & Andrea.

Happy first birthday Zoie Marie Starkman. We love you. From your loving parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines. Monday, June 22, is the deadline for the July 2 issue and Monday, June 29, is the deadline for the July 9 issue. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

Thursday, June 25

MEDIA MARKETING

UJA Israeli Forum Business Cabinet Division and the Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce presents "New Media Marketing Strategies." Panel **Stacy Jarvis**, Microsoft Canada; **Zack Havat**, Searchlings; **Simi Grosman**, Hawk Consultants; Moderator **Avi Pollock**, RBC. Light dinner. Lipa Green Bldg., 4600 Bathurst St., 6:30 p.m. $20 early reservation, $25 at the door. RSVP **Glenda Gomperts**, 416-631-5707, or www.ujaevents.com/registration strategies.

Saturday, June 27

SHABBAT TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah weekly Torah class. Parshat Korah, led by **Eyal Biton**. 10-11 a.m. For more information, call **Henry Alkin**, 416-491-4746.

Sunday, June 28

GARAGE SALE

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada Toronto section holds its annual garage sale. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 4700 Bathurst St. Donations accepted until June 26. Contact 416-633-5100, fax 416-633-1956.

ZAREINU PRO TOUR

Zareinu Moveathon Pro Tour 50, 100 or 162.5-km rides. Starts Bishop Reding High School, 1120 Main St. E., Milton, then along Niagara Escarpment. Pre- and post-ride massages, food and rest stops, showers and change room, finish line BBQ. Minimum sponsorship $1,000. To register or for more information, go to www.moveathon.com.

MEDINA THEATRE

Medina Theatre Ensemble presents a staged reading performance of **Joe DiPietro**'s play Over the River and Through the Woods. Directed by **Mario D'Alimonte**. Earl Bales Community Centre, 2 p.m. Admission $5. New members welcome. For information, call **Lola**, 416-781-8076, or **Morris**, 416-785-0344.

Other News

CANADA DAY

Bernard Betel Centre Canada Day Festival, June 24, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Farmers market, vendors, book sale, BBQ lunch, special entertainment, Canada Day cake. Free admission.

YARCHEI KALLAH

Fifteenth annual Nishmat Yarchei Kallah, with **Rabbanit Chana Henkin**, founder and dean, Nishmat. The Jeanie Schottenstein Centre for Advanced Torah Study for Women. Three mornings of Torah study, in pairs, small groups, or a group guided by **Ilana Sober Elzufon**. This year, Out of the Whirlwind: Sefer Iyov (The Book of Job) Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave. Sponsored by Canadian Friends of Nishmat, Emunah Women of Toronto and Mekorot Institute of Torah Study for Women. For more information, call 416-880-7417, or e-mail denise.cfn@gmail.com.

JEWISH ROOTS

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) Library presents an exhibit of selections from its collection. Highlights include photographs of life in the European shtetl, texts describing the building of Jewish settlements across the country, Jewish immigrant culture in early Toronto, and statistical records from the Holocaust. Barbara Frum District Library, 20 Covington Rd., until July 31.

JEWISH TORONTO

Jewish Information Service of

Continued on page 29

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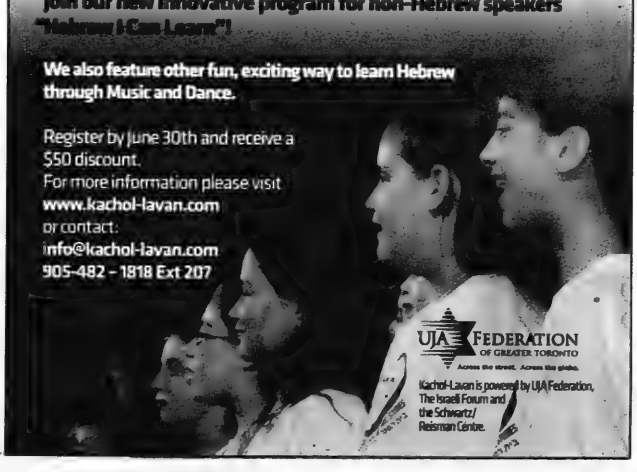
UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
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Kachol-Lavan is powered by UJA Federation, The Israeli Forum and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre.

Continued from page 28

Greater Toronto offers info on a wide variety of topics including community events, holidays, shuls, camps, kosher restaurants.

Shalom Toronto welcomes new residents to the Toronto Jewish community with a warm greeting and a gift basket.

Moving? JIS can help find a basement apartment, room, or shared space.

New baby? JIS/UJA Federation personally welcomes baby with a package which includes a personalized certificate, picture frame and more.

Call 416-635-5600, e-mail jinfo@ujafed.org, or on the web, www.jewishtoronto.com

CIRCLE OF CARE

Volunteers needed – Kosher Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers. Jewish hospice visitors, escorts to medical appointments, friendly visiting. Professional training and orientation provided. Call **Penny**, 416-635-2860, ext. 462, or pedwards@circleofcare.com. A great way to make a difference in your community.

ORILLIA COUNTRY SHUL

Shabbat services during July and August begin again, starting at 10:30 a.m. 151 Creighton St. S. Congregational leaders will be **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**, July 4; **Elliott Melamet**, July 11; **Lionel Sharp**, July 18; **Rabbi Cory Weiss**, July 15; **Rabbi Michael Dolgin**, Aug. 1; **Cantor Tom Schwartz**, Aug. 8; **Rabbi Daniel Gottlieb**, Aug. 15; **Rabbi Tina Grimberg**, Aug. 22; **Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld**, Aug. 29. For more information and directions, call 705-327-7069.

ADULT MINI SCHOOL

Registration is now open for the Florence Melton Adult Mini School. Morning or evening classes, in a choice of locations. Classes start mid-September and run for 30 weeks, two hours each week. For more details and registration information, call **Loretta**, 416-633-3838, ext. 240.

JWIC SERVICES

Jewish Women International Canada offers speakers on domestic abuse, sometimes known as woman abuse or relationship abuse, in the Jewish community. Trained speakers are available for your group, free of charge. Call 416-630-9313, fax 416-630-9319, or www.jwicanada.com.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday, 10 a.m., Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave.. For information, call 416-630-9444.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, July 22, 9 a.m. departure. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. Bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Mah Jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Bridge, Thursdays 12:30-3. Wheelchair and walker accessible. Non-members welcome. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

BJCC. Learn to be comfortable with the Internet, websites and e-mail. Covers surfing the web, using search engines and e-mail, and computer and Internet basics, such as address bar, menus and other tools. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. Members $55, non-members $70. Call **Eran Barlev**, 416-636-1880, ext. 464, or ebarlev@bjcc.ca.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

The outdoor pool is officially open. Call ext. 291 for membership information.

Are you ages 13-16, and interested in learning about the Maccabi Games? Call **Grant**, at ext. 257, or gsmith@bjcc.ca.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

Pride @ the J: Play reading. Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath by **Phil Pivnick**. Directed by **David Gale**. With **Cayle Chernin, Sascha Cole, Jack Newman, Jordan Pettle, Gerry Salsberg** and **David Tomlinson**. Al Green Theatre, June 25, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation $8. Sponsored by Entertainment One with support from Kulanu Toronto. For more information, ext. 606 or esthera@mnjcc.org.

Fringe of Toronto Theatre Festival @ the J. Sheep in Fog Theatre Company of Montreal presents Puck Bunny, by **Lindsay Wilson**, directed by **Alexandra West**, and featuring **Joanne Sarazen**. July 1-12, 8 p.m. Tickets $10. Phone 416-966-1062, or online fringetoronto.com.

Israel Dance Festival 2009, July 3, 4, 5. Three guest Israeli choreographers, **Yaron Carmel, Gadi Bitton** and **Yaron Ben Simchon**. Intensive Israeli folk dancing workship. Includes a Friday night Shabbat dinner, performances, and more. Call **Sofie**, 416-221-6280, sofsof@sympatico.ca; or **Laurie**, 416-789-1671 or knarjys0327@rogers.com; or www.israelifolkdancing toronto.com.

Summer Hebrew Courses. Modern Hebrew for Beginners – from scratch; Modern Hebrew for Beginners Level Bet; Intensive Grammar course; Expand Your Vocabulary; Hebrew Through Song; Hebrew Grammar Essentials; four workshops. Ext. 0

Cooking Classes with **Elise Burton**, July 21 and Aug. 26. Easy Summer Soups and Salads. 6:30-9 p.m., $25 per class. Ext. 0.

Zion Ozeri: one history, many stories; a family album of Israel at 60, Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Co-presented with Koffler Centre of the Arts. More information at ext. 133, or harrietw@mnjcc.org.

Deadline for entries to the Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition is June 30. First prize, professionally directed and performed public play reading at Miles Nadal JCC. For guidelines and more information, contact **Esther Arbeid**, ext. 606 or esthera@mnjcc.org.

KOFFLER CENTRE

Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880, www.kofflerarts.org.

Joshua Neustein, Margins; Contemporary Art unraveling the Dead Sea Scrolls. Presented by the Institute for Comtemporary Culture and the Koffler Gallery, June 27 to Jan. 3, 2010. Royal Ontario Museum. The installation combines drawing, sculptural and textual elements engaging in a poetic reflection on writing, philosophy and religion. Monday to Sunday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., For more information, ext. 268, or 416-586-5524, kofflergallery@kofflerarts.org, or icc@rom.on.ca.

TRACK DONATION: Grandchildren of the late Larry Wise at the l'chaim at the Lipa Green building celebrating the gift of the Larry and Laurie Wise indoor running track, which will be part of the Prosserman JCC, Sherman campus.

IMMIGRANTS RECOGNIZED: Twins Rosalind and Lorelei Silverman were among the 25 recent recipients of the Canadian Immigrant Awards, sponsored by Royal Bank of Canada, recognizing the contributions of immigrants to their new country. Royal Bank makes a donation to a charity chosen by the recipients. The Silvermans chose the Beth Tzedec Musical Fund for which they both make décor and costumes. The fund, led by Cantor Simon Spiro and his wife Aliza Spiro, produces musical events for the Jewish community. Seen from left are Andrea Metrick, Royal Bank Canada's head of client strategy and multicultural markets; Lorelei Silverman and Rosalind Silverman.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 20

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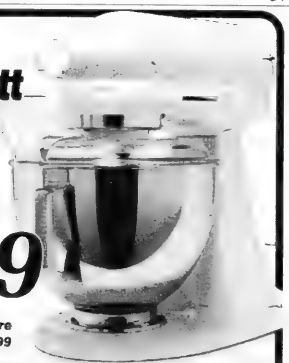

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OBITUARIES
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Steeles Memorial Chapel

Blustein, Jack	June 6/09	83 Forest Heights Blvd
Kolunovsky, Arkady	June 5/09	Private
Lavine, Samuel	June 7/09	56 Old Park Rd
Weinrib, Shirley	June 7/09	541 Finch Ave. W
Weinstein, Marcus E.	June 7/09	1131 Steeles Ave. W
Schwartzstein, Eliezer	June 8/09	5 Fisherville Rd
Bogach, Larry	June 8/09	29 Beaumont Place
Leibach, William	June 9/09	240 Heath St. W
Greenberg, Sydney	June 9/09	150 Red Maple Rd
Finkelstein, Harry	June 9/09	623 Finch Ave. W
Becker, Patricia Leah	June 10/09	
Katzman, Annie	June 10/09	Private
Gurr, Michelle	June 11/09	4005 Don Mills Rd

HEBREW BASIC

Dvoyra Faynshtayn	Jun 13/09	33 Drewry Ave.

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Stan Allen	Jun 7/09	28 Brownstone Circle
Frances Dobbs	Jun 7/09	131 Beecroft Road
Jack Glass	Jun 8/09	12 Hillside Drive
Martha Kellner	Jun 8/09	18 Ancroft Place
Helen Woolven	Jun 9/09	38 Carluke Crescent
Reta Antflyck	Jun 9/09	21 Ida Street
Harold Ross	Jun 9/09	5444 Yonge Street
Herbert Jaeger	Jun 9/09	3270 Bathurst Street
Jack Kotzer	Jun 7/09	10 Humewood Drive
Larry Riczker	Jun 9/09	186 Brickstone Circle
Abram Bryks	Jun 10/09	536 Rustic Road
Morton Marder	Jun 11/09	300 Orange Crescent
Al Denov	Jun 10/09	727 Annette Street
Isadore/Smitty Kerzner	Jun 12/09	8 Covington Rd.
Irving Pomeranz	Jun 13/09	85 Skymark Drive
Lisa Levitt	Jun 13/09	6 St. Thomas Street
Donny Jubas	Jun 13/09	5444 Yonge Street

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
GIGI SCHAFFEL SCHWARTZ ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 5, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Phase 5 - Section IIIII
Relatives and friends are invited to attend
Refreshments following

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
VICTOR FINKELMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 28th at 2:00 p.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Shomrei Shabbos
Chevra Mishnayoth Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
PEARL BLACKMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 28th at 11:30 a.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
Workmen's Circle Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MOLLY COLOMBY ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 28th at 10:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Jacob Kotler ז"ל

You were pulled away on a current of tears 2 years ago at the tender age of eight. It's so hard to believe that 2 years have passed since we saw your sweet face and held your hand. Your tireless days were spent chasing after every chance to generate laughter. And though now we can never see you play in the park, you'll still play on forever in the park of our hearts. Your joy will always light our eyes. Life is measured by impact, not span. We'll laugh, sing and dance all the time thanks to the impact of one little man. This is his gift. Sadly missed and forever in our hearts!
Your dear family, bubbie Elayne, aunts, uncles and cousins.

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U.S. intelligence opposed to Pollard parole

By AMIR OREN
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The U.S. government's intelligence establishment comprises 16 agencies, but despite intra-agency rivalry, the heads of all of them agree on opposing early parole for Jonathan Pollard, who is scheduled to be released on Nov. 21, 2015.

The question of an early parole for Pollard – as former U.S. naval intelligence analyst who was convicted of spying for Israel and sentenced to life in prison in 1987 – was raised at a recent Senate committee hearing.

The way the question was raised at the Senate committee suggests there may have been an intentional effort to foil an initiative for the release of Pollard, 54.

Vice-Admiral Mike McConnell, who until last January was director of national intelligence, and his successor, Admiral Dennis Blair, were at the hearing. Both are navy men, and it's their arm of the defence forces that Pollard, a civilian, robbed.

They don't forget and won't forgive.

The following was asked of McConnell. "During [former] president [George W.] Bush's recent visit to Israel, the case of Jonathan Pollard was reportedly on the unofficial agenda. During the 1998 Wye River Summit, then-director of central intelligence, George Tenet, threatened to resign if Mr. Pollard's life sentence was commuted. Are you opposed to the release of Mr. Pollard? How would the release of Mr. Pollard affect the intelligence community and our national security interests?"

Jonathan Pollard
[CJN file photo]

McConnell's response on behalf of the community was clear. "We are unequivocally opposed to leniency for Mr. Pollard. This is the unanimous view of the counterintelligence community. Our reasons are still best stated in the Jan. 30, 1996, letter from then-FBI director Louis Freeh to then-attorney general [Janet] Reno and the strong stance taken in 1998 by then-director of central intelligence Tenet. Additional classified information, previously submitted to the SSCI [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence] during the years of this matter remains valid as to the grave national damage caused by this individual. Clemency for Pollard will undermine U.S. security practices and complicate U.S. counterintelligence programs."

The U.S. intelligence community has not altered its position. This is a hint to the Israeli government and its various agencies that are preparing to seek an earlier parole for Pollard.

Jewish man's killer gets death sentence in Yemen

JTA

JERUSALEM — A Yemen appeals court sentenced a Jewish man's killer to death on the same day that 16 Yemeni Jews arrived in Israel.

Abdul-Aziz al-Abdi was sentenced to death Sunday nearly three months after a lower court ruled that he was mentally unfit and ordered him to a psychiatric institution. The victim's father had appealed the lower court ruling.

Al-Abdi, a retired air force pilot, shot Jewish teacher Moshe Yaish Nahari last December in a town north of the capital of Sanaa. Al-Abdi told police that he had sent a message to Jews in the neighbourhood that they should either convert to Islam or be killed.

Also Sunday, three families of Yemeni Jews landed at Ben-Gurion International Airport to make aliyah under the auspices of the Jewish Agency.

The rescue of the 16 Jews comes after a family of 10 was brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency in March.

More than 250 Jews are living in Yemen. Following a spate of anti-Semitic attacks, as well as Nahari's murder, the Yemeni government allocated buildings to relocate approximately 50 families to Sanaa. The United Jewish Communities is working to bring 113 Yemeni Jews to a Satmar chassidic community in New York State. That has caused friction with the World Zionist Organization, which objects to the fact that the Satmars are not Zionists and believes the refugees should be relocated to their ancestral homeland.

'We try to motivate people to speak on behalf of the issue'

Continued from page 1

Speaking on behalf of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC), Irwin Cotler described the events that followed the 1947 rejection by Palestinian and Arab leaders of a UN plan to establish a Jewish and a Palestinian state. The result was the creation of a Palestinian refugee population, along with "a second, almost unknown, group of refugees, namely Jewish refugees from Arab countries."

Cotler, a Liberal MP and former justice minister, said narratives of the Middle East conflict usually omit reference to Jewish refugees, focusing almost exclusively on the plight of Palestinians. Yet, around the time the Palestinian and wider Arab leadership was proclaiming a "war of extermination" against the Jewish state, Arab countries were acting against their indigenous Jewish populations – "disenfranchising them, dispossessing them of their property, arbitrarily arresting and detaining them, imprisoning and torturing them, and also murdering them," he told the parliamentarians.

Following his presentation to the deputies, Cotler addressed the Italy-Israel Parliamentary Group on Iran and the Rome Jewish community on the issue of justice for Jews from Arab lands.

The hearings in Rome were organized with the support of Fiama Nirenstein, vice-chair of the foreign affairs committee in the Italian parliament. Nirenstein has taken an interest in the issue and has agreed to champion it in the Chamber of Deputies, said Stanley Urman, executive director of JJAC.

Parliamentarians in other European democracies have likewise lent their support to JJAC's efforts to publicize the history of Middle Eastern and North African Jews. Some 850,000 were made refugees – more than the number of Palestinian refugees – but their situation has been largely ignored. JJAC contends any peace settlement involving Palestinian refugees must take into account the interest of Jewish refugees.

MP Irwin Cotler testifies before the foreign affairs committee of the Italian parliament on June 16, 2009, with committee vice-chair Fiamma Nirenstein looking on.

Bringing the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab lands to the Italian Chamber of Deputies is part of a wider educational strategy. "We have targeted the Quartet as the main international entity trying to promote peace negotiations," Urman said. The Quartet comprises the European Union, the United States, the United Nations and Russia.

"JJAC is a catalyst. We try to motivate and mobilize the most important people to speak on behalf of the issue," Urman said.

Cotler, an honorary co-chair of JJAC, who has also made the case for Jewish refugees to British MPs and the U.S. Congress, is scheduled to address German parliamentarians in early July.

The U.S. Congress has adopted a JJAC proposal, passing a law that advises U.S. diplomats to raise the issue of Jewish refugees in international forums when Palestinian refugees are cited, Urman said.

Italy is an important player on this issue, as the country hosted many Libyan and Egyptian Jews who fled their homelands.

According to JJAC's website (www.justiceforjews.com), from 1949 to 1951, 30,000 Jews fled Libya. A series of anti-Jewish laws were passed beginning in the 1950s, one of which allowed the state to seize Jewish-owned property if the owner had any contact with Zionism.

Urman said JJAC's purpose is to convince opinion makers "to accept the fact there were two victim peoples of the Middle East conflict. The Palestinians demand Israel accept responsibility for the suffering of [displaced] Palestinians. We demand the Arab world accept responsibility for the ill treatment of Jews and for losses we have suffered."

Cotler said that many people who are otherwise well informed have never heard of the "forgotten exodus" of Jewish refugees.

He suggested the remedy for the victims of this "forced exodus" included "active remembrance," acknowledgment by the perpetrators, the need for the UN to include Jewish refugees in any Mideast negotiations and to eventually provide financial restitution to Jewish victims.

"You can make the case that a proportion of that [Italian] indemnification should go to the Jews of Libya, who were double victims, of the Italian fascist regime and the Libyan government's participation in the assault on Libyan Jews," Cotler said.

Majority backs Netanyahu

A large majority of Israelis support Benjamin Netanyahu's recent policy address in which he accepted the idea of a Palestinian state, a poll found. Some 71 per cent of Israelis surveyed believe the prime minister said the right things at Bar-Ilan University and that the speech will benefit Israel internationally, according to a Ha'aretz-Dialog poll conducted the day after the speech. The poll also found that 90 per cent of voters for Netanyahu's Likud Party agreed with what the prime minister said, according to the daily Ha'aretz. In addition, some 49 per cent of opposition Kadima party members believe the party should join the coalition government based on the speech.

Israelis wary of Obama

Just six per cent of Jewish Israelis believe U.S. President Barack Obama's policies are pro-Israel, according to a new Jerusalem Post poll. Half of those surveyed said Obama's policies are more pro-Palestinian than pro-Israel, while 36 per cent said he was neutral, according to the poll of 500 Jewish Israelis by Smith Research. The results are a sharp change from one month earlier, just before Obama met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington. At that time, a poll by the same organization and with the same sample size found that 31 per cent of Jewish Israelis said Obama was pro-Israel, 14 per cent said he was pro-Palestinian and 40 per cent answered neutral. The poll found that only 27 per cent supported stopping building in "large settlement blocs like Gush Etzion, Ma'ale Adumim and Ariel," with 68 per cent against.

Help to Diaspora favoured

Some 60 per cent of Israelis support using their tax money to assist Diaspora Jewish communities, a new survey found. Among 18- to-24-year-olds, the support for using tax money to provide basic services such as education, health care and food to Diaspora Jewish communities was at 73 per cent, according to the annual Survey of Contemporary Israeli Attitudes Toward World Jewry, conducted on behalf of the B'nai B'rith World Center in Jerusalem. Some 54 per cent of those surveyed said the Reform and Conservative movements should receive equal status and funding in Israel as the Orthodox movement, with 36 per cent saying they were opposed. In addition, 44 per cent support the State of Israel recognizing Reform and Conservative conversions, while 49 per cent believe that only conversions performed by the Chief Rabbinate should be recognized by the state. The telephone survey of 500 Jewish Israelis over 18 was conducted June 9 to 11.

Investment class upgraded

Israel's classification for investment will be changed from emerging to developed, which will boost Israeli stocks. Morgan Stanley Capital International, which provides institutional investors with popular global stock, bond and fund benchmark indexes, announced the upgrade June 16. The change will take effect next May. Merrill Lynch said the upgrade could bring $2.8 billion into the Israeli stock market, as funds that are only allowed to invest in developed markets would be able to buy Israeli stocks, Forbes reported.

Army service extended

A new program will allow yeshiva students to extend their army service and shorten their Torah studies. Launched last week, the four-year program offered to young men studying at Hesder yeshiva, which combines Torah studies with army service, includes two years of army service and two years of study. The existing five-year program combines 18 months of army service and 3-1/2 years of study. The programs will operate at the same time.

PA news now in Hebrew

The Palestinian Authority's official news agency launched a Hebrew-language website. The site will provide Hebrew-speaking readers with "accurate and first-hand information" from the PA, according to the agency, also known as WAFA.

– with files from JTA

Israel and Manitoba involved in water sustainability project

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

The head Israeli scientist of the Manitoba-Israel-Mexico water sustainability research project, the Agricultural Wetland-Watershed Research Network, met with his Mexican and Canadian counterparts in Mexico City recently.

"The meeting has taken the group one step closer to establishing a definitive online resource and global information-sharing database for researchers, policy makers and the general public on the impact of wetlands situated in watersheds of downstream freshwater sources," Prof. Moshe Gophen said.

Gophen, from the Galilee Technology Center in Israel, along with two other Israeli scientists, three Canadian scientists and one Mexican scientist are involved in the project. It received a $100,000 (Cdn) grant from the province of Manitoba out of among six proposals pitched at the first-ever Water Experts Symposium in Manitoba in August 2008.

Wetlands are areas of high water saturation that attract a variety of vegetation and micro-organisms and absorb toxic carbon, phosphorus, and other contaminants and nutrients from the atmosphere. This mitigates the effects of global warming. If the wetland is located in a watershed or drainage basin of a freshwater lake, it affects the lake's water quality.

This "filtering" function of wetlands can be enhanced and can serve as a key to purifying large freshwater sources, which is important if the freshwater source is used for agriculture or human consumption.

Manitoba wishes to preserve the quality of the water in Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba by protecting the large Delta and Netley/Libau wetlands on the lake's southern shores. Israel is concerned with the quality of water in the Sea of Galilee and the Hula Valley wetlands.

Prof. Avi Gafni, the project's coordinator, from Keren Kayemeth Israel-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) in Israel, said that Israel has spent the last decade rehabilitating the Hula Valley and trying to reverse the damage inflicted by the drying up of wetland in the 1950s to create agricultural land. They could not have anticipated the damage that this would have on the Sea of Galilee, he said. Without the Hula Valley, Israel's lone wetland, the Sea of Galilee suffered from severe algae bloom.

Nowadays, preservation of the Hula Valley is the KKL-JNF's top priority. There is a small lake there now, called Lake Agmon ("Small Lake"), which has not only attracted flora and fauna but has also significantly improved the quality of water in Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is one of Israel's three major water sources, accounting for some 35 per cent of freshwater domestic consumption.

The "test case" that is the Sea of Galilee and the Hula Valley has answered many other mysteries about wetlands as well, including their value in providing resiliency to watersheds in times of drought, Gafni said.

"The processes of wetlands are universal, and we in Israel have been researching them intensely since the 1950s," he said.

Gafni, along with his Canadian counterpart, JNF Canada, hosts the upcoming second Water Experts Symposium, in Israel in January 2010.

"We only have one wetland and one freshwater lake, but the biological and nutrient balance of Lake Kinneret [Sea of Galilee] is the same as that desired by Lake Winnipeg – it's just that there, the scale is huge," he said.

"If Manitoba wants to take care of Lake Winnipeg, they have to address each and every wetland in each and every watershed that drains into the lake. That's about a million square kilometres. All of Israel can fit into Lake Winnipeg, but the processes are the same."

More than 20 water experts, half from Manitoba and half from Israel, will gather at the second symposium to discuss the unanswered wetland/watershed questions that remain, including the impact of over-pumping, of water level, and of fishing on freshwater sources, as well as factors affecting the water source's resilience capacity.

This time, one project will be selected, by the Manitoba government for funding from among some 20 pitches. "We hope [the symposium] will produce real results, not just on the questions of wetlands, but of other water-related issues. The challenge is not just to talk about it academically but to bring it to concrete results," Gafni said.

"We also hope to expand the symposium to include the participation of high-level water research representatives from other countries."

Australia intends to send an observer to the second conference and is expected to participate fully in the third annual meeting of its kind, in 2011.

In addition to funding the second cooperative research project, the government of Manitoba will spend $250,000 over the next 10 years on scholarships for Manitoba students to study water resources at institution of higher learning in Israel.

The collaboration between Manitoba and Israel is the second such joint Canadian-Israeli water research, with the government of Alberta involved in previous joint Canadian-Israeli water research. Gafni says that co-operation may be extended to Ontario.

"The partnership with Canada has been so productive and so fruitful for us so far. We are on a very positive path," Gafni said.

"It has been wonderful to work with the Canadian scientists. We hope that this is just the beginning of a very strong co-operative relationship."

Hungarian far-right activist facing terror charges

JTA

BUDAPEST — Hungary has arrested a far-right activist and leader of the country's neo-Nazi movement on terrorism charges.

Gyorgy Budahazy, who was charged on several counts of arson and instigation to murder, has declined to co-operate with the investigation and threatened to counter-sue the attorney general.

Hungarian investigators believe they have established a link between Budahazy and the terrorist organization Hungarian Arrows, which has claimed responsibility for several recent arson attacks. The name of the organization is a reference to the Hungarian Arrow Cross, a Nazi military organization that murdered tens of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

Budahazy was present last week at the signing of collaboration accords between Jobbik, a Hungarian neo-Nazi party, and several radical rightist youth organizations.

He is believed to have established a terror unit in 2007 to spread fear among leftist politicians. Shots fired at the home of Istvan Hiller, the socialist education minister, and an arson attack on the property of Janos Koka, a liberal politician who was the minister of commerce at the time, were allegedly intended to influence parliamentary debate on health-care reforms and the national budget.

Hungarian Arrows is blamed for these as well as three similar attacks and other incidents.

Budahazy's arrest is the fifth linked to a police raid on a house in April that uncovered an arsenal of weapons and a bomb-making factory, including several devices thought to have been intended for use on the homes of politicians.

Clinton, Lieberman at odds over settlements

JTA

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton and Avigdor Lieberman last week reiterated their countries' disagreement over settlements.

Clinton, the U.S. secretary of state said, however, that a number of "critical concerns" will be explored in upcoming talks with special U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell.

Speaking to reporters after the two met in Washington, the Israeli foreign minister said that "natural growth" of settlements "must" continue.

"We don't have any intention to change the demographic balance in Judea and Samaria," Lieberman said, using Israel's terms for the West Bank.

But "every place around the world, babies are born and people get married. We can't accept this vision about absolutely, completely freezing settlements."

"We want to see a stop in settlements," said Clinton, who has said in the past that "natural growth" is included in a settlement freeze. "We think that is an important and essential part of pursuing the efforts leading to a comprehensive peace agreement."

Hillary Clinton

Clinton also indicated, however, that there was more discussion on the issue to come.

"We believe that this process that Senator Mitchell is quarterbacking for us has just begun," she said. "There are a number of critical concerns that will be explored in the coming weeks as Senator Mitchell engages more deeply in the specifics of where Israelis and Palestinians are willing to go together."

Reuters has reported that Israeli and western officials are discussing with the Obama administration whether projects already underway in a settlement, or cases in which money spent on a project cannot be reimbursed, could continue.

In a June 17 meeting with reporters, the two top diplomats also disagreed about the validity of understandings that Israel says it reached with the Bush administration to allow some natural growth in certain settlements.

While Lieberman said Israel wanted to "keep" those understandings intact, Clinton said there were "no informal or oral enforceable agreements" on the issue, and "that has been verified by the official record of the Bush administration and personnel in positions of responsibility."

She also noted a recent Washington Post op-ed by Dan Kurtzer, the U.S. ambassador to Israel at the time, stating that "no such understanding" was ever reached on settlements, as reflecting the administration's position. Kurtzer also was a supporter of and surrogate for Barack Obama in the Jewish community during the presidential campaign.

Avigdor Lieberman

In related developments, Mitchell said the United States continues to demand that Israel halt the "natural growth" of settlements.

In a press briefing last week at the State Department, he called "highly inaccurate" an Israeli newspaper report claiming that the Obama administration would allow "natural growth" of settlements and emphasized there has been "no change in our policy."

But when asked for a definition of the term "natural growth," Mitchell was unclear, first saying there was no accepted definition, then stating that "the most common definition" is "number of births."

"Well, of course, one of the issues is that there is no universally used and accepted definition," he said, according to a transcript. "The most common definition is by the number of births, but there are many variations of that. I've had numerous discussions with many Israeli and other officials, and there are almost as many definitions as there are people speaking. But I think the most commonly used measure is the number of births."

Asked a follow-up question, Mitchell declined to elaborate further. Mitchell also said he hoped that negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians could resume in "a matter of weeks, not many months."

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Mazal Tov to our Graduates of 2009/5769

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Abrams, Tamara	תמרה יוכבד	Davidov, Sabrina	סברינה	Greenberg, Maya	כאיה	Laks, Bryan	יהודה	Pichosky, Mitchell	מישה גדל	Snow, Kimberly	יוכבד
Altman, Joshua	יסף	Desatnik, Danny	כאיר	Greenberg, Ryan	רחל	Lechem, Yaelle	יעל בתיטבע	Pinhasov, Avital	אביטל	Solomon, Sarah	שרה
Amar, Dan	דן	Dviv, Jamie	שרה	Greenspan, Dori	דורית	Lepofsky, Harrison	הרשל	Polisuk, Joshua	יהושע	Spivak, Deena	דינה
Anisman, Rachel	רחל	Eisen, Joshua	יהושע אריאל	Grosh, Joshua	יהושע	Levin, Emmett	אפיתי ישעיהו	Polwoda, Dan	דן	Stern, Shoshana	חיה
Antelis, Natalie	עדן	Elbaz, Steven	עמרם	Gurevych, Viktoriia	ויקטוריה	Levy, Sammy	שמואל	Pollak, Matthew	מתתיהו חיים	Stern, Daniel	דניאל איקותיאל
Baena, Joshua	יהושע	Engel, Zachary	אברהם	Guttmann, Daniel	דוד	Libfeld, Pamela	פנינה	Porges, Liron	לירון	Streisfield, Erika	יעל
Bahar, Sierra	סימה	Esses, Ariel	אריאל	Haber, Ron	רון	Lichtblau, Ryan	אפרים	Ranot, Jake	קובי משה	Suslik, Harley	חיים
Baker, Benjamin	בנימין	Fages, Benjamin	בנימין חיים יחיאל	Haimov, Rona	רונה	Maes, Yehuda	יהודה	Reinstein, Avi	אבי	Tabakman, Aharon	אהרון שלמה
Balshin, Fazh	רחל	Fenwick, Erin	ישראלה	Handler, Lauren	לאה	Makalsky, Anna	אנה	Ressin, Veronika	רחל	Talmon-Chvaicer, Lavy	לביא
Barook, Liora	ליאורה	Flanzraich, Ari	ארי	Harari, Gabriella	צפורה	Mamann, Hannah	חנה	Ripsman, David	דוד	Taylor, Nicole	טרית
Batist, Aiden	עדן	Flutgold, Samuel	שלמה	Havasov, Lidia	לידיה	Mandel, Erin	אביה	Rochwerg, Sharon	שרון שפחה פיגע	Teperman, Benjamin	דב
Ben-Aharon, Noa	טעה	Freedman, Adam	אדם	Herman, Annie	נחמה	Marco, Justin	פנחס	Rose, Brandon	ברוך	Train, Abraham	אברהם
Benchetrit, Olivia	חיה	Freeman, Corey	שלמה	Hershkop, Shira	שירה	Marcus, Michelle	מיכל	Rosen, Jacob	יעקב	Trojman, Valerie	חיה
Benlezrah, Avi	אברהם	Fried, Aaron	בנימין	Heyman, Taylora	יעל	Marlow, Machell	פיכה	Rosen, Ofir	אופיר	Weidman, Shawn	שמחה
Bennett-Back, Adi	עדי מיכל	Friedman, Michael	מיכאל יהושע	Hoffman, Alexandra	שרה	Mechali, Joshua	שלום	Rou, Audrey	ליאורה	Weinshtein, Yehuda	יהודה
Black, Estee	איתי	Gahtan, Joshua	יונתן	Hummel, Roxanne	רחל	Middlestadt, Allie	פיגל עזרה	Rubinoff, Alexander	גבריאל	Weisbrot, Abby	אביגיל
Blankfort, Rebecca	עליזה	Gasner, Elisheva	אלישבע נאה דבה	Hyde, Richard	צבי	Miller, Darren	צבי	Samuels, Jacob	יעקב	Weltman, Stacey	פיגה
Boon, Jessica	יעל	Gladstone, Simon	ישעיהו	Ipshtrumov, Ariel	אריאל	Mincer, Zachary	זכריה שין יעקב	Saiok, Jordana	עדינה	Werger, Sam	שמואל
Borenstein, Haley Leah	נעמה	Goldberg, Estee	איתך	Janowski, Michaila	מלכה	Mishaev, Raffael	רפאל	Saiov, Jonathan	יונתן	Wex, Sabina	לאה
Brenner, Alexandra	עפה	Goldberg, Leora	ליאורה	Jesin, Jaclyn	ישראלה	Mishan, Sarah	שרה	Schapira, Ori	אורי	White, Zachary	אליעזר יצחק
Bronfman, Shannah	חנה לאה	Goldenberg, Lior	ליאור	Jesin, Jessica	איתך	Moos, Tamara	תמרה	Schwartz, Danielle	דניאל	Yakobi, Yasmin	יסמין אריאל
Burdo, Jessica	יסקה	Goldenberg, Savrina	סימה גבריאלה	Kahn, Aaron	אהרון	Morris, Cassia	חסיה	Seni, Jonathan	אברהם	Yakobov, Emanuel	עמנואל
Caplin, Nicola	נעמי	Goldhar, Dayna	כלנה	Kaplan, Joshua	אפרים	Morris, Zachary	עזרא	Shalmiev, Eli	אלי	Zarneu-Klein, Zachary	צדוק יצחק
Chalk, Alanna	אביגיל	Goldman, Jacob	יעקב	Karol, Dalia	דליה	Naor, Jaclyn	יעקבה	Silverberg, Jason	ישעיהו	Zavlounov, David	דוד
Choran, David	דוד	Goldrich, Shimon	שמעון	Katzman, Rebecca	רבקה	Noyek, Marli	שושנה	Silverberg, Sydnee	אביגיל	Zimmerman, Henry	צבי
Clodman, Jonathan	יונתן	Gotesman, Ryan	ראובן	Kaufman, Aaron	אהרון	Noyek, Ryan	יעקב	Silverstein, Elliot	אלי	Zins, Rachel	רחל
Crosmak, Rachel	רחל	Gottfried, Mark	מרדכי	King, Toby	אסתר מלכה	Nussbaum, Nicole	לאה	Sinclair, Evan	יצחק	Zipori, Elior	אליאור
				Kranc, Saffire	שפיר	Osuromich, Avital	אביטל	Singer, Daniel	דניאל לוי	Zucker, Jenna	חנה
				Krausz, Erin	חנה הערל	Pearlman, Jordan	משה	Skurka, Dylan	יהודה		
				Kronick, Jami	חוה לאה	Perelgut, Maxwell	ישר	Sluy, Melissa	שרה		

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Star of Anne Frank film reminisces about her role

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Though she's now 73, actor Millie Perkins remembers filming her titular role in The Diary of Anne Frank as if it was yesterday.

June 16 marked the 50th anniversary of the release of the film version of the famous diary, and Perkins told The CJN in a phone interview promoting the re-release on DVD and Blu-ray that she initially had her doubts about taking the role or even getting involved in film at all.

"I was 20 and a model, and wasn't fascinated with being an actress. It wasn't interesting to me," she said. "But [director George Stevens] kept calling me to come shoot the film. I didn't want to do it… until a French friend of mine told me I had to go, because she understood the importance of [the diary]."

Millie Perkins as Anne Frank in the 1959 film. *[20th Century Fox Home Entertainment photo]*

Her decision to take the role was ultimately sealed when someone finally gave her a copy of the diary. After reading it, Perkins said she knew she had to take the part, no matter how reticent she was about dealing with Hollywood.

"I had never read the diary or heard of Anne Frank… but I knew about the Nazi atrocities because my father was in the merchant marines in the war," she said. "The diary hit me in the heart and in my soul. And I knew immediately it was something more than just Hollywood, something more important. [Anne] was me, I knew it was meant to be."

Perkins said she felt a kinship with Anne's free-spirited nature and her refusal to stop believing in the inherent goodness of mankind.

"I understood that girl," Perkins said. "Anne was feisty. She spoke her mind. She annoyed people. She had a mind of her own, and she refused to be shut up or allow people to tell her how to think or what to do. That's what I was like. The story was important [for the filmmakers] but Anne Frank was who was important to me while filming."

Perkins said she continued to be affected by the legacy of Anne Frank for several years after the film's release, when she toured to promote the film in Europe and elsewhere, encountering both "worship" and "hostility" from Europeans who were still raw from World War II events.

"It was quite an emotional experience," she said.

So much so, that Perkins openly declared her love for Israel, having visited the Holy Land on numerous occasions to tour and connect with the state that helped save the Jewish people.

"I'll be going to Israel again in October, as I've offered the Yad Vashem Society my original script from [the film]," she said. "I'm very happy about this, and I'm so thrilled to be going again."

Perkins said she's noticed an increased interest in the film and her role over the last few years, and guessed that it's because in the current state of the world "people need and want to be reminded what it is to feel. People want to feel their hearts again."

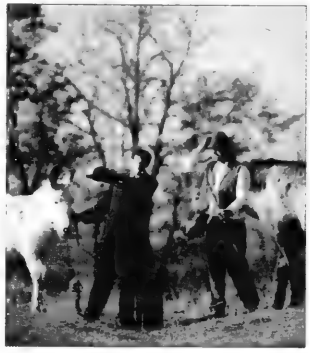
Anne Frank would have been 80 years old on June 12, and Perkins speculates that had Frank survived, she would have grown into a woman "with beauty in her soul… who would have led a fulfilled life as a humanitarian and a journalist."

Perkins credits Anne Frank for having potentially saved her life as well. Admitting that she may have gone on to model and live life with the recklessness of youth, the diary helped give her an early "consciousness… that there was something more important than just existing."

For fans of the film and the diary, the re-release by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment of The Diary of Anne Frank: 50th Anniversary Edition contains a whack of added features, including audio commentary from Perkins and George Stevens Jr. and reminiscences by leading cast members, and the Blu-ray edition offers Millie Perkins' initial screen test, among the bonus material.

The rise and fall of a Jewish resort town

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN



The Right Road to Pontypool premieres July 1 in Millbrook, Ont.

Pontypool, Ont., is a 125-year-old, unassuming, sleepy village located outside Peterborough.

In 1916, larger-than-life Polish-Jewish immigrant Moishe Yukle Bernstein, aware that Toronto's garment workers and their families had no relief from the sweltering city heat, opened up his Pontypool home as a summer getaway. It quickly became the place for eastern European Jewish immigrants to summer.

On July 1, 4th Line Theatre in Millbrook, Ont., presents the world première of The Right Road to Pontypool, penned by Toronto-based actor and playwright Alex Poch-Goldin.

"The story is about the rise and fall of the town," he says. "It was a Protestant town that the Jews came to. It became wealthier because money was being spent in the community, and then it faulted away. It is a historical play based on my imagination."

In its heyday, Pontypool became the home to five Jewish resorts. Every Friday afternoon, thousands of people came by train to enjoy their weekend at this no-frills resort locale. This time in history made a deep cultural impact on the region.

"Pontypool was like a mini-Catskills, but less affluent," Poch-Goldin says. "At 4th Line Theatre, they do historical plays about the region and Pontypool is so close by.

"I was given some seed money to come up with a couple of scenes, then we did a public reading and over 100 people showed up at the Peterborough Museum. The response was really good, so they commissioned me to write the play."

The Right Road to Pontypool is directed by Kim Blackwell and features a cast of 40. Dov Mickelson plays Moishe, and the story follows his family throughout the years to the present-day story of his granddaughter, Doris Manetta, played by Ellen-Ray Hennessy, alongside Allan Price as Cousin Harry.

"I interviewed a bunch of people," Poch-Goldin says. "Doris Manetta was the person I got the most information from, and so I decided to make her a character in the play. I think Doris is charmed by that.

"It's based on characters, some fictional and some real, but the story is a factitious tale inspirited by true events. It was important that as much as I wanted to tell my own unique story, that I wasn't creating falsehoods about the place. I learned about that world."

The Pontypool lasted as a Jewish resort until the late 1970s. "I think the demise was [because] the community became wealthier over time – they would send their kids to camp and buy cottages in Muskoka and Haliburton," Poch-Goldin says.

"There wasn't much to recommend in Pontypool, other than it was cheap, out of the city and it was the community that people were comfortable with. There was a synagogue built in the late '40s – a seasonal synagogue because there were only a few permanent Jewish residents in the town."

Poch-Goldin is an award-winning playwright and actor whose work has been produced on international stages, and for CBC-TV and Bravo Television. He's also artistic director of the Planet 88 Theatre Company in Toronto. His theatre writing includes the Dora nominated Cringeworthy, This Hotel and Yahrzeit, which begins its third tour of Germany in 2010.

He has been playwright-in-residence for CanStage and Theatre Passe Muraille, and has developed work with the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, Buddies in Bad Times and Tarragon Theatre. Most recently, Poch-Goldin wrote an opera libretto for Tapestry New Opera titled The Shadow, slated for production in May 2009.

The Right Road to Pontypool runs from July 1 to Aug. 1, Tuesday through Saturday at 6 p.m. 4th Line Theatre is located on The Winslow Farm, 779 Zion Line, Millbrook. For more information, visit www.4thlinetheatre.on.ca.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

'THE PLAY'S THE THING' AT TORONTO'S FRINGE FESTIVAL

The Fringe, Toronto's largest theatre festival, offers 150 productions at 30 venues, each at an affordable ticket price of $10 or under. The festival runs July 1 to 12. www.fringetoronto.com

Among the offerings is **Wallace Shawn**'s The Fever, as performed by actor **Risa Morris**. The central character in this 90-minute one-woman show travels to the developing world to find herself; instead, she becomes more lost. In a fever-induced hallucination, she struggles with what it means to live in a privileged place, knowing the realities of life in the developing world. Helen Gardiner Phelan Playhouse, 79A St. George St. Proceeds of the performances go to Doctors Without Borders.

Another Fringe entry of interest is The Goodbye Rounds, by comedian **Joshua Saltzman** and **Robert Shapiro**. The play centres on Hirsch, a chronic under-achiever, who is moving to Israel to embrace a life of religious devotion. Hirsch ropes his old friend Seth into joining him, and sets forth to bid farewell to the three friends he loved best and treated worst. The exercise changes the way he sees his past, his future and himself. At Theatre Passe Muraille.

Shannon McDonough and **Lori Pearlstein** are co-writers and performers of Build a Bridge and Get Over It!, a comedy about finding the humour in tough situations. "One of my biggest influences for writing a play with this message was my experience working at a retirement home with Holocaust survivors," Pearlstein comments. Tarragon Extraspace.

My Mother's Jewish-Wiccan Wedding follows Claire Goldstein as she finds a new life and a new wife while discovering her sexuality, rediscovering her Jewish faith and coming out to her teenage son, ex-husband, and homophobic Jewish mother. This musical is based on a true story written by **David Hein** and **Irene Carl**. At the Bread & Circus theatre in Kensington Market. Fringe Hotline 416-966-1062.

* * *

Pontypool Opens: The Right Road to Pontypool, the play by **Alex Poch-Goldin** that is being directed by **Kim Blackwell**, previews on June 30 and July 1, and opens July 2 for a month-long run. The play spotlights Pontypool, a summer haven for thousands of eastern European Jewish immigrants in the heart of Protestant southern Ontario. 4th Line Theatre, Millbrook, Ont. 705-932-4445, e-mail boxoffice@4thlinetheatre.on.ca

* * *

Names in the News: **Karen Kaeja** of the contemporary dance company Kaeja d'Dance was recently nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award in the dance division for outstanding performance in **Kathleen Rea**'s dance piece, Long Live. The awards ceremony takes place at the Winter Garden on June 29. www.kaeja.org

* * *

Recently Published: The wonderful Jerusalem-based Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive recently announced the launch of two new items of note.

Fresh Wind: The First Zionist Film in Palestine, 1899-1902 by **Joseph Halachmi**, narrates how **Theodor Herzl** recognized the power of film as a tool in promoting Zionism and how he and **Avraham Neufeld** attempted to realize this idea in 1899. Published by Carmel and sponsored by the Spielberg Archive, the Hebrew-language book places the Zionist film in the context of world cinema.

Co-produced by the Spielberg Archive, the Jerusalem Cinematheque and **Yaakov Gross** in honour of Tel Aviv's 100th anniversary, the film A Legend in the Dunes uses original archival images to tell the story of Tel Aviv-Jaffa from Herzl's visit in 1898 until his casket is brought to Tel Aviv in 1949. Available in Hebrew and English versions. www.spielberg-filmarchive.org.il

Karen Kaeja

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Pride @ the J features a reading of Guess Who's Coming to Sabbath, a play by **Phil Pivnick**, with **Cayle Chernin**, **Sascha Cole**, **Jack Newman**, **Jordan Pettle**, **Gerry Salsberg** and **David Tomlinson**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, June 25, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation $8. 416-924-6211, ext. 606

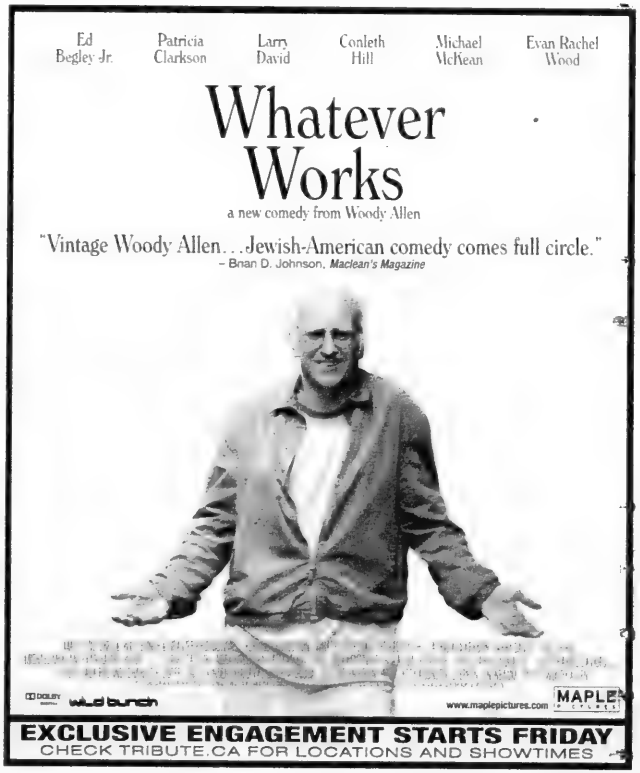
• Hear the **Fern Lindzon Jazz Quartet** with **Mike Murley**, **Mike McLennan** and **Joel Haynes** at Chalkers Pub, 247 Marlee Ave. Sunday, June 28, 7 to 10 p.m. Cover $10. An offering of the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival. Lindzon also performs with the **Sisters of Sheynville** Yiddish vocal group at the Mariposa Festival, Sunday July 5, 6 p.m. www.mariposafolk.com

• The Israel Dance Festival 2009 features three guest Israeli choreographers (**Yaron Carmel**, **Gadi Bitton**, **Yaron Ben Simchon**) who offer a three-day intensive workshop in Israeli folk dancing, with a Friday night Shabbat dinner, performances and more. Miles Nadal JCC, July 3, 4 and 5. Contact Sofie, 416-221-6280 or visit the website www.israelifolkdancingtoronto.com

• Pianists **Shoshana Telner** and **Sara Davis Buechner** are among the many talented musicians participating in the 2009 Brott Music Festival in Hamilton, Burlington and Ancaster, with intermittent concerts now to Aug. 20. Images by the late **Harry Freedman** are also being used in a concert on July 11.

• Dead Sea Scrolls: Words that Changed the World opens at the Royal Ontario Museum June 27 and remains on view until Jan. 3, 2010. This is a rare and extraordinary opportunity to see one of the greatest archeological finds of the 20th century. Running concurrently with the exhibition, a series of lectures and debates highlight the importance of the Scrolls today. www.rom.on.ca

STARS RAISE MONEY: Stars from the Canadian cast of Jersey Boys rounded up a lineup of top talent at the 2009 Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School Tribute Gala on June 8. The event raised over $150,000 for the school. Other performers included So You Think You Can Dance Canada finalist Miles Faber, actor/director and composer Ted Dykstra, singer/songwriter Melanie Doane, vocal trio Zari, actress Kristen Thomson, Zero Gravity circus star Jen Georgopoulos, playwrights and performers Kathryn Greenwood and Teresa Pavlinkek of Women Fully Clothed and the swinging harmony of the Jazzabelles .



Toronto student designs mural that focuses on Jerusalem

By RENA GODFREY
Special to The CJN

Callum Schuster stands in front of his mural.

A mural of Jerusalem that includes a mosaic of Magen Davids ascending toward the sky, with their points woven together, was painted by Arab youths at an arts centre in east Jerusalem recently.

The arts project, at the Paley Center for the Arts, an Arab community centre, was led and co-designed by Callum Schuster, a 20-year-old Ontario College of Art and Design student.

Schuster's mission, given to him by Ian Leventhal, a Toronto artist and executive director of the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada in Toronto, was to design a mural that focused on Jerusalem and its importance to the many people who inhabit the culturally rich city.

The eight-metre-wide mural was painted during after-school hours over a five-day period by 15 local, mostly Muslim Arab youths from the ages of 10 to 20.

"I was naive to expect that the students would immediately accept me and my idea of the painting," Schuster, still buzzing from the trip, said.

"As soon as I took my pencil off the canvas from drawing a Star of David, several students erased it, and I realized that I was obviously not seeing something they were seeing."

Issam Sabbah, the director of the centre, told the students, in Arabic, what Schuster's intentions and wishes for the mural were.

"You have to move on from these feelings of hate and look at things in a new light," Sabbah told them. "If we want a new future, we need to find a new way of looking at things."

Then Sabbah told Schuster to continue doing what he had planned to do with the mural, and not to let the students stop him. Sabbah drew a Jewish star again, and those who were still opposed to having the Jewish symbol included moved on to drawing another scene.

Schuster integrated Jewish, Christian and Muslim sites in Jerusalem into the mural. One girl suggested painting candles to symbolize the people who have perished on both sides of the Mideast conflict. These, too, were incorporated in the mural.

The execution of the mural and experiences gained during the process were completely different than what Schuster anticipated.

Arabs youths work on the mural.

"The final product was truly secondary. What really matters was that it was a step forward and that the students were able to drop the negative feelings for the Star of David," he said.

"The kids showed up every day with a smile on their faces, ready to paint, hoping for a new and peaceful Jerusalem. They hold the key to the future. As long as there is hope, there is possibility for change."

Spending much of his time in east Jerusalem, at the Paley Center and with Sabbah's family at his home in Siluan overlooking the City of David excavations, gave Schuster added insight into the complexities of Jerusalem. Schuster said he listened intently when Sabbah talked about his Christian, Jewish and Muslim neighbours, and the success of their co-habitation. Schuster said he felt privileged to see this different side of Jerusalem, and of Israel.

Schuster hopes to go back to Israel and contribute his talents to more coexistence projects. He has his sights on volunteering at the Ramat Moriah Community School, an Arabic and Hebrew bilingual school, as well as bringing to Toronto a travelling art show called Children of Jerusalem: Painting Pain, Dreaming Peace, created by the Muslim, Christian and Jewish students from the school.

Schuster said he is determined to convey what he's learned in Israel to his friends and family in Toronto.

Film shows creation of mural by Combatants for Peace

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Elik Elhanan, a former Israel Defence Forces paratrooper, and Bassam Aramin, a former Palestinian "resistance fighter," have two things in common.

They both lost a close family member during the first intifadah, and they both belong to the organization Combatants for Peace.

Elhanan lost his 14-year-old sister in a suicide bomb attack in Jerusalem. Aramin's young daughter was killed by an Israeli soldier during an incursion in the West Bank.

Combatants for Peace consists of former IDF soldiers and Palestinian fighters who have put down their weapons and are using active, non-violent means to resolve the conflict.

The Billboard from Bethlehem is a 60-minute documentary about a Connecticut billboard company's owner, Bruce Barrett, who proposes to Combatants for Peace that they build a giant peace mural.

The idea came about when Barrett, who directed this documentary, heard members of Combatants for Peace give a speech at a synagogue in Connecticut and was "wowed."

He approached them to do this mural in his shop, but they convinced him it would work better if they got Jewish and Palestinian kids to paint it in Bethlehem. The completed mural later hung on a giant billboard in Connecticut, on Connecticut Interstate I-95 and Route 84.

Children in Bethlehem put the finishing touches on the Combatants for Peace mural.

The film is mostly a collection of interviews with members of Combatants for Peace, who talk about their fighting experience and why they decided to lay down their arms.

"Occupation leads to resistance, resistance leads to oppression, oppression leads to more resistance, which leads to more oppression and innocent people pay the price. People like my sister pay the price," Elhanan says.

Although the film doesn't take sides and goes through pains to show both Jews and Palestinians as victims in a political struggle, it does have an obvious left-wing bias. It refers to "Palestine," "resistance fighters" and "the occupation" throughout the documentary.

The group Combatants for Peace has as its goal the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem.

The Billboard for Bethlehem makes its Canadian première at the ReelHeaRT International Film Festival on June 27 at 1:45 p.m. at the Innis Theatre in Innis College, University of Toronto, 2 Sussex Ave.

It airs in a program with two unscreened films, The Sky Was Angry, about children and teens who took refuge in a theatre in Beirut during the recent war, and Marathon Beirut, an American film about 20,000 people who took part in a marathon for peace in Lebanon.

For tickets and info, visit www.reelheart.com

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World's Yiddish theatres come to Montreal for festival

Troupes from Poland, Romania, Israel and other countries participated in historic event

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — In an emotional and historic moment, members of all the major Yiddish theatres in the world gathered last week on the stage of the Segal Centre for Performing Arts in a joyous demonstration that a culture that was virtually annihilated is once again vibrant.

Representatives of theatres that regularly present shows in Yiddish participated in the Montreal International Yiddish Theatre Festival which ended June 25. Bryna Wasserman, the eight-day event's initiator, said this was the first time the theatres have gathered together in one location.

The troupes came from Poland, Romania, Austria, France, Australia, the United States and Israel to put on performances and workshops. In addition, scholars of Yiddish theatre and culture held a daylong symposium at the Segal, in conjunction with McGill University, and musicians, both local and from as far away as Buenos Aires, gave concerts of klezmer and other Jewish music.

Altogether, about 130 people from out of town participated in the festival, and there were about 35 public events.

The festival was in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Segal's Dora Wasserman, Yiddish Theatre (DWYT), one of the longest continuously running Yiddish theatres in the world, founded and directed by the late mother of Bryna Wasserman, who has directed it for the past decade.

Wasserman used a theatrical metaphor, "mending the torn curtain," to describe the festival, largely made possible by Leanor and Alvin Segal, longtime supporters of the DWYT and now the main benefactors of the Segal Centre itself.

"We are celebrating our past, but we have to look to the future," she said. She thanked the guests for keeping "the *pintele Yid* alive [with] your determination not to compromise when others told you to do it in Polish or Romanian or Hebrew or English or French."

At the June 17 opening, tribute was paid to Dora Wasserman, who immigrated to Montreal in 1950 from Ukraine, where she had been a disciple of Shlomo Mikhoels, director of the Jewish State Theatre. The DWYT, whose actors are volunteers, grew out of a children's Yiddish drama group Wasserman began after her arrival.

This year's festival was officially opened by 10-year-old Jordana Singer, representing the theatre's third generation. Her grandmother Lily Blander was one of the first members of the DWYT, her daughter Adina Singer is a current actor, and Jordana has begun appearing with YAYA (Young Actors for Young Audiences), the teen group.

Wasserman was remembered as "strong-willed and uncompromising" in her artistic standards and in keeping the theatre going. In a videotaped tribute, Quebec playwright Michel Tremblay described her as "someone who didn't take no for an answer."

Université de Montréal professor Jean-Marc Larrue, who wrote a history of the DWYT, doubts the theatre would still be around today had it not been for Wasserman's exceptional personality.

The festival's free outdoor Zumerfest in neighbouring Mackenzie King Park, was an invitation to everyone in the multicultural neighbourhood to join in the fun.

In interviews, the theatre people from abroad spoke enthusiastically of the vitality of Yiddish theatre.

Jacob Weitzner, artistic director of the state-sponsored National Jewish Theatre of Warsaw, said at least one play in Yiddish is presented each season. The audiences, of course, are mostly not Jewish, and they are often young and not Polish. Students come from all over Europe come to the plays, he said.

At the festival, the Warsaw troupe put on Bonjour Monsieur Chagall, an original musical celebrating Jewish folklore. Weitzner, whose parents were Polish, is from Tel Aviv, but he has been living in Warsaw for five years. He wanted to contribute to the revival of Jewish culture in eastern Europe, which he feels personally attached to.

In Israel, where Yiddish was long suppressed in order to establish Hebrew as the national language, the mamaloshen is enjoying renewed interest, especially among younger people.

Mendy Cahan, now in his 40s, founded YUNG YiDiSH in 1993 to preserve and transmit Yiddish culture. The group now has chapters in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv whose members include both the Israeli-born and immigrants from Europe, North America and even North Africa.

"What they share is not necessarily knowledge of the Yiddish language and culture, but an acknowledgement of their importance to contemporary Israeli society and culture," said Cahan, who was born in Belgium of Transylvanian parents, and speaks Yiddish fluently.

One of YUNG's biggest projects is to collect and restore Yiddish books, and it has amassed 42,000 volumes. A year and a half ago, the group opened The Lively Yiddish Museum next to the central bus station in Tel Aviv, with support from the city and the National Authority on Yiddish.

Bryna Wasserman greets Mendy Cahan of Israel, founder of YUNG YiDiSH, at the Montreal International Yiddish Theatre Festival. The poster behind them has a photo of the late Dora Wasserman.

Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer, general and artistic director of 20-year-old Yiddishpiel Theatre in Tel Aviv, represents the older generation of Israel's Yiddish champions. He is adamant that Yiddishkeit is not only a culture, but a civilization whose preservation is essential to Jews wherever they live, including Israel.

Yiddishpiel's audiences were older when it began, but today are "much like the audiences for Hebrew theatre, old and middle-aged, with a growing number of young people," said Polish-born Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer, who came to Israel in 1948. He is also a veteran of Hebrew theatre and worked with the Habima National Theatre.

The interest among young Israelis is due in large part to the March of the Living, which has sent more than 20,000 Israeli teens to the sites of former concentration camps in Poland, Atzmon-Wircer said. They are sent to Yiddishpiel plays a part of their curriculum.

Yiddish got some overdue recognition a few weeks ago when the Knesset saluted Yiddishpiel and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sholem Aleichem. The parliament declared that Yiddish, as well as Ladino, is a recognized language, like Arabic, he said.

"As long as Yiddish culture lives, the Holocaust will be remembered," he said. "Today I am one of the big fighters in the recovery from the deep misunderstanding of our founders that Israel had to get rid of Yiddish because it was a danger to Hebrew."

Alex Dafner, a founding actor and playwright with the Yiddish Theatre of Australia in Melbourne, said that for many years, he and his colleagues thought they were the only people left in the world working to keep Yiddish theatre alive. Then he attended the world Yiddish conference in London in 1998, where he met Dora Wasserman.

Born in Poland, Dafner immigrated to Australia in the 1960s, when he was 16.

For him, this festival was also a reunion with Golda Tencer, head of the Warsaw theatre, whom he knew 50 years ago in a Jewish school in Lodz. They have only met once before in Australia.

Yiddish theatre is quite healthy in Melbourne, Dafner said, because the Jewish community largely arrived after World War II. It has remained close to its culture, which has been transmitted to the second and third generations, many of whom speak Yiddish.

Books & Authors

Two-state solution has run its course: Israeli historian

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The two-state solution appears to be back on track now that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has, for the first time and under pressure from the United States, explicitly endorsed the principle of a Palestinian state coexisting alongside Israel.

But according to Israeli historian Benny Morris, the prospects for such a solution are bleak. In his newest book, One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel Palestine Conflict (Yale University Press), he presents an argument in support of his thesis and reviews the goals of the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement from a historical point of view.

Benny Morris

Delving into the past, Morris – a professor of history at Ben-Gurion University whose last book was on the 1948 Arab-Israeli war – makes the point that, until quite recently, the mainstream Palestinian leadership adamantly opposed the partition of Palestine and regarded it as inalienably Arab.

By the same token, generally speaking, Zionist leaders believed that the country was the ancient patrimony of the Jewish people and could not be divided into an Arab and Jewish state. But bowing to realities, the Zionist movement moved from an initial demand for Jewish sovereignty over the whole of Palestine to a compromise position in which it accepted a division of the land.

In 1937, in a watershed event, the Peel Commission, a British body, recommended partition. The Zionist movement embraced the plan, but Zionist Revisionists dissented, as did the Palestinians. Arab opposition was fuelled by a British White Paper in 1939 that disavowed partition and envisioned an independent Palestinian state governed by the Palestinians, who outnumbered Jews in Mandate Palestine.

The concept of partition re-emerged in a 1947 United Nations resolution. In general, Jews were in favour of it, while Arabs rejected it, trying by military means to destroy the newly created state of Israel. Having been defeated in the war, the Palestinians were robbed of the opportunity for self-determination.

The idea that the entire Land of Israel, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, should permanently remain under Jewish control was advanced by Israel's territorial conquests in the Six Day War. Religious Zionists, in particular, perceived Israel's victory as divinely ordained and as heralding the messianic redemption, he writes.

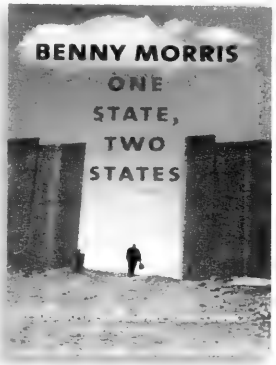
Yet secular Jews, from the poet Natan Alterman to the novelist Moshe Shamir, embraced the vision of Greater Israel, while the Israeli government hesitantly agreed to build Jewish settlements in the new territories, consisting of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula.

Amid a mood of euphoria in Israel, the Palestinians stuck to the dogma that Palestine was all theirs. Morris reminds a reader that, from its inception, the Palestinian nationalist movement completely rejected Jewish claims to Palestine. In 1920, the Third Palestine Arab Congress declared, "Palestine is the holy land of the ... Christian and Muslim worlds ... its destiny may not pass into other than Muslim and Christian hands."

As well, the Palestinians denounced the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which was in sympathy with the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The rejection of partition was so deeply ingrained in Palestinian thinking that, in his book, The Arab Awakening, the historian George Antonius observed, "No room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession."

The national charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasser Arafat in the wake of the Six Day War, hewed to this position, demanding a secular Palestinian state in place of Israel.



Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, dissident Palestinian officials, from Said Hamami to Issam Sartawi, toyed with the concept of a two-state solution. As Morris dryly notes, they were assassinated by radicals.

Nonetheless, Arafat's aide, Bassam Abu Sharif, launched a trial balloon in 1988 in which he publicly called for a two-state solution and lasting peace based on mutual recognition. Around the same time, Arafat's deputy, Salah Khalaf, reiterated the PLO's policy of a phased takeover of all of Palestine. "Nevertheless, during the following decade, the PLO appeared to inch significantly toward a two-state solution and acceptance of Israel's legitimacy," writes Morris.

By the summer of 1993, the PLO had dropped its opposition to Israel's existence. In accordance with their acceptance of the Oslo accords, Arafat and Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, exchanged letters of mutual recognition.

Several years later, the PLO amended its charter, in line with Arafat's commitments to delete the articles calling for Israel's destruction. PLO hardliners, though, insisted that the charter had not been changed.

The failed summit between Arafat and Ehud Barak in July 2000 was symptomatic of the troubles and mutual suspicions that had already surfaced in Israel's relations with the PLO.

The emergence of Hamas as a major player in Palestinian politics, Netanyahu's election as prime minister in 1996 and Israel's unilateral actions in the territories made it all the more difficult for the two sides to agree on the main issues: borders, Jewish settlements, Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees.

Morris claims that Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, may not be sincerely committed to a two-state solution, given his consistent backing for "the right of return" and his refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

Proceeding from this assumption, he says that a two-state solution may have run its course, primarily because "the Palestinian Arabs, in the deepest fibres of their being, oppose such an outcome, demanding, as they did since the dawn of their national movement, all of Palestine as their patrimony."

He adds, "The division of historic Mandatory Palestine as proposed, of 79 per cent for the Jews and 21 per cent for the Palestinian Arabs, cannot fail to leave the Arabs, all Arabs, with a deep sense of injustice, affront and humiliation…"

In his estimation, a Palestinian state, comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would inevitably seek more territory and try to expand, all at Israel's expense.

Is there a way out of this potential nightmare? Yes, he says, suggesting an amalgamation of the West Bank and Gaza with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

"Such a fusion of the Palestinian territories and Jordan would blunt the edge of Palestinian expansionist needs and motivations, though most likely it would still face the opposition of the fundamentalists bent on Israel's overthrow and conquest…"

Although acknowledging that this scenario will likely incur considerable dissent and disagreement in Jordan, Morris maintains that "this would seem the only logical – and possible – way forward."

Throughout this book, Morris presents himself as an arch realist without illusions. But his espousal of a Palestine-Jordan federation, and his pessimism in the feasibility and/or durability of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, may both be misplaced.

Still, One State, Two States is thought-provoking.

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On Campus

York must be stricter in enforcing student code of conduct: Ferman

Continued from page 3

"Most students do not attend a university to participate in political protest, and it's really out of respect for the majority of students at the university that we're recommending that Vari Hall should be a space [where] political protests are not allowed," he said.

Daniel Ferman, Hillel at York president and also a commission member, added that "universities have always been a place for political activism, but that shouldn't come at the cost of academia."

Ferman added that the university must be more strict in enforcing its student code of conduct. "If they start enforcing it on a more consistent basis, I think it will solve a lot of the problems that we're having on campus," he said.

In addition to designating alternative space for political demonstrations and enforcing the code of conduct, English said York should work to foster dialogue between members of the campus community with opposing views.

"The university could control the use of space and it could enforce the code of conduct, but without incentives and encouragement for opposing positions to be discussed and debated in a civil atmosphere, enforcement and use of space control will not work effectively," he said.

In spite of the tensions at York, English praised the university as an institution that has always accommodated its Jewish students and faculty.

"The Middle East dispute has hijacked all other activities at York to the detriment of all students, but we certainly appreciate all that York has done for Jewish students over the years," he said.

Ferman said York's task force is expected to release a report, based on all the submissions it gets from community members, by the end of August.

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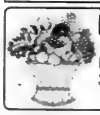

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Ex-CFLer Cantor brings professionalism to rugby team

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Noah Cantor was enjoying life after pro football, running Vera's Burger Shack, his Vancouver restaurant chain, and shooting hoops with his pals, when one of his buddies suggested he try out for Canada's Maccabiah rugby team.

He thought at first that his friend, Alex Cristall, was joking. Cantor, 38, hadn't played competitive rugby since high school, although he butted plenty of heads as a defensive lineman in the Canadian Football League from 1995 to 2006. In two stints with the Toronto Argos and one with the B.C. Lions, Cantor won four Grey Cups and was named a CFL all-star in 2004.

Apparently the rugby idea was not so outlandish. He got a call from the team's coach inviting him on the team, and before he knew it, he was working out with other Vancouver-based rugby players, preparing for the trip to Israel for the Games.

So far, it's been only "touch rugby," Cantor said. "Hopefully, it's going to be like riding a bike."

As a beefy guy – he weighs in at 255 pounds, 10 pounds lighter than his CFL days – he'll be playing forward in the second row. "It's like a lineman. They do the pushing… It's like what I did for years."

Mark Winokur, the Toronto-based head coach of the team, pointed out that Cantor is only one part of the 22-man team and may not get into games until later in the tournament. Unlike Cantor, the rest of the guys play club rugby, many at a very high level. "All these guys have a good background in the game."

Tryouts for the team were held last August in Toronto and in September in Vancouver. The bulk of the team hails from Ontario, but there are also sizeable contingents from Quebec and British Columbia. Only four players are holdovers from last Maccabiah, when the team failed to medal.

"This is a younger team, with two or three guys in their 30s," said Winokur, who was twice named coach of the year by Rugby Ontario, most recently in 2008. "The rest are in their early 20s."

Noah Cantor in his days with the B.C. Lions

Winokur, who played in the Games on the 1989 team, said the team's youth and speed and athleticism means "we'll probably play a running game," sort of like the fast break in basketball.

The Maccabiah tournament includes six countries, with teams from Canada, the United States, Israel, Australia, Britain and Chile vying for medals. Most of the other teams are mysteries, but Winokur expects the Americans to be strong, thanks to their "enormous Jewish population and tons of money."

Winokur expects most of the teams will face the same problem of creating a cohesive unit out of players that span a country. The Canadian players have been asked to get in shape and train hard, but they won't get together as a unit until they gather in Toronto in early July. The rugby team, along with other squads, will then hold a training camp to prepare for the Games.

With a fairly youthful group to mould into a team, Winokur expects Cantor "to bring a level of professionalism that the younger guys will learn from."

For his part, Cantor is looking forward to "a great opportunity to go to Israel and experience the Games. It's our Olympics, right?"

For Cantor, the Maccabiah will mark his second visit to Israel. When he was 16, he visited the Holy Land on a Jewish youth trip from his home in Ottawa. He still has great memories from that trip but he's been told the country has changed a lot since that summer 22 years ago.

Winokur, who coached the 2005 team, is likewise eager to get back to Israel. "It's a rare opportunity to play and compete against athletes from around the world and see Israel," he said.

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TIGERS DOMINATE: The CHAT Tigers capped a perfect 6-0 regular season with three convincing playoff wins en route to the TDCAA boys softball championship. CHAT defeated Yorkland School 10-2 in the championship final to capture the title of the mostly Roman Catholic school league. The Tigers advanced to the final with a 13-8 semifinal victory over Michael Power after defeating Cardinal McGuigan 23-2 in the quarterfinal. Seen here, front row, from left, Jonathan Sherman, Justin Friedlich, Michael Orlan, Daniel Freedman. Middle Row, from left, coach Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, Adam Taras, Jason Faibish, Zachary Pearlstein, manager Jenna Bendayan. Back Row, from left, coach Adam Strassberg, Richie Chailkof, Ben Walters, Noah Schwartz, team captain Grant Goldhar, Adam Gurza, Zachary Tobe, Josh Kimmel, Josh Morton, coach Jory Vernon, head coach Rob Fishbaum.

Jerusalem is ours

By NADAV SHRAGAI
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Opinion

At the end of the day and after all the speeches, the Palestinian state – and with it the State of Israel – will rise or fall on Jerusalem, the most legitimate and greatest Israeli settlement ever. This is the field where the battle should be conducted. This is where our chances are good of explaining our rights, from King David's time to 1948 and the Six Day War, without stammering and without apologizing.

When it comes to Jerusalem, there's no need to mention either natural growth or natural development. What's at stake is the nature of our connection to this city and the realization of the right that is rooted in our religion and history, and 2,000 years of memory and longing, during which the Jewish presence in Jerusalem never ceased to exist.

The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian media no longer have any sense of the absurd extent to which they have magnified their false claims about Jerusalem. Palestinian TV reported not long ago that it's possible there will be an artificial earthquake that will cause the Al-Aqsa Mosque to collapse, because Israel was considering carrying out a nuclear test in the Dead Sea.

The mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, is sticking with conspiracy theories about "the destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque," whether by "explosives, dropping bombs from the air or from a distance," or "by means of the tunnels." Sheikh Jamal Mohammed Bawatneh, the PA minister in charge of the Waqf, is also convinced that the "occupation regime" is seeking excuses to invade the mosque.

But it's not just a scare campaign regarding Al-Aqsa that's underway.

The Jewish presence itself in Jerusalem is perceived these days as a desecration of the Muslim character of the city. Thus Marwan Abu Khalaf, the director of the Institute of Islamic Archeology at Al-Quds University, says that "under every stone and in every corner, on every street and at every bend in Jerusalem, there are remains that say: 'We are Arab, we are Muslim.'"

Mahmoud Habbash, the PA minister of agriculture and social affairs, persists in saying that the Temple was not located in the Holy City at all, while researcher Hasan Sanallah is critical of the use of the term "Wailing Wall." According to him, "The occupation is falsifying the facts, and it has no right to the walls of Al-Aqsa."

With such a Jerusalem narrative, it's no wonder the Palestinian Authority – and not just Hamas – is defining Jerusalem as land that Muslims are religiously required to fight for and hold on to, liberating the land for the sake of Islam. This, of course, comes in addition to the Palestinians' denial of the Jewish connection to Jerusalem.

It's not difficult to undermine these lies. Indeed, according to many interpretations, the Al-Aqsa Mosque mentioned in the Qur'an - which many say appeared to Muhammad in a dream - was originally in the seventh heaven of Mecca and Medina, and not a terrestrial place at all. Nor is Al-Aqsa mentioned at all in the verses from the Qur'an that adorn the interior walls of the Dome of the Rock. Moreover, Muslims' journey to Jerusalem is always theologically considered a visit rather than a pilgrimage. It should also be noted that Jerusalem was never the capital of this land in the days of Muslim rule.

But while all this is correct, it is ultimately of negligible importance.

The main thing is to tell the Jewish story of Jerusalem again and again, a story that is unequalled and without which the Jewish people would not have undergone a revival in the Land of Israel. It should be told without tiring, without blinking and without getting confused, either by those among us who are mistaken or who mislead others, or by those who pose an external threat.

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3 garlic cloves
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2 tblsp water
1/4 tsp hot red pepper flakes
1 chicken cut in 1/8's or chicken parts

Preheat oven to 350°. Process garlic in food processor. Add ginger until finely chopped. Add jam, soy sauce, water, red pepper flakes and pulse until sauce is combined.

Lightly oil or spray baking pan with cooking spray. Place chicken pieces in baking pan. Season with salt. Pour sauce evenly over chicken. Bake 1 hr., basting several times inbetween to ensure even browning.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

My dear girlfriend, Amanda, and I were sitting in an outdoor cafe enjoying a glass of wine with dinner when she pulled out her Blackberry to read a text message that had just come in.

It was from her current love interest, Randy. He texted her to let her know that he was cancelling their date for Saturday night because "something important came up." He also added that he has been rethinking their relationship and would not be calling her for a while, as he feels he needs a little space right now.

To say our dinner was ruined would be an understatement, but more than the breakup, we were both shocked that Randy, who we thought was a decent guy, would do this kind of thing via text message. Amanda was in tears.

Has the world gone mad with texting or is Randy just a misguided creep?

Texting Trouble

Dear Texting Trouble

The old saying "It takes all kinds" comes to mind. You can rarely go anywhere these days without watching people walking, driving, eating or working out while doing the two-thumb tango on their smartphones.

Let's face it: there's no nice way to dump someone, but breaking up through a text message is an all-time low. It's like a high-tech "Dear Jane" letter, only it takes even less effort.

Randy's actions show a total disregard, lack of sensitivity and respect for Amanda. All it did was demonstrate that Randy is a coward who used his texting skills as a crutch and an easy way to get out of dealing with a difficult situation.

There can't be any closure with a text message or e-mail breakup. Ending a relationship should either be done face to face or, at the very least, in a phone conversation. With the world of texting gone mad, I'm sure this new "breakup via text" phenomenon has become more popular. No muss, no fuss, no accountability.

I'm sorry, Amanda, but any guy who doesn't have the moral fibre to break up with his girlfriend using proper communication is not worth shedding tears over, let alone ruining a dinner with a good friend.

Be happy you're done with this loser.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, email, eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

'Visioning' the future

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

I regularly comb bookstores and check magazine newsstands for books and magazines with articles, ideas and images that I know will bring people closer to their joy, bliss and passion in life.

So even though I had heard for years about vision boards and "visioning" the future you want to create, I was recently struck by a book called The Vision Board: The Secret to An Extraordinary Life, by Joyce Schwartz. I really want to share what it's all about.

A vision board is a tool that will help you discover who you are and ultimately help you achieve what you want more of in life. It is recommended that you do a visioning session in a group led by a facilitator, but you can certainly try the process alone. To help you, there are some excellent suggestions in the section called "The Passport to Possibility."

To get started, Schwartz recommends gathering several different kinds of magazines. Make sure they are not the usual kind of publications you read and pick at least three different magazines. Just glance at the pictures and then pull out a bunch of pictures that appeal to you. When you have at least eight to 10, lay them out, look at them, shuffle them and put them into some kind of sequence. Grab a pencil and pad of paper and write down some key words, and see if there are any links between the pictures. What is your interpretation of the images? What do these pictures tell you? Summarize your thoughts in a paragraph of advice to yourself.

As Schwartz writes, "one picture may be worth a thousand words," but she recommends the next step is to have a personal vision statement – one word or phrase that you "craft to visualize your best possible future." She recommends that you draft this personal vision statement before you create your vision board.

Find key words that match your core values, because your vision statement will be driven by your strongest personal values. So what do you value? What's important to you? List your top 10 values. Take the following values and put them in order from most to least important: acknowledgment, excitement, family, freedom, friends, honesty, money, power, recognition, reputation, respect, security and spirituality."

Come up with a "motto mojo," which is the redrafting a popular motto, cliché, slogan or line from a song, or even a family motto you grew up with. Some examples are: "The sun will come out tomorrow" or "Life is a bowl of cherries."

Keep a journal and jot down ideas when they come to you.

Create a wish list. Write down what you are grateful for and your top five best memories, achievements, successes or things that you are the most proud of. Then write down the five top experiences that you want to create in your life. So for example, Schwartz wrote: "To create and promote this book, so it is listed in the top 10 of the New York Times bestseller list."

You can use crayons, ribbons, markers, fabric and colour to create your vision board. Throw in affirmations, power words, quotations, pictures and photos of celebrities or influential figures who make a difference (Oprah is often featured in people's vision boards), and make sure to keep your vision board in a place where you can see it every day.

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart," Schwartz says. "Who looks outside, dreams: who looks inside, awakes."

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This Week

National

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Larry Green jazzes up Toronto's radio waves. ***Page 30***

Arts & Travel

Pagan weddings, therapy and slam poetry are all part of Fringe's variety. ***Page 31***

Lori Starr sets the record straight on Reena Katz exhibit. ***Page 33***

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Cdn. astronaut visits Ramon's family

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — Canadian Space Agency president Steve MacLean was in Israel last week for the third time since the tragic death of his Israeli colleague and close friend Ilan Ramon aboard the space shuttle Columbia, which exploded during its re-entry to Earth on March 1, 2003.

"The first time I came to Israel was for a very sad reason. It was for the funeral of Ilan Ramon," MacLean told *The CJN*.

He came to Israel for the second time in February 2007 for a memorial ceremony at Ramon's gravesite, and to visit schools, hospitals and airbases to speak about Ramon and the importance of space science.

Steve MacLean

This time, he came to Israel for a happier occasion: the graduation of Ramon's son, Assaf, from the Israeli Air Force (IAF) pilot training course.

"The day Assaf got accepted into the Israeli Air Force, I promised him I would be at his graduation," said MacLean, who attended the ceremony and air show with his wife and one of his daughters last Thursday at the Hatzerim Air Base in the Negev, where Assaf Ramon received his wings and his officer's ranks.

The amazing part about it, MacLean said, was that seeing Assaf graduate reminded him of a photo Ilan once showed him from his own IAF graduation ceremony. "They look a little bit alike. I found it quite emotional."

Assaf Ramon, who was the valedictorian last week, told Israeli daily *Yediot Achronoth* in April 2006, on his induction into the IAF, that he intended to follow in his father's footsteps. "Israel must send another astronaut," he was quoted as saying.

Graduating from the training course was the first step in that direction, a step formerly taken by Ilan Ramon, who was a colonel in the IAF before joining NASA.

"It is impossible to tell what the future holds," MacLean said. "But [Assaf] certainly has the character and all the qualities to become an astronaut. He graduated first in his class from the top flight-school in the world. He is well on his way."

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Dead Sea Scrolls on display in Toronto

Some of the fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls and a clay jar that are part of the exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. [*Photo courtesy of the ROM and the Israel Antiquities Authority*]

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

After months of promoting the historic Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, the organizers eagerly welcomed people from all backgrounds to explore the scrolls and other artifacts that offer Jews, Christians and Muslims a link to their past.

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the ROM have collaborated to produce the exhibition, which opened last week and will be on display until Jan. 3 in the ROM's new addition, the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal.

Sixteen scrolls, discovered in 1947 buried in caves in the Judean Desert by a Bedouin shepherd, will be divided into two groups of eight and each group will be on exhibit for three months.

Among the 16 scrolls – written between 250 BCE and 68 CE, from the books of Genesis, Deuteronomy and Psalms, as well as the sectarian Community Rule, War Scroll and Messianic Apocalypse – are four that will be on public display for the first time ever.

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Can Israel benefit from Iranian unrest? – see page 28

The News in Brief

Canada

Exam Question Pulled

VANCOUVER — A controversial practice-exam question about Mideast politics has been pulled from the British Columbia education ministry's website after protests from the Jewish public and Canadian Jewish Congress. The multiple-choice question was meant for teens studying for province-wide Grade 12 history exams. It asked them to identify the following group: "They have been fighting to regain a homeland since they were driven out in 1948. Some have lived their entire lives in refugee camps. Forty years later, Israel still refuses to recognize their right to exist as a nation." Answer choices were Jews, Iranians, Egyptians or Palestinians. Congress spokesperson Romy Ritter said the question oversimplified a complex issue.

Ex-Guard Can Stay

OTTAWA — A Federal Court judge has rejected an effort by B'nai Brith Canada to overturn a cabinet decision to let a former Nazi guard stay in Canada. In 2001, a Federal Court judge ruled that Ukrainian-born Wasyl Odynsky was a guard at a forced labour camp in Trwainiki, where German SS killed most of its Jewish prisoners in a 1943 massacre. The judge ruled he was confined to barracks during the killings and that he served involuntarily and wasn't a Nazi, but also that he likely lied about his service to enter Canada. B'nai Brith argued this alone justified revoking his citizenship. On July 19, Judge Robert Barnes ruled, contrary to the group's claim, that cabinet made a fully informed decision. He ordered B'nai Brith to pay Odynsky's legal costs, Canadian Press reported.

World

Shchitah Reaffirmed

BRUSSELS— New European Union rules to make slaughtering animals more humane also recognized the validity of religious slaughter methods. EU farm ministers agreed June 22 to tighten rules on slaughter to minimize animals' suffering. The new regulations allow kosher meat to be traded and sold freely in every EU country. They also recognize that animals being slaughtered for kosher consumption can't be pre-stunned, which violates shchitah laws. In addition, kosher meat won't be labelled in a discriminatory way.

Jew Elected Speaker

LONDON — A Jewish MP has for the first time been elected speaker of the British House of Commons. Tory John Bercow, 46, was elected by his peers in a secret ballot. His faith has not played a role in his political life. However, when Prime Minister Gordon Brown congratulated him, he noted that Bercow was the first-ever Jewish speaker.

Canada Joins Shoah Education Task Force

OSLO — Canada is now a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced last week.

Canada's application for full membership was accepted during the ITF's plenary session in Oslo.

"Membership in this important body provides Canada with an opportunity to work internationally to combat racism and anti-Semitism," Kenney said. "This government believes it is critically important to be engaged in efforts to teach future generations the lessons of the Holocaust and help prevent future acts of genocide."

To become a full member, Canada had to complete a study on the state of Shoah education, remembrance and research in Canada, as well as a project with ITF members.

For its project, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and B'nai Brith Canada, in partnership with the U.S. State Department, the French foreign ministry, the U.S. Holocaust Museum and the Memorial de la Shoah, hosted a recent conference in Toronto that examined Canada's actions and attitudes before and during World War II, including the refusal in 1939 to accept passengers of the MS St. Louis, some of whom later died in the Holocaust.

At the conference, Kenney announced funding for a new National Task Force on Holocaust Research, Remembrance and Education.

As a full ITF member, Canada commits to promoting the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust through remembrance, research and education. The ITF, which now has 27 member countries, works to get political and social leaders to support Shoah education and research nationally and internationally by funding training programs and educational material.

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York conference on Israel met by protests

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Last week's three-day York University-sponsored conference on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was met with three days of protests from concerned members of the Jewish community who feared the event would promote an anti-Israel agenda.

According to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), when the latter organization assigned three people to attend Israel-Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and paths to Peace, their fears were confirmed.

"The conference devoted virtually no time to suggestions about an invigorated peace process and concentrated instead on Israel as a military machine determined to dominate the Palestinians," the organizations said in a joint statement.

"There was no discussion of terrorism or Israel's security needs and there were no speakers who presented an Israeli centre-left or centre-right perspective. The assumption that Zionism and Israeli society are based on violence and racism predominated.

"At one panel discussion, 'Zionists' were blamed as the cause of domestic violence perpetrated by Palestinian men against Palestinian women. At another, some participants questioned the sanity and integrity of an Israeli presenter. Speakers who defended Zionism were often jeered and heckled and virtually all of the publicly available material was anti-Israel."

B'nai Brith Canada called the conference "a blatant exercise in anti-Zionist propaganda," and other Jewish and Israel advocacy organizations – including the Jewish Defence League (JDL), StandWithUs, the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism (CCIA), Hasbara Fellowships and Hasbara at York – held protests at the entrance of York's Glendon campus at Lawrence and Bayview avenues, where the conference was held between June 22 and 24.

JDL's national director Meir Weinstein said on June 22, at the peak, about 125 people gathered for the protest and on the 23rd and 24th, the protests drew smaller crowds.

In a release distributed by UJA Federation, CIJA and Hillel of Greater Toronto, Daniel Ferman, Hillel's city-wide student-council chair, said the conference "is academically flawed and unbalanced.

"It's disappointing that a university which publicly supports 'reasoned discourse' would sanction a conference with so many speakers whose rhetoric falls far below this lofty goal," Ferman added.

Continued on page 18

Students gathered at York University's Glendon campus on Monday to protest the York-sponsored conference called Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace. [Sheri Shefa photo]

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Greater Toronto Area

The IAA and the ROM

The logo of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Reshut Ha'Atikot) conveys within its modest, simple design a profound statement about the timelessness of Jewish history and the everlasting inter-connectedness of the Jewish people.

The stylized seven-branch candelabrum (menorah) is an ancient symbol that owes its Jewish association to the fact that the menorah was part of the religious ceremony in the Temple in Jerusalem. Well before the construction of the Temple, a menorah also travelled with the Israelites during their 40-year wandering in the desert.

From the editor's desk...

The menorah was identified with the Temple. It represents a very specific place – Jerusalem. Over the years, various likenesses of the menorah were used throughout the world, for example on gravestones, to denote the presence of Jewish individuals.

The two circles above the base of the menorah, as the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) explains on its website, depict Torah scrolls. The circles, we are told, are "a Jewish motif that accompanies the seven-branch menorah from the time of the Talmud until the present day."

And it is no wonder.

It is in those scrolls that the menorah is first mentioned. Those scrolls, lovingly carried across time and place, have defined individuals as Jews and groups of Jews as Jewish communities. Those scrolls have connected and continue to connect Jewish communities to one another across the globe.

The circles represent the Jewish people.

Through its very compelling and exciting work, the IAA per-petates understanding of the connection between a very special place and a very special people.

The IAA was founded in 1948, some 2-1/2 months after the State of Israel was created. It is the leading professional body for the study of archeology of Israel. It is also in charge of the country's antiquities, the antiquity sites, the excavation of the sites and the preservation, conservation and study of the artifacts yielded by those sites.

William Thorsell, director and CEO of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), described the IAA as having "a deep level of scholarship and caring." He spoke those words at the media preview of the exhibition of *Dead Sea Scrolls: Words That Changed the World.*

Together, the ROM and the IAA have undertaken what Thorsell described as "one of the most significant exhibitions in the history of the ROM."

For nearly six months, from June 27 until Jan. 3, the ROM is showcasing a specially curated exhibit of more than 200 artifacts lent to the museum by the IAA. The centrepiece of the exhibition are 16 of the Dead Sea Scrolls that contain fragments from the books of Genesis, Deuteronomy and Psalms. Four of the fragments will be on display for the first time ever.

The exhibit has been masterfully curated by former Torontonian Risa Levitt Kohn, director of the Jewish Studies program at San Diego State University.

ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY רשות העתיקות

The arrangement and display of the artifacts are an esthetic tour de force. The exhibition tries to make the visitor "feel" the desert, marvel at the splendor of Jerusalem and stand in wonder of the mountain singularity of Masada. The route for the visitor through the exhibition replicates a route in ancient times through the hills of Judea to the Galilee centre of Sephoris, back to Jerusalem and then farther south to the Dead Sea redoubt of Qumran, where the scrolls were discovered.

Even the colours of panels, the walls and the display fabrics are the beiges, golds and light brown of Judea and the nearby area dominated by the Dead Sea.

Most important, however, is the aspiration of the ROM and the IAA to lead visitors to a wider, deeper appreciation for the impact of the scrolls on the culture and humanity of the world.

Thorsell emphasized this. "The exhibition," he said "was about values and ideas. It was intended to generate discussion about the meaning and the significance of the scrolls."

For Levitt Kohn, the "small parchments are a link between us and our past."

"The exhibit," she wrote, was "a highly unique opportunity for a Canadian audience. Among the scrolls are some of the oldest discovered texts of the Hebrew Bible – writings that have had lasting influence on western culture as they continue to resonate today. This exhibition tells an important story of discovery, as these scrolls and their words shed light on the life, faith and culture of ancient Judea at the dawn of modern Judaism and Christianity."

This special collaboration between the ROM and the IAA is to be praised, and it should be seen by as many of us as possible. To be sure, the treasured antiquities that the IAA has lent to the ROM demonstrate the unique connection between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. But as the exhibit organizers also wish to point out, they prove a common starting point for the fostering of inter-ethnic, inter-national goodwill that is demanded of us all if the world is to be the best place it can be for all its inhabitants. — *MBD*

Correction

The story "Panel addresses anti-Israel 'crisis' on campus" (*CJN*, June 25) contained two errors. It incorrectly identified the event's organizer. It should have said the event was organized by the Jewish Defence League of Canada. In addition, the event was held at the Chabad Lubavitch Community Centre on Chabad Gate in Thornhill, Ont., not at York University. *The CJN* regrets the errors.

SeeJN

PRIDE PARADE: More than 100 people, gay and straight, organized by Kulanu, a Jewish LGBT social group affiliated with Hillel of Greater Toronto, marched in Pride Toronto's parade on Sunday. Tens of thousands of people gathered on Yonge Street to watch the parade, and watchers cheered loudly as the pro-Israel marchers passed. Marchers included Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber; Len Ruder, CJC's regional director, and Phil Berger, chief of the department of family and community medicine at St. Michael's Hospital.

United Chesed is desperate for funds

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

When Zev, 46, had no money to feed his five children, United Chesed stepped in to help.

Now he's working for the organization, a not-for-profit charity that assists members of the Jewish community who are experiencing financial hardship or living in poverty but don't meet the requirements of other social service agencies.

"My business had failed, and I lost my home. We had to live with relatives for two weeks until we found a house, and my bank account was zero. I couldn't put food on the table."

He wasn't able to get any emergency help until he was referred to United Chesed, who gave him food coupons and a commitment to help out with $800 a month to help pay the bills.

"Once the pressure was off, I had the mindset to move forward. My life turned around," said Zev, who preferred not to give his last name.

During his first day at work, he delivered $245 worth of groceries to a mother with four young daughters. "The little girls hadn't eaten yet that day. We should never have to see these things."

Brian Price, a Thornhill dentist who founded United Chesed seven years ago, said these two cases aren't unusual. "When we say people need money, they really need money. They need food and clothing for their children, and they need beds."

> ***'We have hundreds of people who are out of work'***

When he placed a recent ad in *The CJN* saying the organization urgently required help, "I was practically crying. We said that our 'Jewish brothers, sisters, children, parents and grandparents are bleeding', and we meant every word."

In these tough times, he said, the organization is being forced to grow bigger, "and we don't want to grow. We need $40,000 to $50,000 a month to survive, and we're not coming close to that. We have very little overhead, and the money we receive goes right back to the people, but we're able to help only a fraction of those living under the poverty line."

Ruth Rebuck, United Chesed's executive administrator, said that every charity is having a difficult time raising money.

"Poverty is not sexy. It is a reality, and people can't cope with it. They look away. Poverty is shameful and people don't want to face it," she said.

"We're talking about people's lives, though. When they're hungry, we have to help. I can't rest if someone is desperate."

Price said United Chesed helps in a number of ways. "When we heard about a pregnant woman who had no health insurance, we found an obstetrician and anesthetist willing to work for free. There are people out there who want to help."

Last Pesach, a company distributed a roast and 10 pounds of ground beef to 10 families. "These people had no words to say thank you," he said.

Rebuck said that although United Chesed doesn't set out to find people jobs, she will send out resumes to contacts, and she has been successful matching employers and employees.

"We have hundreds of people who are out of work. It can happen to anyone. No one is safe."

Price said that "there is only so much we can afford to do. We need the basic necessities to help people survive."

He would like to help hundreds of more people, he said.

"I'd like to see a resource centre for jobs and housing, and I'd like to get our name out there. Too often, people don't call until they're desperate. They've fallen through the cracks."

Call United Chesed at 905-707-0233.

Camps take swine flu precautions

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Jewish camps were being vigilant last week about screening for the H1N1 virus, but none reported any suspicious cases of flu among campers or staff.

Rabbi Elliott Kleinman, chief program officer for the Union for Progressive Judaism, the umbrella body for Camp George in Parry Sound, Ont., said staff sent out letters to parents telling them not to send their children to camp if they're feeling ill.

"We told them to keep their kids home for a few days, and we told the staff the same thing. We take the health and safety of our campers and staff seriously."

> ***Campers' temperatures taken upon arrival***

He said that the camp would be taking campers' temperatures when they arrived and would "push basic hygiene such as washing their hands and covering their mouths when they cough or sneeze."

At Camp Shalom, Canadian Young Judaea's camp in Gravenhurst, Ont., director Adam Shulman said his staff would also be taking campers' temperatures and asking them a series of informal questions about their general health.

"We do a regular lice check when campers arrive, and this will be part of that check," he said.

"We checked with physicians and the Ontario Camping Association, and this is the protocol they suggested. We're trying to be preventative and pro-active. We won't hesitate to send a camper or staff member home if they're sick."

At Camp Ramah, located in Utterson, Ont., campers had their temperature taken before they got on camp buses from Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa and four American cities, and at Camp Gesher in Cloyne, Ont., staff screened campers for fever and planned to teach basic hygiene.

"We have hand-washing stations all around the camp," Gesher's director, Shaul Zobary, said.

Meanwhile, two Jewish camps in Texas last week reported cases of swine flu. Camp Young Judaea and the Greene Family Camp, both overnight summer camps, will remain open, the Jewish Herald-Voice in Houston reported.

Camp Young Judaea had eight cases, including campers and staff, as well as 25 campers and two counsellors quarantined with flu symptoms. The Greene Family Camp had one confirmed swine flu case and four campers with symptoms.

Swine flu also affected the start of at least three other Jewish-sponsored camps in the United States.

The Reform movement's Camp Newman-Swig in Santa Rosa, Calif., delayed its opening after some staff came down with the flu, while at the movement's Camp Coleman in Georgia, 15 staff came down with flu, delaying the opening there.

As well, at the Conservative movement's Camp Ramah Darom in Georgia, several campers came down with flu and were to remain isolated for a week.

With files from JTA.

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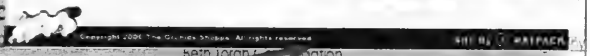

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Greater Toronto Area

Restaurant 'warns against' Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A posh downtown restaurant inserted itself into Middle East politics last month when it advised its clientele to avoid the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). The restaurant later removed the Internet posting.

On June 18, Le Sélect Bistro told visitors to the "What's Up" section of its website that it wished "to warn against a show whose artifacts were obtained by force and looting."

The exhibit "showcases artifacts seized by Israel in its 1967 surprise war which it waged against its neighbours," the site stated. "The war led to the seizure and the ongoing military occupation of many lands, including the West Bank, from where the scrolls were taken."

The one-paragraph summary goes on to accuse the ROM of "violating Canada's responsibilities under the UNESCO Conventions and Protocols relating to cultural object seized by arms."

That posting, which included a graphic red "X" over a ROM poster publicizing the exhibit, was changed to a more neutral description that omitted allegations Israel looted the scrolls, but maintains that a "controversy" concerning the scrolls still exists.

Before it was changed, the Select posting was being circulated on the Internet by individuals angry at the restaurant's views.

Mel Fogel, a semi-retired teacher, said, "I read it. It was outrageous. They described the 1967 war as if Israel engaged in a surprise war.

"If the owner of the restaurant is prepared to engage in that kind of behaviour and misrepresent the facts, especially the '67 war, obviously he's anti-Israel."

Fogel suggested that anyone upset by Le Select's inaccurate description of the scroll's provenance should consider doing to the restaurant what it suggested doing to the ROM exhibit – stay away.

Frédéric Geisweiller, owner of Le Sélect, said he wrote the original web posting, which ran for three weeks until it was removed on June 19. The site was changed in part because "the ROM was willing to acknowledge some" of the things we were acknowledging about the exhibit," he said.

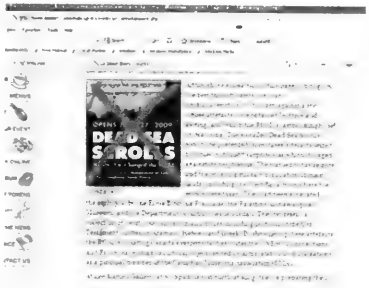
Geisweiller said the original description of the exhibit warned the restaurant customers to be "cautious" about the exhibit, but it didn't explicitly call for a boycott. "I want the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls told," he said, adding that Palestinians, the Jordanian Antiquities Department and the École Biblique in Jerusalem excavated them.

Those scrolls were placed in the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem and Israel removed them after its victory in the 1967 war, Geisweiller said.

These are the scrolls on display at the ROM, he continued, adding that the ones purchased by Israelis from antiquities dealers were likely now in private collections. (In fact, they are part of the collection at the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem.)

However, in a letter to Geisweiller (which was circulated on the Internet), Howard Adelman, a York University professor emeritus in philosophy, addressed point by point the assertions contained on le Select's website.

After criticizing Geisweiller's use of the website "to propagate clearly political views and propaganda," Adelman noted that the site



of Qumran was a site settled by Jewish Zionists under the British Mandate who were forced out when Jordan occupied the West Bank in 1948; that Jordan, which itself "seized and annexed" the West Bank, did not make the export of antiquities illegal until 1974; that international protocols on protecting cultural property during war only apply to contracting states, and the Palestinian Authority does not qualify as such; that the 1967 war was not a surprise attack by Israel but only followed Egyptian closure of an international waterway. Adelman added that Jordan entered the conflict after Israel had asked it to stay out, and that the Rockefeller Museum was a private institution that Jordan expropriated and which Israel, as a successor authority, took possession of in 1967.

Adelman also noted that the scrolls are "clearly the cultural property of Jews 2,000 years ago. Given many precedents on cultural property, would you not think the Jews of today should be the inheritors of that property, even if ownership of the property is in dispute?"

The ROM exhibition, which runs until Jan. 3, 2010, will take place despite the protests of Palestinian officials, who argue the scrolls were acquired illegally from the Jordanian-owned Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. In Mississauga, Palestine House called on the ROM to cancel the exhibit, saying they "were looted from a museum in East Jerusalem after it was occupied in 1967."

Museum officials and Canadian government officials have rejected that contention.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, authored by Jewish scribes from 250 BCE to 68 CE, were found in 1947 in a cave by a Bedouin shepherd near the ancient village of Qumran. They were turned over to an antiquities dealer, as were other scrolls located in caves near the ancient Essene settlement. Many of the scrolls were purchased by Israeli scholars at various times before 1954.

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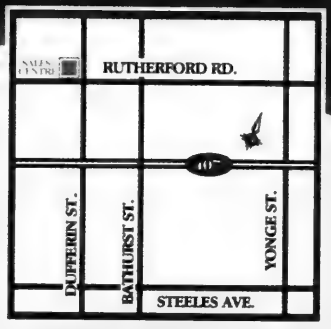

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An unmistakable message

It was to be expected. The clerical elite of theocratic Iran have closed ranks behind their supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Khamenei, it will be recalled, last week closed ranks behind President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and severely disparaged the defeated presidential candidates and the people still protesting the results of the June 12 presidential election.

The rulers of Iran have now added brazen intimidation and harassment to the brutal suppression of the peaceful pro-democracy protesters. And of course, they have pointed their accusing fingers at their western scapegoats for inciting the pro-democracy protests.

According to reports, Ayatollah Ahmed Khatami, one of the most powerful individuals in the country, last Friday said the protest leaders were "at war with God" and should be punished "without mercy." "They are worthy of execution," Khatami warned.

Taking their cue from the fulminating Khatami, the Iranian security forces substantially buttressed their already considerable number in Tehran. Some 10,000 Basij militiamen were reportedly deployed throughout the city to help "control" the demonstrators.

On Sunday, Iranian authorities detained eight local employees of the British Embassy in Tehran for allegedly taking part in the post-election demonstrations.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband called the detentions "harassment and intimidation of a kind which is quite unacceptable." European Union foreign ministers were said to have agreed that the EU would meet any Iranian intimidation of European diplomatic staff in Tehran with a "strong and collective response."

It is difficult to imagine what that "strong and collective response" might be. Thus far, the EU has failed every test that the the government of Iran has placed before them. Following the recent American example, the Europeans have been reluctant to impose meaningfully effective and biting sanctions upon Tehran in relation to the mullahs' nuclear subterfuge.

Canadian leaders are genuinely disgusted by Tehran's behaviour. "The regime has chosen to use brute force and intimidation in responding to peaceful opposition regarding legitimate and serious allegations of electoral fraud. Basic human rights are being ignored," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said last week.

"This is a regime that has denied the reality of the Holocaust, that's attempted to develop nuclear weapons, and long before the election we knew this was a regime with which we could not have normal relations. Canada cannot abandon the people of Iran," Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff has said.

The Khamenei-Ahmadinejad rulership, alas, appears to have beaten down the will of their own people to live by truer democratic standards. Western inaction regarding the events in Iran will send an unmistakable message to the Iranian rulers and to all other anti-democratic despots in the world about the sorrowful state of western resolve when it comes to affirming the much vaunted sanctity of human life and the democratic ideal that underpins it.

25 years ago in The CJN

An Arab attempt to expel Israel from the Universal Postal Union was rejected by a secret ballot vote of 73-32. Western diplomats said it was a major political success for Israel. Although the expulsion wouldn't have had a significant impact on postal service, it would have sent a precedent for Israel's removal from other international bodies.

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Jewish refugees from Arab countries

I read with great interest "Italian deputies learn about Jewish refugees" (*CJN*, June 25) and was pleased to see appropriate recognition for MP Irwin Cotler and his able representation of the history of Jewish refuges from Arab countries before the Italian parliament under the sponsorship of Justice for Jews from Arab countries.

I was especially struck by the fact that coinciding with Irwin's address was the visit of Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi to Italy. This quite appropriately allowed Cotler to ask why Libya has done nothing to compensate the Jews forced out of Libya following the establishment of the State of Israel.

I do note, however, that *The CJN* missed the fact that also present at this same meeting in Italy was Toronto's own Walter Arbib, a former Libyan Jew who today is one of Canada's most respected philanthropists. Arbib acted as special emissary for the Canadian Jewish Congress at the Rome gathering on Jews from Arab countries.

Mark J. Freiman
President
Canadian Jewish Congress

* * *

Congregation welcomes gays, lesbians

In her letter, Aurora Mendelsohn raises the issue of shuls not openly welcoming GLBTQ congregants ("Jewish gays, lesbians not supported," *CJN*, June 25). Gays and lesbians have not only been welcome at Congregation Shir Libeynu since its founding 13 years ago, but have also been front and centre here. Our recent third annual GLBTQ Pride service, Going to Shul with Pride, was attended by more than 70 people. Led by our ritual leader Aviva Goldberg, our service included alternative liturgy, songs, readings and a communal aliyah for our GLBTQ congregants.

We also have High Holiday services, and we have Shabbat services the first Saturday of every month at 10:30 a.m. at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Our liberal congregation is very diverse. Many of our congregants, both GLBTQ and straight, say that Shir Libeynu is the first shul where they felt truly welcomed. We hope that anyone looking for a shul to call their own will visit our congregation. For more information, visit www.shirlibeynu.ca.

Eden Nameri
President, Congregation Shir Libeynu
Toronto

* * *

A diatribe against the Jewish People

Regarding, Gilbert Plaw's defence of *Seven Jewish Children* ("Judge *Seven Jewish Children* for yourself," *CJN* letters, June 4):

• The play is about the Jewish people, not just Israelis. The title shows that. We see it in the constant repetition of the lines "tell her," "don't tell her" – what Jewish parents should or should not tell their Jewish daughters and in the Holocaust episodes, which occurred before Israel became a nation.

• The structure of the play is circular. It begins with the Holocaust and ends with the attack on Gaza, which in the play becomes another kind of Holocaust, against the defenceless people of Gaza. The victims become the perpetrators in their deliberate, cold-blooded attack on innocent people. That is the ironic point the playwright wants you to accept.

• The play assumes from the start that Israel has no right to exist: "Don't tell her she doesn't belong here."

• The play is hardly more than a diatribe against the Jewish People. References to Palestinian rockets and bombs are seen as snide Jewish rationalizations to justify Jewish cruelty. Theatre is essentially conflict. Here there is only a pretense to conflict, nothing to show the constant fear Israelis have been living under in their fight for survival.

• Oh yes, there is some conflict in the play's beginning, where we see the heart-rending decision a parent must make in telling her child about what might happen or did happen in the death camps. But that soon becomes only a theatrical device for the playwright to drive home in one appalling paragraph the horrors inflicted on the poor Gazans. What kind of mother would tell her child that "I laughed when I saw the dead policeman," that the Gazans are filth, that they're animals living in the rubble? Here the circle is complete, with the attack on Gaza joined with the Nazi destruction of the Jews. This is not conflict. This is not theatre.

Philip Pinkus
Vancouver

* * *

Grandson to participate in Maccabiah

Our household is filled with excitement, and I am proud to tell you this little story. My grandson, Max Grossman, from Toronto, will be representing Canada in the 2009 Maccabiah Games in Israel. He will be playing basketball in the 16-and-under age group. Well, 50 years ago, his grandfather, by the same name, also played basketball in the Maccabiah Games, representing Canada. How times flies, but I am just as excited today as I was then. I wish all of our athletes a safe trip and the best of luck.

Georgina Grossman
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Let's curb the hyperbole about York

By ERIC LAWEE

There's no denying that York University's 50th anniversary year has had ups and downs. Most obviously, although the "winter term" did finally end, it did so in June, after a strike that shut down classes at York for months.

The campus is now relatively quiet, but loud rumblings from within segments of the Jewish community continue to reverberate when it comes to York, especially regarding anti-Israel activities on campus and the adverse impact they have on the quality of the Jewish student experience. Some verdicts have been especially harsh. For example, a full page ad in the National Post published by a prominent Jewish advocacy organization gave York a "report card" in which the university received straight "Fs" in subjects such as "providing balanced, intellectual academic debate," "preventing anti-Israel agitators from spewing hatred," and "ensuring Jewish students are not marginalized and intimidated." The only passing grade (an "A+" no less) was for "seeking community support while anti-Jewish activity takes place on campus."

To be sure, supporters of Israel and many Jewish students have had much to lament in recent months, not the least of which is a conference held at York last week that, while ostensibly "mapping paths to peace" in "Israel Palestine," featured a raft of virulent Israel-bashers, including some who routinely deploy the scurrilous language of "Israeli apartheid" and seek a "one-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian impasse – that is, the founding of a "bi-national state" on the ruins of the Jewish one.

York has also gained unenviable notoriety due to strident anti-Israel demonstrations on campus and a deplorable incident in which police intervention was required to escort besieged students from the university Hillel. In that case and others in recent years, the university's response has been slow and muted. Little wonder that many are upset and others outraged.

> *'Leave the rhetoric of blanket demonization to the anti-Israel zealots'*

Before, however, declaring York the academic equivalent of Sodom and Gomorrah (or Durban II), I would urge consideration of the *matsav* (situation) at my home institution in an enlarged perspective. Here are some items that I think merit consideration as we seek to achieve positive outcomes on a campus that is still home to more Jewish students than any other in Canada.

First, a little history. Jewish studies at York, and a strong Jewish presence there, stretches back to the university's inception. York augmented its early commitment to the field of Jewish studies by creating a Centre for Jewish Studies (CJS) in 1989, the first interdisciplinary research and teaching centre in Jewish Studies in Canada. The CJS now has a new name, the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies, due to the centre's generous endowment by the Koschitzky family. The centre's ability to promote Jewish studies on campus and beyond has never been greater. Such things do not happen in an institutional vacuum. York's support has been unstinting and continues unabated, so no failing grade here.

York also boasts a new Jewish studies program that allows students to major and minor in the field. It was created with strong encouragement from York's upper echelons. Some program offerings are rare in any university outside Israel, such as courses conducted in Hebrew with texts studied in the Hebrew original. By their nature, such courses attract smaller enrolments, so sustaining them requires support from department chairs and deans. At York, such support has routinely been forthcoming.

York encompasses innovative initiatives such as the Jewish Teacher Education Program, which trains students to teach in a range of Jewish day schools and the Mark and Gail Appel Program in Holocaust and Anti-Racism Education, which helps York students and partner universities in Canada, Germany, and Poland develop curricular responses to racism and anti-Semitism. For these "A+" programs, the university deserves credit rather than blanket vilification as a place where Jewish students are "marginalized and intimidated" or, as a petition I recently saw proclaimed, a place characterized by "hate and intimidation targeting Jewish students."

But what about Israel? Again, without discounting unacceptable incidents that have occurred at York and some of the disturbing larger trends that they betoken (trends that, sad to say, are hardly limited to York or to university campuses), I would note that York has just inaugurated a program that brings a visiting Israel studies professor from Israel to campus each year to do research, teach, and give public lectures.

Needless to say, the visiting professorship promotes academic ends, not political advocacy. At the same time, by teaching students at the undergraduate and graduate levels (and the wider community, through public lectures) about Israel's challenges, achievements, shortcomings and endless complexities in a nuanced way, using a variety of scholarly approaches, the Israel studies visiting professors take students beyond the screaming headlines – and the screaming demonstrators who too often populate York's Vari Hall.

As scholars who model and impart habits of rigorous, open-minded critical analysis, these professors serve, as all professors should, as an antidote to tendentious propagandizing of any sort, Israel-related or otherwise. In addition to communal support, the program receives strong support, moral and financial, from York, and should be counted as another feather in York's cap.

And speaking of Israel, it's worth remembering York's generous policy, unmatched in Canada as far as I know, when it comes to granting university credits to students who spend a year in Israel studying at yeshivot, seminaries, or like institutions after high school.

Pro and anti-Israel demonstrators at Vari Hall earlier this year.

Of course, for students on campus, the quality of the university experience has much to do with the extracurricular sphere. Here, York students enjoy advantages hard to find on too many other North American campuses, from the vibrancy of York's Hillel, to the variety of the speakers of Jewish interest who appear on campus, to the delightful cuisine of the kosher cafeteria (the latter a true rarity on a North American campus). Let us note also that when some years back York Hillel invited Daniel Pipes – a strong but controversial, pro-Israel voice – to speak on campus, the administration of the day made sure he was able to do so, despite strenuous protests from many on campus, and beyond.

Other aspects of some of the attacks on York emanating from the Jewish community trouble me, apart from their lack of balance. For one, although I am the first to agree that what happens at universities matters and has repercussions far beyond the campus commons, I worry that the focus on York is becoming too total, displacing other pressing priorities. A full page ad in a major newspaper is a major expenditure. Are those dollars really best spent attacking York?

More than I worry about the allocation of scarce community resources, however, I worry about our community's ability to keep its head and retain its own sense of "balance" in challenging times. In addition to that petition mentioned earlier, entitled "Stop York University Hate and Intimidation Targeting Jewish Students," I recently received an e-mail that spoke of "the bigotry and racist agenda of York University towards Israel and the Jewish community." Fighting words those, but also ones that are wholly unjustified. Leave aside the fact that there really is no monolith called "York University" but only the messy parts of a complex and dynamic whole, typically acting autonomously from one another. The point is that such baseless criticism diminishes the Jewish community's credibility on campus and threatens to destroy much that has been painstakingly built – and will not easily be rebuilt or replaced.

Perhaps more importantly, criticisms such as these are simply unfair to the many at York who expend time, energy, and resources in order to enhance Jewish life on campus, build academic Jewish studies and, yes, even help to sustain events and programs that benefit the embattled Jewish state. (For example, York International, York's international education office, contributes to our successful efforts to send a large contingent of York students to study at Israeli universities on a yearly basis.)

Evidence-based responsible criticism is the lifeblood of the university and any university worthy of the name should welcome it. We must engage in trenchant criticism where appropriate, while also remembering to bestow praise where deserved. But we should leave the rhetoric of blanket demonization, whether shrill or sophisticated (the latter being increasingly the more dangerous form when it comes to the assault on Israel within the academy) to the anti-Israel zealots who, as we know, paint a fraudulently one-sided picture of a country living amidst an extremely complex and often unspeakably trying reality.

As we formulate out letters, petitions, and advertisements, let us recall Pirkei Avot's wise maxim: "Scholars, be careful with your words." Let our community be distinguished by prudent, fair-minded, lucid thought and discriminating, measured speech – on campus and off.

Eric Lawee is a humanities professor and acting director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at York University in Toronto.

Opinions

Because we care

Alaska governor Sarah Palin was in the news recently. To her credit (and I'm not a fan), she was in New York City to raise funds for autism. At the end of one news item about her, the reporter included the following: one of Palin's own children is developmentally challenged. Why was it necessary to inform us of her personal situation? Were these her reasons for involvement? Was the underlying assumption that she was marching only because of her personal connection?

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

People often get involved with charities that promote or cater to issues they're personally connected to. I understand that. If someone you love is stricken with a disease, it seems quite natural to want to focus on the illness, to get funding for research and to raise consciousness so that others will embrace the cause.

Yet we err if we assume that people only get involved when they are personally touched.

Many of you know that I have been crusading for agunot (women who can't get their Jewish divorce) for more than 35 years. In all that time, people have consistently assumed that I was once an agunah. So let me confess publicly in this column: I was never divorced. I have been married to Rabbi Howard Joseph for 44 years. My parents were not divorced.

I didn't take up the cause of Jewish divorce because I knew of the problems personally. I took it up because I was and still am outraged at the injustice of our supposedly just legal system. I can't sit idly by while Jewish women are chained to dead marriages. What kind of Judaism allows men to use Jewish law to abuse law-abiding women.

I got involved because of the cause. Just like many of you!

Volunteering to help or to promote a cause or to raise money can't be limited to the issues that touch me or those I love. We are more than that. We can be moved by ideas, by problems others face, in other communities and other places. We can imagine. We can extend our concerns. We can be responsible for those we don't know. Because we care.

Maimonides describes our charitable obligations as a series of concentric circles. First you take care of your immediate family. Then you move to your extended family, then the community, the nation, the land you live in, etc.

We must move out beyond ourselves in our acts of volunteering. Remember the words of Hillel: If I am only for myself, what good am I?

Important to heed the lessons of the past

The recent death of Amos Elon sent me back to our bookshelves to re-read some of his work. Elon was a passionate observer and critic of modern Jewish events and history, and his *Jerusalem: City of Mirrors* (published in 1989) seemed just as apt today as it did 20 years ago.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

For example, in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, he observed in regard to the recapture of east Jerusalem: "Fervent expectations soon produced spectacular results. Tombs of renowned Hebrew prophets and kings… as well as Saul's own throne and Samson's alleged cave were being discovered almost daily."

Fast forward to 2009, to my morning paper. The caption under a picture of a tallit-shrouded man reads: "Overlooking the tomb of Joseph, one of the holiest sites in Judaism."

Since when is the putative tomb of Joseph one of our holiest sites?

Or take Elon's description of the "Tomb of David" on Har Zion. Built by the Crusaders, it remains the imagined site of David's tomb, despite having a very Muslim-looking sarcophagus; and it is draped with a cloth inscribed, "David, King of Israel, lives."

Not much has changed since Elon wrote his book. We are still in the throes of messianic expectations, the search for signs of an imminent miracle.

Elon did get one thing wrong, however. He argues that in regard to Jerusalem, political decisions are rational, whereas collective memory is not rational.

But political decisions have not been rational. The creation of the State of Israel was not a rational act but a desperate one, one based on the necessity of history, infused with dreams and born of tragedy. The 1967 war was not a miracle, but a brilliant military achievement carried out by actual people.

Once we recognize that our images of Israel and Jerusalem, of the shrines discovered and venerated, are artifacts of memory as much as of history, we may approach rational thought. Not before.

Why then, do we harangue Palestinians whose memories so bedevil a search for peace? Why should we be different? Buffeted by the same Zeitgeist as all other nations – radical, reformatory, conservative, fundamental – we, too, live in a confused amalgam of rational, factual truths and a mist of memory.

The accumulation of shrines has a long history in Judaism, just as it has in Christian and Muslim traditions. "The religious imagination always invented – still invents – its own geography," Elon wrote.

However, today, when we venerate such places as the "tomb of Joseph" we are assigning a specific meaning to it, in crass political terms. We are saying that Jews can settle in that place because we have been there since the time of Joseph, whose bones were brought by Moses out of Egypt and buried in the Land of Israel.

I suggest that this kind of geo-religio-political nonsense stop. Elon subtitled his book "City of Mirrors," I believe, because everyone in this tormented city sees what he or she wants to see reflected in so-called sacred sites.

Abraham Joshua Heschel taught that Judaism is a religion that sanctifies time, not space.

Yeshayahu Leibowitz, an ardent Jew, observant in every way and a fierce Zionist, saw the danger in assigning metaphysical meaning to physical space. The Temple Mount is not holy because a building stood there, he argued. Holiness, sacredness, is given when the people who occupy it give it meaning.

What meaning do we give to a mythical tomb – where a Crusader or an Ottoman is buried? To the Western Wall, build by the despicable Herod, now so holy that only certain groups may approach it?

By our actions, we sanctify or desecrate a place. By our actions, we make the world a better or a worse place.

We do a terrible disservice to ourselves when we insist on making "sacred" every inch of soil. Israel, our beloved Israel, now grapples with internal strife that threatens to tear the country apart. Is this the dream that we share?

Have we forgotten the lessons of these scholars and teachers and abandoned ourselves to some twisted version of a dream that leads only to hatred and destruction?

On citizenship

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to everyone in Canada and, in some instances, to those outside of Canada who are subject to Canadian law extending beyond our borders.

Of course, the charter grants some special rights that apply only to Canadian citizens but not to everyone residing in Canada. Canadian citizens have the right to vote and the right to serve in office if elected. Canadian citizens have the right to enter, remain and leave Canada. And Canadian citizens can take advantage of guarantees in certain circumstances of minority language education. The right to vote could be extended to non-Canadians, a matter of current debate within the City of Toronto. But only Canadian citizens have a constitutionally entrenched right to vote. Surely, however, citizenship means more than these particular provisions in our constitution.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

Apart from our First Nations peoples, Canada is essentially a nation of immigrants. There have been some six million new citizens since the enactment of the first Citizenship Act in 1947. Before that, Canadians were considered British subjects. But, to quote Gabe de Roche of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, this "did not reflect the character of our nation."

Recently, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship was established to promote "the idea that citizenship is one of the most important bonds we share." This organization, co-chaired by Canada's former governor general Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul has established six pillars of Canadian citizenship. They are economic security, social networks, legal status, political participation, cultural identity and public discourse.

There are, however, some current issues of considerable controversy surrounding the notion of Canadian citizenship. Of particular interest to Canada's Jewish community, in recent years, Canada has had to deal with the question of the revocation of citizenship of persons designated as "war criminals."

The leading case involves Helmut Oberlander and his activities during the World War II. Pursuant to the Citizenship Act, the minister responsible referred Oberlander's case to the Federal Court to determine whether he had obtained Canadian citizenship by "false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances." Following this decision and subsequent judicial hearings, Oberlander was stripped of his Canadian citizenship in October of 2008.

Most recently, Bill C-37, amending the Citizenship Act, came into effect on April 17. The new act deals with four distinct legal scenarios under which people lost Canadian citizenship and provides for the acquisition and/or restoration of their citizenship. Among those affected by the new legislation were some of the so-called "war brides" and their children. War brides were European women who married Canadian servicemen during World War II and returned to Canada with them.

Another issue that has attracted considerable attention relates to children born abroad to Canadian parents born abroad. Under the new law, children born in another country will not be Canadian citizens by birth if they were born outside Canada to a Canadian parent who was also born outside Canada to a Canadian parent. In effect, the new law limits Canadian citizenship to the first generation born to Canadian parents outside of Canada. Some have alleged that this creates "two-tier Canadians."

Of course, citizen issues are tied to the whole question of immigration. Jason Kenney, the minister responsible for immigration and citizenship, recently said that immigrants to Canada should be competent in either of Canada's official languages before becoming Canadian citizens. He also remarked that "integration does not mean assimilation." While new Canadians do not have to cut themselves off from their religion or customs, he feels that they should embrace a new "Canadian identity."

In Israel, issues relating to immigration and citizenship take on a different significance. Jews around the world have the opportunity to make aliyah and become Israeli citizens under its 1950 Law of Return.

The underlying notion behind the law of return relates to the growth and viability of Israel and its continued preservation as a Jewish state.

It also serves to guarantee a safe haven for Jews from discrimination and repression experienced in many counties around the world both historically and even today.

Given the demographic reality of modern Canada, issues surrounding immigration and citizenship exert a major influence on this country's economic, social, cultural and political fabric.

The Kirshner File

The Passing Parade...

They died recently, leaving footprints in time...

Claude Berri (Langmann) , a French film director and producer and contemporary of Francois Truffaut, made *Two of Us*, *Jean de Florette*, *Manon of the Springs*, *Valmont*, *Tess* and *Germinal*. **Ned Tanen**, a Hollywood studio executive, developed and/or produced a string of films – *American Graffiti*, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, *Top Gun*, *Crocodile Dundee*, *Jaws*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Animal House*, *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, *The Breakfast Club* and *Missing*.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Charles Schneer produced such Hollywood movies as *Jason and the Argonauts*, *I Aim at the Stars*, *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and *Hellcats of the Navy*, the only film in which Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy Davis, appeared together. **Robert Nissim Haggiag**, a movie producer and distributor, was behind films like *El Cid*, *The Barefoot Contessa*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Shoeshine* and *Lolita*. **Robert Chandler** (Zuckerkandle), a CBS TV executive, played a key role in creating the weekly newsmagazine program, *60 Minutes*.

Bea Arthur (Bernice Frankel), an actress, played Maude Findlay and Dorothy Zbornak in *Maude* and *The Golden Girls*, the television situation comedies. **Ronald Silver**, a TV and film actor, portrayed statesman Henry Kissinger in *Kissinger* and *Nixon* and lawyer Alan Dershowitz in *Reversal of Fortune*.

Hortense Calisher, the novelist and short story writer, wrote *Mysteries of Motion*, *In the Absence of Angels* and *Sunday Jews*. **Johannes Simmel** wrote Cold War thrillers – *It Can't Always Be Caviar*, *The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*, and *Dear Fatherland*.

George Clare (Klaar), an Austrian-born British journalist, wrote the memoir *Last Waltz in Vienna*. **Amos Elon**, an Israeli foreign correspondent, wrote *The Israelis: Founders and Sons*, *Journey Through a Haunted Land: The New Germany*, *The Pity of it All* and a biography of Zionist visionary Theodor Herzl. **Harold Pinter**, a playwright (*The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*, etc.), won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2005. **Dale Wasserman**, a playwright, adapted *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Man of La Mancha* for Broadway. **Fleur Cowles** (Florence Freidman) conceived and edited *Flair*, a 1950s fashion, cultural and travel magazine that set new standards in journalism. **Walter Schnier** wrote a book on the sensational Julius and Ethel Rosenberg espionage trial, *Invitation to an Inquest*, while **Ruth Greenglass** was a star witness in that case.

Alfred A. Knopf Jr., a founder of Atheneum Publishers, published Andrew Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*, Theodore White's *The Making of the President* and Frederic Morton's *The Rothschilds: A Family Portrait*. **Helen Levitt**, a photographer who caught moments of quiet drama and lyricism on the streets of New York City, was the author of *A Way of Seeing*, *Crosstown*, *Here and There* and *Slide Show*. **Howard Zieff**, an ad photographer and commercial director, was associated with the sassy phrase, "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's real Jewish rye." **Alan Landers** (Levine), a male model, advertised Winston cigarettes with the catchy line, "Winston tastes good like a cigarette should."

Jack Lawrence (Schwartz), a composer of hit songs, wrote *Tenderly*, *Linda*, *If I Didn't Care* and *All or Nothing at All*.

Claude Berri

Millard Kaufman, a screenplay writer (*Bad Day at Black Rock* and *Take the High Ground!*), created the cartoon character Mr. Magoo. **Alan Livingston**, the president of Capitol Records and an NBC TV executive, brought the Beatles to the United States and the western *Bonanza* to the television screen.

Ted Lapidus, a French designer, shook up the fashion world with the safari suit, ready-to-wear unisex clothing and military jackets for women. **Maggy Reeves** (Weisz) was a Canadian fashion designer and retailer in Montreal and Toronto. **Jack Weil**, the king of cowboy couture, was president of Rockmount Ranch Wear Mfg. Company. **Kenneth Paul Block** was a fashion illustrator for *Women's Wear Daily* and *W* magazine.

Luckas Foss (Fuchs) was a composer, pianist and conductor, while **George Perle** was a composer/teacher and winner of the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for music. **Gary Kurfirst**, a rock music manager and promoter, managed Talking Heads, Blondie, the Ramones and Eurythmics. **Jan Krugier** (Krygier) was a Polish-born New York-based art dealer who specialized in modern painters. **Howard Kanowitz** was a pioneer of the Photo Realism school of painting. **Dina Vierny**, a model, posed for the French sculptor and painter Aristide Maillol and Raoul Dufy. **Pearl Lang**, a dancer and choreographer, founded the Pearl Lang Dance Theater. **Archie Green**, a Canadian, was a folklorist who was instrumental in the establishment of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. **Lee Solters**, a press agent, worked for, among others, Michael Jackson, Barbra Streisand, Cary Grant and Dolly Parton and promoted Broadway plays, including *Funny Girl* and *My Fair Lady*.

Daniel Carasso

Edmund de Rothschild, a merchant banker, helped develop Newfoundland's Churchill Falls hydroelectric power project. **Allen Ephraim Diamond** was a co-founder of the North American real estate empire, Cadillac-Fairview. **Jack Dreyfus** ran one of the first Wall Street mutual funds. **Jack Nash** was a pioneer of the modern hedge fund business. **Daniel Carasso** founded the Danone yogurt empire. **Gedlio Grinberg**, the president of the North American Watch Company, was the distributor of Movado, Concord and Hugo Boss wrist watches.

Sadie Moranis, the founder of one of Toronto's top real estate companies, was the first woman to head the Toronto Real Estate Board. **Burnett Thall**, a Canadian media executive, was chair of *Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd.* **Richard Pratt** founded an Australian multinational cardboard and packaging company. **Hyman Golden** was a co-founder of the Snapple Beverage Corp. **Sandy Ruby** founded Tech Hifi, a major U.S. consumer electronics chain.

Milton Parker (Packowitz) was one of the owners of the Carnegie Deli in Manhattan. **Frank (Lefty) Rosenthal**, a professional gambler, brought sports betting to Las Vegas' casinos. **David Rubinoff**, a Montreal entrepreneur, built a chain of almost 50 Holiday Inns across Canada.

Helen Suzman

Helen Suzman was a South African anti-apartheid campaigner and parliamentarian. **Janet Rosenberg Jagan**, an American from Chicago, was the first female president of Guyana. **Sheila Finestone**, a Canadian politician, represented the Montreal district of Mount Royal for 15 years, served as secretary of state for multiculturalism and sat in the Senate. **Clement Freud**, the grandson of Sigmund, was a British member of parliament, newspaper columnist and radio wit.

Salamo Arouch, a Greek Jewish amateur boxer and Holocaust survivor, inspired the 1989 movie *Triumph of the Spirit*. **Hank Kaplan** was founder/editor of *World Wide Boxing Digest Magazine*. **Ralph Klein** guided Maccabi Tel Aviv to the 1977 European basketball championship. **Ralph Kaplowitz** was one of the first players in the National Basketball Association. **Alan Seiden** was an all-American guard who led the St. John's basketball team to the 1959 National Invitation Tournament title. **Daniel Bukantz** was a champion fencer, winning four U.S. singles titles. **Richard Jacobs** was the co-proprietor of the Cleveland Indians baseball club that won the 1995 American League pennant.

Betty Zimmerman, a Canadian Broadcasting Corp. producer, headed Radio Canada International for a decade. **Charles Dalfen** was chair of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

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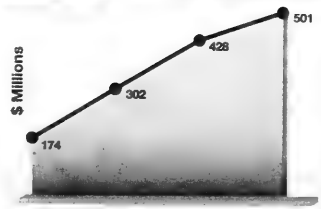

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Jewish Life

Canada leads in fight against anti-Semitism

By JASON KENNEY

Guest Voice

A lesson I learned some time ago is that it is far more important to decisively demonstrate the principles you live by than to simply talk about those principles.

The government of Canada is committed to the fight against anti-Semitism and racial intolerance and our actions demonstrate that commitment.

We acted decisively when we became the first of many nations that refused to participate in the recent Durban Review Conference. Participating in discussions that are underpinned by hateful ideas serves only to validate those ideas.

Our commitment has also been at the heart of Canada's two-year effort to achieve full membership status in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), which culminated on June 24 in Oslo, Norway.

Now, as a full member of the ITF, Canada is proud to join with 26 other countries to work worldwide to increase public awareness of genocide and develop learning opportunities about the Holocaust.

Regrettably, Canada hasn't always been a champion of human dignity. Canada has its own unfortunate history of anti-Semitism that we must acknowledge and learn from.

Last month, our government, in collaboration with B'nai Brith Canada, hosted a conference in Toronto titled "The St. Louis Era: Looking Back, Moving Forward." The conference examined Canada's actions during World War II, including our country's refusal in 1939 to provide a place of refuge to passengers aboard the MS St. Louis, some of whom, tragically, later perished in the Holocaust.

The MS St. Louis incident and other wartime measures, such as the internment of British Jewish refugees in Canada, are a shameful part of Canadian history that must be acknowledged, confronted, and taught. While Canadians have a strong general knowledge of the Holocaust and of genocide, recent research by Léger Marketing for the Association of Canadian Studies also showed significant knowledge gaps among Canadians.

Our government is also taking concrete steps to break down barriers between cultures in Canada. Recently, I announced funding for an innovative project that brings young Somali-Canadians together with established Jewish-Canadian professionals in the spirit of cooperation and intercultural understanding. I sincerely hope this will become a model for future projects engaging many other communities in Canada.

When I think about the importance of the fight against hatred and intolerance, I will forever remember two recent visits overseas. Last November, I paid my respects at the Babi Yar Holocaust site in Kiev, a ravine where more than 33,000 Ukrainian Jews were killed over two days in 1941 by Nazi war criminals.

A few days after I visited Babi Yar site, an attack in Mumbai, India, left 164 people dead, including Rabbi Gavriel Holzberg and his wife, Rivkah, at Chabad House. I visited Chabad House, the synagogue and Jewish community centre in January and was sickened to think that this peaceful place could be targeted in this manner.

Sixty-eight years and thousands of miles separate the ravine of Babi Yar from the debris of Chabad House, but those two sites are connected by the same hatred, the same dehumanizing of innocent people. As Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated in response to the attack on the Chabad House, anti-Semitism "is a pernicious evil that must be exposed, that must be confronted, that must be repudiated whenever and wherever it appears."

Our government is committed to exposing, confronting and repudiating all forms of racial hatred.

Jason Kenney is minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism.

Solving a 'sexy' crisis

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

It takes great moral strength to be a public servant. As guardians of the public purse, they must decide where to spend money and, equally importantly, where not to. It is thus inevitable that their decisions will cause some to suffer. Increased spending on health care may come at the expense of the education budget. Increased funding for the police may mean less for public transportation. And the list goes on.

Making such decisions is not for the faint hearted or the morally weak. With so many competing interests and the impossibility of knowing the full impact of one's decisions, mistakes are inevitable and fully excusable – provided one's motivation is to act in the public interest.

However, when decisions are motivated by personal career ambitions, or even by the desire to help a favourite charity, then one must bear the moral brunt of and responsibility for the harm one has caused. It is this exacting standard for public officials that serves as the basis for denying office to those who are not morally fit and for the weekly communal prayer for those "involved faithfully in communal needs."

Unfortunately, such leaders, especially among our democratically elected political officials are few and far between. This moral failing of leadership, which is a theme we have discussed on these pages in the past, is more evident during the challenging economic times we are currently facing.

A small but instructive example of the lack of moral integrity of our leaders is the short-lived controversy surrounding the unfortunate but revealing comments of Lisa Raitt, the minister of natural resources, on the life-threatening shortage of medical isotopes used in the treatment of cancer and heart patients.

The minister was caught on tape saying that the crisis represents a "sexy" career challenge with much benefit to accrue to the one (namely herself) who would solve the crisis. What is sexy about people dying is something that perhaps only a true politician could understand. Compounding the problem was her delay in apologizing, leading one to suspect the apology may have been politically motivated and thus morally worthless, if not repugnant.

Since it came on the heels of her firing her aide for leaving confidential papers in the CTV Ottawa offices, we might have thought this would be grounds for a reprimand. We would have been sorely disappointed. She received the full backing of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and the "gaffe" quickly faded from memory.

Harper also announced that the nuclear plant that had been producing nearly half the medical isotopes used worldwide would not be reopened. What strikes me as disheartening is the apparent lack of public outcry about how to solve the crisis and how the nuclear plant was allowed to deteriorate to this point, and the apparent acceptance of such insensitive comments as par for the course.

While such a display of crass political opportunism in the face of human suffering is unfortunate, public figures need not and should not let the helping of individuals be their primary focus. Rather they must take a more global approach, balancing the needs of the public as a whole, even at the expense of some individuals.

A government is within its moral right to increase spending on education, or even a cultural centre, despite the possible negative repercussions on health care. It is for this reason that Jewish law forbids paying exorbitant amounts to redeem hostages. While the family may suffer untold grief, the needs of the nation take precedence.

Ultimately one's motivation is something that is known only to oneself and our Creator. We can only hope and pray that our leaders are motivated to act in the best interests of those they must serve.

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Jewish Life

Thoughts on finishing *Kaddish*

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

If my arithmetic is correct – and it may not be – I've said *Kaddish* for my father more than 1,600 times in the past year.

Rabbi Philip Scheim, spiritual leader of my synagogue, Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am in Toronto – as well as others who have lost a parent – cautioned me early on that finishing the traditional 11 months of *Kaddish* can be emotionally difficult.

May 23, my last day as a *Kaddish*-sayer, was sad, but also unexpectedly gratifying.

From the beginning, I found the whole experience compelling. At its simplest, there was something fulfilling about accomplishing what I had set out to do.

A friend in Seattle, Joanie Diskin Saran – a third-time *Kaddish*-sayer who lost her mother shortly before my dad passed away – advised me by e-mail last summer that keeping busy "may make you feel less pain at the time, but eventually you have to feel it and work through it."

I took her advice to heart. In part, that meant persisting with *Kaddish* even though there were challenges to overcome.

One of the first was *Birkat Hamazon*, the blessing after meals that we sang at post-service breakfasts and after seudah shlishit, the evening meal on Saturdays. I'd heard my dad lead it many times, and it took two months before I could get through it dry-eyed.

I came to think of *Birkat Hamazon* as a personal test – an emotional thermometer, of sorts. And virtually every day after the first couple of months had gone by, I was satisfied with the feedback it gave me.

The calendar was another stumbling block. We lost my dad unexpectedly, and when the Hebrew date on the wall calendar was changed daily between Minchah and Ma'ariv services, I felt at first that I was being pulled too quickly in a direction I didn't want to go.

But I never considered stopping. Initially, my mother, my sister and I were guided by instinct and the example my dad had set. Soon, we had new reasons to want to continue.

Saying *Kaddish* together was a tremendous bonding experience for the three of us. We also bonded with fellow *Kaddish*-sayers and minyan regulars.

As a first-time mourner, I was in uncharted territory. It was reassuring to compare notes with others on how we were dealing with our individual losses. I hadn't anticipated that by going to services, I would have built-in sounding boards, advice-givers, and a whole new group of shul friends.

I found it grounding to start the day with a predictable routine that included prayers for peace, a blessing on the earth and good health for those who are sick.

The recitation of *Kaddish*, which praises God, is believed to elevate the soul of the deceased person. I felt it connected me with Judaism, my synagogue, and fellow mourners – past, present and future.

Becoming involved with other aspects of the service was a way of connecting, too.

For approximately the past eight years, women have been eligible for Torah honours at our shul, which is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. I learned how to wrap the Torah for *glilah*, an honour I'd never had before, and which – to be honest – I'd never aspired to.

> ***'I had no clue I would laugh as much as I did at shul. I had no clue I would laugh there at all'***

It was even more of a stretch for me to be called to the Torah for the first time. It helped to recall that, at a previous service, a man I didn't know, returning to his seat after an aliyah, confessed how nervous he had been.

But the kicker – the thing that people have no idea about – is that we also had fun. I had no clue I would laugh as much as I did at shul. I had no clue I would laugh there at all.

We shared old pictures and funny stories. We joked about some of the quirks that are unique to our minyan, and we never seemed to run out of things to talk about over coffee and bagels. Why would I want to leave?

But in March, I opted to play hooky for the first time since I had started saying *Kaddish*. My daughter and I went on a four-day cruise, a welcome break for both of us.

Although I felt it was the right decision for me, knowing I had *Kaddish* back-up was comforting. In addition to my mother and my sister, a cousin who felt close to my father also said *Kaddish* whenever he was in shul this past year.

In a way, I thought of my trip as a rehearsal for stopping. I missed being at services when we were away, but the hiatus reassured me that I would be OK when the time came to finish.

I had mixed feelings about the imminent 11-month mark until a woman I know told me that she had continued to attend some weekday services for the final month of her 12 months of mourning.

I liked the idea of not quitting cold turkey. I decided I would continue to wake up early and divide my mornings between the gym and shul, at least for a month.

As our last day of *Kaddish* approached, friends asked how I was feeling about it. "I'm OK," I would say. "I have a plan."

Knowing that I would be back, especially some weekday mornings, buffered the emotion I was bound to feel on the final day.

My mother, my sister and I said *Kaddish* for the last time at a Saturday Minchah service.

Shortly after we sat down for seudah shlishit, Michael Rubin, Beth David's ritual director, told me he would like someone from our family to lead *Birkat Hamazon*.

My reaction surprised a few people – myself included – who knew that, at services, I often avoided eye contact with Mike in the hope of not being chosen for an honour.

I wanted to lead *Birkat Hamazon*. It would be hugely symbolic for me to end my 11 months by leading the blessing that had so challenged me at the beginning. After checking with my mom and my sister to see if they would be OK with it, I asked my husband for back-up if I needed it, at the parts I was less confident about.

My sister had paved the way by leading *Birkat Hamazon* following breakfast on two occasions, only the first of which threatened my composure.

When I started to lead *Birkat Hamazon* on our last night of *Kaddish*, David Grad – a fellow *Kaddish*-sayer and new shul friend – caught my eye across the table.

He pointed at me and stage-whispered to my husband, "She's actually doing it."

The look of incredulity and mischief on his face made me laugh.

I felt I'd come full circle as I recalled how *Birkat Hamazon* used to make me cry.

At the Ma'ariv service, Mike asked my mother, my sister and me to change the calendar. There were three components to be changed, one for each of us.

I couldn't have imagined a better way to finish.

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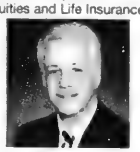
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Greater Toronto Area

Local doctor runs medical aid program in Dominica

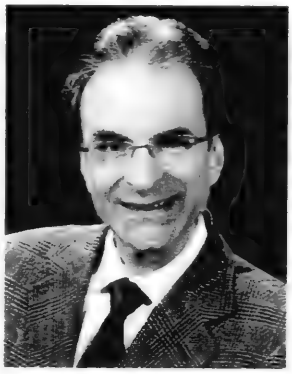
By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Peter Newman, a North York family physician, has received the Ontario Medical Association's Presidential Award in recognition of exceptional and longstanding humanitarian service to the community that brings honour to the medical profession.

Newman accepted the award – he was nominated by the Toronto district of the Ontario Medical Association – at a recent ceremony and dinner held at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

A graduate of University of Toronto's medical school, Newman, now an assistant professor at U of T, has practised medicine in Vancouver and Israel, as well as the tiny eastern Caribbean island nation of Dominica.

He has served on the North York General Hospital's president's advisory committee, the executive of the department of family medicine, and the executive of the medical advisory committee.



Dr. Peter Newman

A co-ordinator of continuing medical education events with a special interest in international content, Newman is the founder and co-ordinator of the Canada-Dominica Outreach Program, which combines medical aid to Dominica with training for post-graduate residents.

The seeds for this program were planted, Newman said in an interview, after he volunteered in Dominica, and remained in touch with people there. "It is a poor country in the Caribbean – one of the poorest in terms of resources."

His idea, he said, was to send residents to Dominica – the population is about 75,000 – for about one month of their training. The program benefits both sides. The residents get credit, and the patients receive care. Residents also provide information to Dominican health-care professionals.

Since 1991, he said, he has sent down about 100 health-care professionals, including social workers and psychologists, from graduate programs across the country, who work in community health clinics and in outlying villages.

"My goal is to expose young Canadian [health-care professionals] to the challenge of working in under-serviced areas. The ones that do go always come back excited and brimming with enthusiasm. They learn how to work as part of a team and with nurse practitioners."

He hears "heart-warming" stories, he said. "Residents have told me about intervening to make an HIV-positive patient understand about safe sex, and a lot of stories about helping to organize the care of patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or heart disease."

> ***Recognized for exceptional and longstanding humanitarian service to the community***

Newman's job is to meet with prospective residents, prepare them for their work, and liaise with the minister of health in Dominica.

One of his biggest challenges is arranging housing, he said. "[The Dominican government] can no longer afford to provide housing, so we have to fundraise here to pay for the housing and airfare," Newman said.

"These days, doctors graduate with huge debts, and most can't afford to pay for this on their own. We've raised money from individual and corporate donors, and North York General Hospital has a fund earmarked for this program."

> ***'My goal is to expose young Canadian [health-care professionals] to the challenge of working in under-serviced areas'***

Among his work in continuing medical education he has spoken in Mexico and in Trinidad – he speaks Spanish, Hebrew and French – to the Pan American Health Organization about Canada's experience with SARS.

He has also arranged talks in Alaska for Canadian doctors to learn about native healing. "They learn about traditional healing methods, herbal medicines, and the psychological effects of complementary medicine. It is interesting for the Canadian doctors who practice evidence-based medicine."

Newman, a father of four and grandfather of two, said he has always been addicted to travelling. "I'm fascinated by other cultures. It has been a lifelong interest. My work in other countries has come about because of this."

In his earlier days as a physician, he said, he was a doctor on a kibbutz in the Upper Galilee. "I was the first civilian doctor in the Golan Heights after the Six Day War, and I was monitored by the International Red Cross. I had to speak to them in French, to the nurses in Hebrew, and then it all had to be translated into Arabic. It was challenging."

His connection to Israel has been very strong since then, he said. "I'm a strong supporter. It's an incredibly dynamic country."

Newman stressed that the Presidential Award "could have gone to thousands of people. I'm humbled at being singled out, and I dedicate the award to all hard-working physicians."

Seniors

SENIOR STAR COMPETITION

Herman Frances 69, was named this year's Senior Star at the annual competition held at the Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living in Toronto. Frances honoured his idol Frank Sinatra by singing "My Way".

[Sholom Wargon photo]

Greater Toronto Area

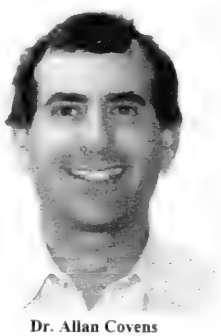
Local oncologist shares knowledge worldwide

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

World-renowned gynecological oncologist Dr. Allan Covens is one of just a few surgeons who can perform a procedure to remove cervical cancer while preserving fertility.

Covens, who has been doing the laparoscopic procedure successfully for about 17 years, has given countless women the opportunity to have children, even after having surgically removed the cervix and a small part of the vagina near the cervix.

Once the cervix is removed, suturing is used around the lower part of the uterus where the cervix once was, so that when a woman does conceive, the uterus can support the weight of a developing fetus.



Dr. Allan Covens

Although this helps to prevent a woman from miscarrying, it makes vaginal birth impossible and a Caesarean section the only option.

With this kind of expertise, Covens – the head of gynecologic oncology at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto and a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Toronto – is happy to share his technique with doctors all over the world.

"We've trained a lot of people. We have a formal training program at the University of Toronto and we take people from Canada and elsewhere in the world. We've trained a lot of people, including a number of Israelis," said Covens, the author or co-author of more than 65 peer-reviewed publications and three textbooks, and the recipient of 30 scholarships and awards.

Covens is beginning to organize a medical workshop to be held in Jerusalem next April.

The workshop will be modelled after one that he used to arrange every two years in Toronto.

The Alon Dembo Memorial Workshop – named after Dembo, a "very well-known, very respected" radiation oncologist who died of leukemia in his 40s – began in the the early 1990s, Covens said.

"That ran for about four meetings – eight years – and it was very good, but it became hard to maintain. A small number of people organizing the meetings – it just became tough. The last meeting was in 1999," Covens said.

He said when he was in Israel nearly three months ago to train six or seven Israeli fellows in gynecological oncology, one of his former fellows suggested organizing a meeting in Israel of Israeli and Toronto-based doctors.

"I thought it would be a good idea, but I suggested we make it a little bigger. I thought, 'Why don't we call it a Dembo meeting and organize it like a Dembo meeting and invite anybody who'll come, open it to the international community?'" he said.

"I thought, 'It's a great idea. We've got a lot of people who we've trained, we know them well, we're good friends with them.'"

Although his decision to have the Dembo meeting in Israel was not a political decision, his involvement with Doctors Against Racism & Anti-Semitism (DARA) was based on his discomfort with the way the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has crept into the medical world.

"There are a lot of Jewish physicians who feel that the political agendas have gone a bit too far and have crossed boundaries into things that they shouldn't," Covens said.

He was referring to the fact that the Lancet and the British Medical Journal have, in recent years, been publishing anti-Israel articles.

This year, the Canadian Medical Association Journal ran two pieces that were critical of Israel's role in the recent war with Gaza.

"Here are a couple prominent journals that all of a sudden seem to be moving in a political direction. I think it's totally inappropriate," Covens said.

"There has been a level of activity that has been going on for several years, but I think the medical journal articles were the last straw. I think a lot of people, Jewish physicians, felt that enough is enough. This is inappropriate, this is wrong, and I don't think a lot of us feel comfortable in being totally silent about it anymore."

He added that he doesn't see or experience anti-Semitism in the hospitals, but said, "I think it's just beneath the surface."

He said some people are working with the strategy that the more attention they pay it, the more prominent the issue becomes.

"That may be, but that was a very common message that was used in 1937, and look what happened."

He said there are countless countries all over the world that are in "gross violation" of human rights. But those countries don't get the negative attention that Israel does.

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New president aims to revitalize Jewish National Fund

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Frank A. Wilson wants to revitalize Jewish National Fund of Canada.

"My vision for JNF is to create a national footprint for the organization, to be visible… and make people understand what JNF does. We're not just trees and water, we're a lot more. Without JNF there'd be no Israel. We are the Land of Israel," he said.

Wilson, 66, who took over as national president last month – succeeding Sharon Marcovitz Hart – told *The CJN* in a recent interview he plans to increase co-operation between his organization and others in the Jewish community and is intent on making sure all JNF Canada employees and volunteers are on the same page and can move forward as one.

"I created an organizational chart and a board members' guideline," something that had not existed previously in the organization, he said.

"Our mandate is, and always will be, to raise money for the State of Israel," Wilson said. But he added that under his tenure, he hopes to position the JNF as something more.

Frank A. Wilson

"I am looking to train young leadership in Canada," he said. "We have one of the greatest brands in the world... especially with our work on the environment. Consider that JNF trained people in countries like Rwanda, East Timor, [and] Indonesia how to grow wheat without water. To plant trees and grow vegetation in those war-torn zones. These are Muslim countries, and people that hate us. But we are doing lots of beautiful things for the world."

Wilson has also set his sights on increasing dollars raised for Israeli environmental science programs, so Israelis can continue to invent breakthrough technologies for the world's benefit.

"We know we should be the number 1 or number 2 fundraiser [for Israel] in Canada. Our goal is to reach the $20-million plateau," he said.

That number is more than double what the JNF raised in its best fundraising year, he said, adding that he believes this number is "very achievable."

Wilson has also initiated the organization's new "Ambassadors" program, for which 15 to 20 volunteers will be brought to Israel and trained to become representatives for JNF and Israel, to communicate the virtues of the Holy Land to organizations that don't normally hear about the JNF in Canada, such as church groups.

Those trainees will spend a week in Israel and return for further training with JNF's education shlichah to Canada, Wilson said.

"It's essentially a speakers' bureau. To really hone in on where we can make a difference," he said. "JNF are the caretakers of the Land of Israel on behalf of its owners, who are the Jewish people everywhere around the world."

Additionally, Wilson said he's hoping to create a new generation of young leaders in Canada for the JNF.

Without divulging specifics, Wilson said there will be "a huge thrust going forward" in the area of young leadership.

"We have to teach and talk to youth and explain to them tzedakah. Because the generations change," he said. "We need to educate the young professionals today, because they are going to be the donors of the future."

Though involved with JNF for more than 20 years in various capacities, Wilson said he had always considered becoming national president and felt that the time was right now to take the reins.

"These are difficult times, and we have to make changes. And we will," he said, adding that the JNF is an organization that needs "forward-looking planning, real direction and someone that's going to roll up their shirt sleeves and make things happen."

Outside his JNF role, he is also chair of the Reena Foundation and runs his own company, The Employment Solution, an employment staffing agency.

Wilson, who is unafraid to speak his mind, said that in his view, the Jewish community in Canada today is "a little convoluted. The fact is that we don't get our message out there very well. Israel has a public relations perception problem to begin with. [The JNF] being an Israeli-based organization… creates a situation where we have to go out and explain to people what we do. Our focus is Israel.

"[Federation] UJA, as we all know, is the United Way for the Jewish community. They do a marvellous job," he said. "But from my perspective, people really don't understand what JNF does for Israel and for the world."

Among other initiatives in the works, Wilson is organizing more golf tournaments for the JNF and said "more creative" approaches to fundraising for the organization will be revealed soon.

Born in Wales, Wilson was brought up Orthodox and almost pursued a career as a cantor.

His family immigrated to New York in 1947, and he subsequently moved to Canada in 1964, where he first became involved with JNF.

"My father was a Zionist who fought in the British army against the Germans. My parents always taught me when you have an opportunity and you're in a position to give back, you give back," Wilson said. "I love the organization and I've gotten to meet some wonderful people along the way. I'm very proud to be carrying the JNF banner across the country."

COOPER TO HEAD JNF TORONTO: Josh Cooper, founding executive director of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), a grassroots organization mandated to engage the Jewish community in the political process, will step down from his current position and become the Jewish National Fund's new Toronto executive director in September, JNF Canada announced late last week. Cooper will fill the void left by the late Ben Prossin, a JNF stalwart. Cooper has led CJPAC since its inception in May 2005. Details on who will replace Cooper at CJPAC were not immediately available.

Josh Cooper

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Beth Tikvah appoints new assistant rabbi

Compiled by CJN Staff

Beth Tikvah Synagogue will soon be getting a new assistant rabbi.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover, a Montreal native and recent graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, will join the congregation next month.

Rabbi Grover, 27, who earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Princeton University in 2004, will work with Beth Tikvah's youth director as a teacher and resource for the shul's youth and young families, as well as assisting Senior Rabbi Wayne Allen with teaching and pastoral care.

The addition of Rabbi Grover, says Rabbi Allen, gives Beth Tikvah the much-needed flexibility it needs to "increase exponentially our programming and services to our membership, on and off site."

In the summer of 2006, Rabbi Grover completed a 400-hour clinical pastoral education fellowship at Baycrest and Toronto Western Hospital.

"In a hospital setting, as a chaplain, I dealt not only with patients, but with their spouses, their children, their parents, so many of whom were in emotional, if not physical pain," he says. "Building relationships, not only with patients but with their entire families was the most challenging – and the valuable and rewarding – part of the experience."

Rabbi Grover says he'll draw on that experience for the pulpit, and he envisions his work at Beth Tikvah as a similar form of relationship- and community-building.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover

"What's great about a synagogue is working with people of all ages, but also bringing them together, whether it's in the services or on the steps outside. What I really hope is that my presence will make people feel welcome and that I can help build a stronger Conservative Jewish community — at Beth Tikvah and in Toronto."

He said he's looking forward to meeting with Beth Tikvah members, particularly young families, to understand their concerns and what they'd like to see in their synagogue. He envisions his first year on the job as a "sponge," soaking up knowledge about the community in order to help create the programs and services it needs.

"In many senses, my mission beyond the walls of the synagogue is the same as that within it: to think about ways to reinvigorate a congregation and a community that is rapidly aging, and to make it relevant to younger and future generations," he says.

"I'd like Beth Tikvah to be a destination synagogue: if you have a young Jewish family and you're searching for a welcoming spiritual home in Toronto, this should be where you want to belong."

Toronto said to be unaffected by Israeli conversion dispute

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Recent converts whose entry into the Jewish fold was officiated by the Toronto Orthodox rabbinate should have no concerns that their status as Jews could ever be challenged by an Israeli rabbinic court, stated the outgoing head of Toronto's Vaad Harabonim.

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, whose term as president of the Orthodox rabbinic council ends this week, said recent conversions in Toronto should be acceptable to the Israeli rabbinate, as converts were required to agree to the more rigorous standards set in Israel. Recent remarks in Israel by a haredi rabbi, who challenged conversions performed by a government-sanctioned Orthodox rabbinic body, should have no effect on Toronto conversions, Rabbi Tradburks said.

However, there's a much larger pool of converts whose status could be placed in question if they ever came before a theologically conservative haredi court in Israel, said Rabbi Martin Lockshin, former director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at York University. "There were lenient Orthodox conversions in Toronto 40, 50, 60 years ago," he said. "In theory, if overturned, you could have three generations of people in Canada who could find that Israeli courts call their conversions null and void."

Rabbi Martin Lockshin

That's what happened to Yossi Fackenheim, son of renowned Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim, whose conversion as an infant was ruled invalid by an Israeli court because he was not living an observant lifestyle when he had his bar mitzvah.

More recently, the High Rabbinical Court of Israel's Chief Rabbinate ruled that the Jewish status of converts can be revoked at any time, regardless of which rabbinic court performed the conversion, unless the convert shows they have embraced an Orthodox lifestyle.

Rabbi Avraham Sherman, head of the High Rabbinical Court, who made that ruling, was also involved in a decision last year in which he stated all converts authorized by rabbinic courts under the supervision of Rabbi Chaim Druckman were invalid. Rabbi Druckman operates conversion courts established under the Chief Rabbinate that were tasked with converting tens of thousands of mostly Russian immigrants whose status as Jews was questionable.

Ironically, Rabbi Sherman's court also operates under the Chief Rabbinate and both are official arms of the Israeli government.

Earlier this month, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger threw his support behind Rabbi Sherman, saying his decisions were consistent with the views of Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, a leading expert on Halachah.

That in turn prompted a condemnation from MK Uri Orbach of the Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home) party, who called for Rabbi Metzger's dismissal. "The honour of the converts supercedes that of the chief rabbi, who does not recognize the conversion of his own system," Orbach said, according to a report in Arutz Sheva.

At the same time, Tzohar, an association of modern Zionist rabbis in Israel, issued a statement saying, "It is inconceivable that the chief rabbi of Israel can... [express] complete distrust in the system of judges that he is meant to be heading. The chief rabbinate is positioned to offer a very positive contribution to our nation, but statements like these only serve to diminish the country's faith in this institution.

"We believe that the most important way to approach a potential convert is with love and patience," said Rabbi David Stav, co-founder of Tzohar.

Noting that as many as 200,000 immigrants may have been born Jewish but couldn't prove it, he said, "By dismissing these cases because of technicalities, the result is that these converts are forced to marry outside the context of Halachah, a situation which serves as an obstacle towards a central challenge facing the people of Israel – our continued existence as one nation."

Rabbi Lockshin called Rabbi Sherman's renunciation of the Israeli conversion court "a matter of grave concern. The main problem is that the decisions that have the blessing or the imprimatur of the state can be overturned by an individual rabbi later on.

"From a political point of view, it's crazy," he said. "It's no way to govern a country.

"The bigger issue is the human damage," he continued. "People go through the system, do all they were asked to do and find out later someone decides it's not valid. The hurt to people being treated this way, the human dimension," is troubling.

"Even Toronto conversions can come under question from the Israeli rabbinate," he added.

However, Rabbi Tradburks, who is moving to Israel later this summer, said Rabbi Metzger does not currently have jurisdiction over conversion issues. That is now in the hands of the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, who last year said he didn't believe Rabbi Sherman's decision was binding on other rabbinical courts.

"The whole thing is such a muddle," Rabbi Tradburks said. "There is no central authority that says all conversions are acceptable. That's the crux of the problem."

In traditional Jewish practice, authority over personal status issues was diffuse. Rabbis in different communities made their own rulings. That situation still pertains in Israel to some extent, so if a convert went to the rabbi in Netanya to be married, that rabbi could reject the application if he was not convinced the conversion was proper, Rabbi Tradburks said.

> ***'There is no central authority that says all conversions are acceptable. That's the crux of the problem'***

"There is a substantive rationale for checking every conversion," he continued. "There are a variety of standards" and there are rabbis who do not believe Rabbi Druckman's conversions are proper.

Stressing he was speaking only for himself, Rabbi Tradburks said "a central authority is especially appealing to me. Chaos in not appealing to me, whether about conversions or kashrut."

Rabbi Tradburks said if he lived in Israel, he'd be willing to give up control over conversions to the chief rabbinate.

"The only way to have clarity and consistency is to have a chief rabbinate issue a directive," he added.

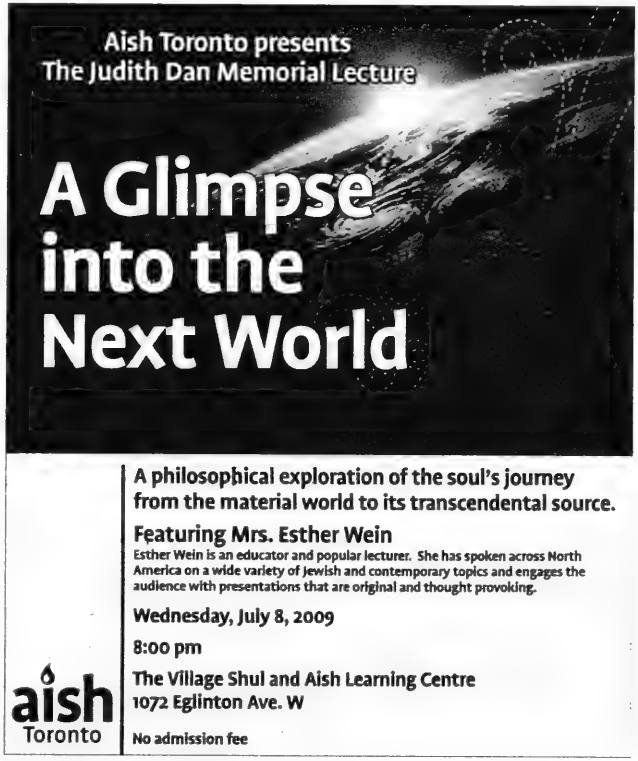
However, Rabbi Lockshin said that "in the past, there was sufficient respect for rabbis that people did not call conversions of other rabbis into question."

Right now in Israel, a power struggle is underway between the haredi rabbis in control of the chief rabbinate and the rabbinical courts. "The haredim were never comfortable with the conversion courts," which were set up when Ariel Sharon was prime minister, he said.

The haredim are trying to impose their standards on other Orthodox rabbis, and because they are politically powerful, the secular parliamentary parties do not wish to intervene, Rabbi Lockshin added.

He speculated that the future might see "a parallel structure to the chief rabbinate.

"The question is, when will the modern Orthodox reach the breaking point and set up parallel institutions?" he asked.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Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit opens

Continued from page 1

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty was at the media preview event on June 24, during which photographers and videographers were given the only opportunity to photograph and film the exhibit.

"My hope is that all people, people of all ages, faiths and backgrounds, will come together to marvel at the scrolls and take this rare opportunity to discuss their meaning and significance," McGuinty said.

Dead Sea Scrolls guest curator Risa Levitt Kohn, an alumna of both York University and University of Toronto and director of the Jewish studies program at the San Diego State University, said that the show is about more than the scrolls themselves.

"This show is a show about the world from which they came, the culture that spawned the scrolls," she said, adding that the texts are a key to the ancient people at a critical juncture as the ancient Israelites transformed into the early Jews and early Christians.

Uzi Dahari, deputy director of the IAA, who was in Toronto last week for the opening of the exhibit, said that despite the painstaking efforts to safely transport the scrolls to Toronto and create ideal conditions to put them on display while preserving them, it's worth it to be able to share these artifacts with people around the world.

"We demand a lot of conditions. First of all, you can exhibit a scroll under certain conditions for three months and then it must rest for at least a year in a climate-controlled condition without any light," said Dahari, who has a PhD in archeology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Anne Tanenbaum Lecture Series, featuring some of the world's most renowned scholars on the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, is meant to complement the six-month exhibit.

Each lecture will take place at the ROM, with the next lecture by Yuval Peleg, the district archeologist from Eastern Samaria and the Jordan Valley, scheduled to take place on July 2.

The lectures will run until December. For a listing or to register, visit www.rom.on.ca/scrolls and click on "events," or call 416-586-5797.

The ROM also partnered with the Koffler Centre of the Arts to display contemporary artwork by Joshua Neustein, who "explores themes and ideas suggested by the scrolls, shaping a dialogue with their historical and cultural traditions."

"I have seen a lot of exhibitions of the scrolls in many other venues around the world, believe me," Dahari said.

"This is the most beautiful one, in my opinion. The ROM did a beautiful job."

Despite the excitement surrounding the historic exhibit, the opening did not come and go without controversy.

On June 25, Palestine House, a non-profit educational and cultural centre in Mississuaga, Ont., issued a statement calling for a boycott of the exhibit.

The call came two months after Palestinian officials called on the Canadian government to cancel the show, because of claims that the scrolls were acquired illegally by Israel when the Jewish state annexed east Jerusalem in 1967.

The Palestine House statement said that it's calling for a boycott because the ROM is "displaying the artifacts looted by Israel from the Palestine Archaeological Museum. This is not the ethical or legal standard Canadians expect of the ROM."

It said it will boycott the exhibit unless the ROM admits the scrolls are Palestinian property.

In response to the claims from Palestinians that the artifacts are stolen property, Dahari said that at the moment, that debate is "irrelevant."

"Let's say the debate is that they say we are not the owners of the scrolls. OK, they can say that, but we are protecting the scrolls now. It is our responsibility. We are preserving the scrolls, we are investing a lot of money in doing it, we have the best lab to protect the scrolls… So we also exhibit them according to our responsibility of the curators at the moment," Dahari said.

"Even concerning the law, the only state that ever acted according to the Hague Convention [for the protection of cultural property] in 1954 was Israel, when it returned all the antiquities excavated by Israelis in the Sinai to Egypt after the peace agreement was signed between us," he added.

"To say that we are stealing their heritage, it's chutzpah. It is an insult. I don't understand. I am a historian, so I know that Islam is from the seventh century AD. The scrolls are from the second and third century BC and first century AD. This is not their heritage… This is Jewish heritage. It is written in Hebrew. It is our language, our Bible. What do they want from us?

"The Dead Sea Scrolls were written by Jews, were hidden in the desert by Jews… and they should remain in Israel."

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Media denied access to the conference

Continued from page 3

In a June 18 address to York's senate, university president Mamdouh Shoukri said he understands that "the subject at the heart of the conference is one that many people find difficult, sensitive and very personal… All universities – not just York – must be dedicated to supporting reasoned discourse. They must be willing to accept dissent and deal with complex issues.

"These issues are discussed on a daily basis in all parts of the world, especially in the Middle East — including Israel. There is no reason why they should not be discussed at a university in Canada," Shoukri added.

Among the nearly 60 speakers, only a handful represented an Israeli narrative. Presenters included Omar Barghouti, a founding member of the Palestinian boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel, and Ali Abunimah, co-founder of the Electronic Intifada, a website that posts articles accusing Israel of ethnic cleansing and labelling it an apartheid state.

The media were denied access to the conference. Bruce Ryder, one of the organizers, said he believed a no-media policy would "help promote a scholarly atmosphere conducive to reflective, academic dialogue," but he added that the lectures were recorded and would be available later on the conference website at www.yorku.ca/ipconf.

Despite the news blackout, *The CJN* interviewed two Israeli presenters about their personal views on the conflict and their impressions of the conference.

Professor and human rights lawyer David Kretzmer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem said that although he used to believe that a two-state solution was the preferred way out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he has come to realize that it has become "more unlikely, unachievable and unviable."

Kretzmer, who considers himself to be on the "Israeli liberal Zionist left" of the political spectrum, said that while he was impressed by the calibre of speakers at the event, he was discouraged by the rhetoric from the floor.

"I think there is a disparity between the speakers, who are of a very high quality and of a high academic standard, and the audience, some of whom have been very, very emotional, and I would say that generally, the rhetoric from the floor has been very, very critical of Israel, to say the least, and certainly unaccepting of any legitimate Israeli narrative," he said.

Kretzmer said that one of the lectures that affected him most was the address by University of Pennsylvania professor Ian Lustick, whose lecture, titled "Thinking the Unthinkable: Perhaps There is No Solution," forced him to consider his greatest fear.

"But it's a luxury for people from the outside to say that there is no solution… But those of us who live there are living the conflict itself, and we have to try to find ways out of the political impasse, and that is what we are doing," Kretzmer said.

He said he felt that the fears of Toronto's Jewish community were misconceived.

"I don't see why Israeli Jews can ask these questions, but Canadian Jews suddenly feel that if you ask the questions and try to address them, suddenly, you are delegitimizing the state of Israel."

Meron Benevisti, a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem and a self-proclaimed "radical leftist Israeli," said debates about Israel's future are masking the fact that "a durable bi-national state already exists in Israel and the West Bank for at least 20 years."

He said that his impressions of the conference is that it was a gathering of left-of-centre academics who are preaching to the converted.

Benevisti added that the demonstrations by the Jewish community are "ludicrous."

"To think about me coming to see my own national flag in a demonstration against myself – I, who was born and raised in Israel and has grandchildren in Israel – I have to feel that I'm a traitor?"

On the other hand, he said he understands the concerns the Jewish community has when it comes to scholars who push the idea that there should not be a Jewish state.

"There are some scholars and some speakers here who use the one-state solution as a disguise to delegitimize the Jewish collective in Israel… But there are others who believe that dialogue is necessary because… the present situation is unbearable," Benevisti said

"It is a complex issue, but complex issues should be debated with open minds and not with demonstrations."

Canadian group supporting medical research at Hebrew U

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU) hopes that the $50 million it is raising for the school's medical research community will help advance discoveries, scientific breakthroughs and cures that will change the world.

In May 2008, CFHU, a non-profit organization that promotes and raises funds for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with chapters from coast to coast, pledged to raise $50 million over eight years to support the new Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC).

Jon Allen

The institute, housed in a brand new building on the Ein Kerem medical campus, is meant to encourage interdisciplinary partnerships to help scientists better understand how to prevent and combat diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

As the name of the institute suggests, Israel's most brilliant scientific minds will work and partner with some of Canada's best and brightest.

For example, the University of Alberta's Dr. James Shapiro has partnered with Hebrew U's Dr. Yuval Dor in the hope that their collaboration could lead to a breakthrough in treating diabetics by discovering how to trigger the regeneration of insulin-producing cells.

In Montreal, McGill University's Dr. Moshe Szyf, who holds a PhD from Hebrew U, will partner with IMRIC researchers including his mentor, Prof. Howard Cedar, head of the Hebrew U developmental biology and cancer research department. Cedar's research is fundamental to understanding the genetic defects that lead to cancer through DNA methylation (chemical changes in the DNA molecule).

Last month, *The CJN* and five other journalists from Quebec and Manitoba were invited to Israel to tour the university and IMRIC, and to meet with some of Israel's brightest scientific minds.

On the six-day tour, in addition to meeting with researchers and scientists who shared information about their discoveries, the journalists visited Hebrew U's Stephen Spielberg Jewish Film Archives and the Albert Einstein Archives; toured Israel's Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, and the Old City of Jerusalem; visited the home of the Canadian Ambassador to Israel Jon Allen; and ended the trip with time to explore Israel's bustling metropolis of Tel Aviv.

CFHU's national president Nathan Lindenberg said that raising $50 million is the "most significant undertaking" in CFHU's history, and he is proud that his organization is working to support the institute.

"It's a very unique program. They are integrating research and the clinical aspects of medicine, and they've restructured the whole medical educational and service system," Lindenberg said.

In an effort to be more efficient and to encourage more collaboration between scientists, the number of departments at IMRIC were reduced from 14 to five, and 11 new "research hubs" are being established.

Lindenberg said that Hebrew U – founded by scholars and visionaries including Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Martin Buber and Chaim Weizmann, 23 years before the State of Israel was established – produces a "disproportionate" number of Nobel Prize winners.

"We want to continue that. We hope there will be more Nobel Prize winners," he said.

On June 10, during the IMRIC dedication on the Ein Kerem campus, steps away from the Octav and Marcela Botnar Research Building where IMRIC is based, the institute's chair David Lichtstein said the new building increased lab space by about 30 per cent.

David Lichtstein

"This means we can be more attractive in recruiting exceptional scientists and that the laboratories may be more spacious," Lichtstein said.

He added that the idea behind IMRIC is to bring scientists physically closer together, making it easier to collaborate within different disciplines on a particular medical problem.

"This will promote strong interdisciplinary research programs and significantly improve the quality of our research, our efficiency and productivity," Lichtstein said.

Outgoing CFHU national president Ronnie Appleby, who was one of the major players in initiating the fundraising project for IMRIC, said this is a contribution that will affect people all over the world.

"This partnership, this joining together of Canada and Israel for the benefit of Israel, the Jewish People and all mankind, is most worthwhile."

Ambassador Allen said CFHU's relationship with IMRIC is characteristic of the 60-year diplomatic bond between Canada and Israel.

"In part due to the unwavering and strong support of my Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and in part due to the kinds of relationships that people like Ronnie Appleby and Nathan Lindenberg are building together, the relationship is at a new high. I feel that this opening of IMRIC… is an essential part of the 60th celebration [of Canada-Israel diplomatic relations]," Allen said.

"My wish is that in 10 years… The groundbreaking and award-winning research will be fully funded with the generous assistance of Canadians and we will all be here dedicating Phase II of the project."

STUDENTS DONATE HAIR TO CHARITY

Eleven girls, aged three to nine, most of whom attend Bialik Hebrew Day School, and one mother had their hair cut for charity recently. The Child's Voice Foundation and its Angel Hair for Kids program provide wigs free of charge to financially disadvantaged children who have lost their hair due to illness. The haircuts took place on June 22 at the Marc Anthony Hair Salon on Avenue Road in Toronto, which donated its services for the event. In the picture, Emma Albaum holds her freshly shorn 12.5-inch ponytail. Her brother, Eli, is in the background. It takes 10 to 12 ponytails, each a minimum of nine inches long, and costs $800 to make one wig.

[Marion Albaum photos]

Dead Sea Scrolls Series

at Beth Tikvah Synagogue
3080 Bayview Avenue, Toronto

July 2009
3 Study Opportunities

Wed July 8th 8:00pm — Rabbi Wayne Allen
'Was the Book of Esther part of the Qumran canon?'
Curiously, not a single fragment was ever recovered in all the manuscripts found at the Dead Sea that included any passage from the Book of Esther. Scholars are divided on how to account for this mystery. Join Rabbi Allen in an exploration of the extant explanations for this riddle.

Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn

Sun July 12 8:00 pm — Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn is the guest Curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit at the ROM, As well she is a Professor and Director of the Jewish Studies Department at San Diego University.
'The Curator's Overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit in Toronto'.

Rabbi Wayne Allen

Thurs July 23 8:00 pm — Rabbi Wayne Allen
'How did the Qumran community understand the Torah?'
Cave Four at Qumran has yielded a number of fragments that paraphrase the Torah rather that quoting from it precisely. Most scholars have argued that this did not suggest that the authors had a different version of the Torah but included their commentary within the citation. Rabbi Allen will show several examples of this phenomenon and look at how the Qumran passages illuminate the laws of kashrut, personal injury, and the ceremony of first fruits.

All three events are open to the community. No charge.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit is coming to the Royal Ontario Museum June 27, 2009 - January 7, 2010.
The Exhibit is a collaborative effort between the Israel Antiquities Authority and the ROM.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Toronto chef cooks up new role for TV

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Chef Ezra Title hadn't planned on becoming a TV celebrity. But with the première of his new show *The Healthy Gourmet*, on July 4 at 7:30 p.m. on the new VIVA network, he'll do just that.

A Jewish Toronto native – Title attended Leo Baeck Day School and then went to Forest Hill Collegiate Institute – he has spent the last decade creating and serving scrumptious fare to clients, using techniques learned at the sides of master chefs across North America.

Though he favours French and Italian cooking, like any good chef worth his salt, so to speak, Title is adept at all forms of gastronomy.

Good thing, too. Because he's being put to the test this year as the chef in *The Healthy Gourmet*, alongside his co-host, Toronto nutritionist Julie Daniluk.

Ezra Title helps a *Healthy Gourmet* participant. [Corus Entertainment photo]

Ezra Title and and his co-host, nutritionist Julie Daniluk

The show's premise pits Title against Daniluk on a episodic basis, as they try to teach select women's groups – from women's hockey teams to a group of women anglers – how to make their meals more delicious (Title's job), while simultaneously increasing their nutritive value.

Speaking to Heebonics during a break in filming on a recent shoot in Toronto, Title said he thought it would be challenging to jump into the world of TV while still employing his culinary skills.

"I like to be involved in a range of things," he said. "This was something new to add to my repertoire. I'm completely out of my element. Cooking on camera is different than cooking for real."

Be that as it may, Title said he's having a blast filming this new show with the cast and crew, and learning all the ways not to act on camera.

"I have something the director calls 'Ezra speak'... so I'm learning how to talk to the camera and position myself," he said. "My biggest challenge on screen is learning to be articulate and eloquent [while] being direct, without stuttering and pausing."

Though the show is unscripted, Title said he's happy without the safety net of written dialogue, preferring to banter with Daniluk and guests in his natural, gregarious style.

Watching him film some short sequences, it becomes obvious that when talking about food preparation and selection, Title has a wealth of knowledge and an inherent ability to communicate the joy of cooking to onlookers.

"I can talk about cooking 24/7. It's what I love," he said.

Title first discovered he liked to cook after he first left home to attend McGill University.

It was there, he said, that he realized he missed his mother's Jewish home cooking. "I was used to good food," he said, smiling, so he began reading up on preparing his own meals.

He discovered he liked the "instant gratification" of creating something edible with his own hands.

Title warns aspiring cooks who think they can go from cooking a meal in their dorm to being a full-time, professional chef to think again.

"I recommend getting experience... [which] comes from working in a restaurant," he said.

Title said he got his start by cold-calling at restaurants and volunteering to work in order to gain experience in the sector.

After obtaining his associates degree in the culinary arts from the California Culinary Academy, Title trained with some of the best chefs in the world at well-known restaurants such as New York's Restaurant Daniel and Blue Hill at Stone Barns, and Jardiniere in San Francisco.

He returned to Toronto in 2005 and began his own business, Chez Vous Dining, after obtaining a master of business administration in hospitality tourism management from Guelph University.

When he's not on set, playfully sparring with Daniluk, Title oversees the daily operation of his catering business.

Though he works anywhere from 10 to 18 hours a day and is "hands-on" in his business, Title said one of his greatest joys is visiting the various local farmer's markets around Toronto, where he sources produce for his business.

"I look forward to spring every year. I get excited by seeing all the [Ontario] produce again," he said.

Title also rents spots at two farmer's markets in Toronto – the Don Valley Brick Works market and the Artscape Wychwood Barns market, where he makes breakfasts for shoppers and fellow vendors.

Growing up kosher, Title has also incorporated his love for Jewish soul food with his own unique twists to some standard Ashkenazi fare, such as rosemary-tinged matzah balls and kugel with caramelized onions.

He still has Shabbat dinners every Friday. He and his wife, Elisse Peltz, recently welcomed their first child into the world.

"My wife is my closest closest confidante," Title said, adding that she keeps him honest in his professional life. "She has an amazing palate. I run everything by her."

Title said for him, food isn't just a job, "it's a lifestyle. It's a part of my family's life. I have an edible garden which I use at home."

In addition to working on *The Healthy Gourmet* and running his catering business, Title recently partnered with his wife on an initiative called Yo Dinna, which offers clients an evening of sampling his gourmet creations, coupled with a yoga course given by Peltz, a yoga instructor.

Working on the TV show with Daniluk has helped him broaden his culinary horizons, Title admits.

"In my professional life, I don't consider nutrition so much when I cook," he said," he said. "For events [cooking], food has to taste as good as it can. But in my personal life, I try to eat as nutritious as I can. I take a lot of what Julie says and incorporate it in my diet."

For more information about *The Healthy Gourmet*, visit www.myviva.ca/groups.

Ezra Title, left, and Julie Daniluk, far right, show a guest how to prepare a dish on *Healthy Gourmet*.

Food, Scrumptious Food

Jewish cooking, the original fusion food

By DENISE PHILLIPS
Special to The CJN

Food and family have always been important to the Jewish People. Although some may say that what we eat speaks to who we are, there is no really clear definition of Jewish cuisine. It varies enormously from country to country and within different communities, and it's a function of Jewish dietary laws, Jewish Sabbath laws, holiday rituals and the local food and cooking customs of the many lands in which Jews have lived over the centuries.

It could be said that Jewish Cookery is the world's first example of fusion cooking:

The importance of religion in our food cannot be underestimated. For example, on Shabbat, because we are not permitted to cook or light a fire, Jews have developed the talent of using one pot to combine the best ingredients the household can buy, cooked on a very low heat before sundown and eaten for lunch on Shabbat. Stews such as cholent, hameem and adafina have become classic recipes.

In Russia, the dish is served with kasha, buckwheat toasted with onions and mushrooms. In Czechoslovakia it is served with kugel, and the Poles tend to make it with potato dumplings. The Sephardi communities call their version adafina, which means "buried," referring to the cooking pot that was buried in the fireplace ashes and to the eggs cooked in their shells that were buried in the stew.

Shabbat would not be the same without challah, the ultimate in Jewish bread. Traditionally, kosher challah is made pareve, and the two loaves used on Friday night signify the double portion of manna that was provided for the Israelites in the desert before Shabbat, following the Exodus from Egypt.

Like Shabbat, Jewish holidays provide an opportunity for speciality dishes connected to our history and traditions. On Shavuot, it is customary to have dairy foods, and for many, it is viewed as the "cheesecake festival." One of the reasons given for use of dairy products is that the Israelites in the wilderness were not familiar with the laws of kashrut and it was simpler to keep to non-meat ingredients.

Ethnic background also played an important part in the way Jewish cuisine developed. Jews have travelled to nearly every corner of the globe, and life in the Diaspora has contributed to many of the differences that exist within our religion and its cuisine.

Ashkenazi Jews originate from Russia and eastern European countries like Poland, and their cuisine is heavily influenced by the cold climate. Vegetables were pickled in salt rather than fermented with spices. Examples include pickled brisket, red cabbage, cucumbers and beetroot. Freshwater fish like carp and herring were smoked and salted. Sugar, honey, raisins and lemon juice were commonly used to preserve food. Sweet and sour recipes were popular. Potatoes in the form of kugels, latkes and dumplings helped the poor community make a little go a long way!

By contrast, Sephardi cuisine was developed by Jews living in hot climates. It blends their heritage and dietary laws with a distinct influence from the Iberian and Arabic culture and traditions. Its cuisine is fragrant with spices including cinnamon, turmeric and cumin, and herbs like coriander, dill and mint. Olive oil is a staple. The onions, potatoes and chicken fat that were basic ingredients for Ashkenazim are virtually unknown!

Differences are also evident when it comes to Passover. Sephardi Jews have the custom of eating rice, legumes, corn and beans – all foods that are forbidden for Ashkenazi Jews at that time.

Symbolism is yet another element that influences our Jewish cuisine, and Passover is the best-known example. Matzah, the unleavened bread eaten on Pesach, is symbolic of the time when the Jews left Egypt in such haste that they did not have time to let their bread rise.

But we have now added a more modern touch – coconut pyramids, matzah balls and macaroons have become classics during this eight-day festival because they use permitted ingredients.

On Sukkot, the harvest festival, we eat in a sukkah and our recipes include lots of fruits and vegetables, often stuffed to symbolize the wish for a bountiful harvest.

Another symbolic Jewish classic are hamantashen we eat on Purim, when the three-cornered pastries represent Haman's ears.

So the vast array of recipes that we now enjoy are the result of our having vacuumed up the flavours, ingredients and recipes from the countries that our ancestors have travelled through or lived in and then adapted in order to adhere to the laws of kashrut.

Just as the Jewish people are a melange of nationalities and backgrounds, our food, too, has a complicated DNA made up of various strands, all of which create the exciting and varied range of menus that we choose from today.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Congratulations to Robbie Libman on your Grade 12 graduation, and for going on to study engineering at Queens University. With love from the whole family.

Mazel tov on your graduation, Naftali. You have achieved a nice milestone. Wishing you the best of luck in your future endeavours. Love, Mom & Dad.

Mazel tov to Zaven on your recent graduation. Good luck in university! Have fun! Much love from your whole family.

Mazel tov to Hy Quint who turns 95 July 8. You're an inspiration to us all. With love from your children, and 17 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Happy first birthday Brody Lewis. With love from Mommy & Daddy, Lauren and Brian, Delzie Lewis, Granny Esther Blumenow, Bubbie Sylvia & Zadie Lou Kirshner.

Robyn & Alan, Edward & Paula are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children Jordana Fenster & Terry Schonberger. Mazel tov and happiness always!

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines. Monday, June 29, is the deadline for the July 9 issue. Monday, July 6, is the deadline for the July 16 issue. There is no issue on July 23. All material for that day will be included in the July 16 issue and must also be received by July 6. Deadline for the July 30 issue is July 20. I receive calls on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Saturday, July 4

TORAH CLASS

David Schaeffer leads a Torah class on Parshat Chukkat/Balak. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 10-11 a.m. For more information, call **Henry Alkin**, 416-491-4746.

Sunday, July 5

SINGLES DANCE

Shaar Shalom Singles, in conjunction with Intersynagogue Singles (45+) holds its Midsummer Night's Dance, featuring a live performance by **James Regan** of Tapps. 7:30 p.m. Refreshments, complimentary dance lesson with **Don Otter**. Admission $12. For information, call **David**, 416-224-9494.

Tuesday, July 7

FREE SUMMER FUN

Entertainment all summer long at the Barry Zukerman Amphitheatre in Earl Bales Park, if CUPE strike is over. In case of rain, programs will be moved inside the Earl Bales Community Centre. First Tuesday concert July 7, 7 p.m., Silverthorn Symphonic Winds Ensemble. Family fun events begin July 9, 5:30 p.m., with Chris McKool Trio concert at 7 p.m. For more information, call 416-392-3846.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

First lecture in Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's lecture series on "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Unveiling Secrets of the Past, Revealing Truths in the Present," including a visit to the exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. Speakers **Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn** and **Rachel Urowitz** during July and then September and October. Packages only. CFHU board room, 3080 Yonge St., 5th floor. For more information, registration or questions, contact **Jenifer Lev**, 416-485-8000, jlev@cfhu.org or www.cfhu.org.

Wednesday, July 8

ESTHER AND THE QUMRAN

Rabbi Wayne Allen asks "Was the Book of Esther part of the Qumran Canon?" Beth Tikvah, 8 p.m. First of a series of three study opportunities in connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the ROM. Open to the community. No charge.

Other News

PROSTATE CANCER

Man to Man and Side by Side prostate cancer support groups present a prostate cancer awareness night meeting, July 29, 7:30 p.m., Toronto Botanical Garden Floral Hall, 777 Lawrence Ave E. Guest speaker **Dr. Kenneth Pace**, on "Robotic-Assisted Radical Prostatectomy: Fact vs. Fiction." Free parking. For more information, call 416-932-8820.

RELIGION & JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" July 14, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, brotherhood and entertainment and cultural committee. Refreshments. Sisterhood Hall, 8 p.m. Members free; non-members $2. For more information, 416-789-3213.

GARAGE SALE

JACS holds the first of several summer garage sales, Sunday, July 12, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. 1081 Alness St. Next garage sale July 26, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., 696 Sheppard Ave. W.

Continued on page 23

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JACS
JACS would like to thank GARY GOLDMAN, outgoing Chair for all of his hard work over the past 3 years and takes great pleasure in welcoming ART SILBER as the new Chair of the Board.

Gary Goldman

Art Silber

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Continued from page 22

JEWISH MEDICAL ETHICS

International conference on Jewish Medical Ethics, Aug. 20-23, Tremblant, Quebec. Sponsored by Torah in Motion, the Orthodox Union and Yeshiva University. Speakers include **Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Rabbi Michael Broyde, Dr. Beni Gesundheit, Dr. Cliff Librach, Rabbi Avraham Steinberg**. Topics include genetic screening, terminal illness, treating terrorists. Information and registration at www.torahinmotion.org medical, or 1-866-633-5770.

MINDSCAPES 2008

A travelling art exhibit features art produced by seniors with dementia from Canada, Australia, Israel and the United States. Presented by the Alzheimer Society and the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care. 20 Eglinton Ave. W., 16th Floor. Until Aug. 31. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, **Susan Sommers**, 416-640-6309, ssommers@alzheimertoronto.org, or www.alzheimertoronto.org.

COMMUNITY EXHIBITS

The first series of the Community Exhibits Program for 2009-2010 features displays and exhibits from museums and archives across Ontario. Showcases the many facets of Ontario's diverse communities. In the East Wing of the Ontario Legislature, the Ontario Jewish Archives exhibit tells the story of Toronto's Jews and the garment industry. Until September 2009.

VOLUNTEER STUDY

The Canadian government is supporting a study to determine the health benefits of volunteering. Retired boomers (over 55) in good health and not currently volunteering can sign up to volunteer at Baycrest to be part of the study. Contact Baycrest Volunteer Services, 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Casino Rama, July 22. Lunch and Laughter Club, Aug. 13, noon. Casino Niagara, Aug. 18. Mah Jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Bingo, Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday dances will resume in October. Pre-register for all trips. Walker and wheelchair accessible, non-members welcome. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell. For information, call 416-630-9444.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Eureka! How Science Discovered God with **Dr. Arnie Gotfryd**, July 7, 10 a.m.

Israel Day Festival, July 8, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. No charge.

The Benefits of Meditation with **Marilyn Freedman**, July 9, 1:30 p.m. No charge.

WAGMAN CENTRE, 55 Ameer Ave., 416-785-2500.

Come join us in a sing-along to lift your spirits. Entertainers **Perry Foster, Elex Korn, Dorry Korn, Anne Till** and **Eddie Sokoloff**. Assembly Room, Wednesday, July 8, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Members free, guests $2, at the door.

Montrealers Group, July 2. Join **Shawn** in the Fireside Lounge, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Creative Arts Studio: Glass painting, Mondays, 1-3 p.m. Flower pressing, July 14 and 28, 1-2:30 p.m.

Internet Lounge – stay connected with friends and family through e-mail and surf the net. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. to noon, E-Pals (Baycrest seniors support program) – share e-mail messages with a trained volunteer matched with your interests, situation and language. Ext. 2247.

Summer youth volunteers will serve chocolate and vanilla ice cream, Wednesday afternoons during July and August, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Wagman Centre lobby.

Dear Abby discussion group Thursdays, 2-3 p.m.

Early Risers Summer Breakfast Program. Start the day with a healthy breakfast. Every other Friday during July. $5 per day.

Torah Study, every Sunday, classroom A and B 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Book Club, facilitated by **Marilyn Fine**. Once a month, Thursdays, 1:30, classrooms A and B.

Arthritis and Massage therapy – to book an appointment, call **Inna**, ext. 5174.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

The outdoor pool is officially open. Call ext. 291 for pool membership.

Are you ages 13-16, and interested in learning about the Maccabi Games? Contact **Grant**, ext. 257, or gsmith@bjcc.com

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

Fringe of Toronto Theatre Festival @ the J. Sheep in Fog Theatre Company of Montreal presents *Puck Bunny* by **Lindsay Wilson**, directed by **Alexandra West** and featuring **Joanne Sarazen**. Until July 12. 8 p.m. $10. Phone 416-966-1062, or www.fringetoronto.com.

Toronto IsReal Dance Festival 2009. Three guest Israeli choreographers, **Yaron Carmel, Gadi Bitton** and **Yaron Ben Simshon**. Put your Israeli folkdancing talents to work over a 3-day intensive workshop. Includes a Friday night Shabbat dinner, performances and more. July 3, 4, 5. For more information, www.israelifolkdancingtoronto.com, **Sofie**, 416-221-6280 or sofsof@rogers.com, **Laurie**, 416-789-1671 or lmarkus0327@rogers.com.

Summer Hebrew Courses: Modern Hebrew for Beginners, levels A and B; Intensive Grammar course; Hebrew verb system; Expand Your Vocabulary (Intermediate); Hebrew Through Song; Hebrew Grammar Essentials. Register at ext. 0, For more information, jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Cooking classes with **Elise Burton**. July 21 and Aug. 26, 6:30-9 p.m., Easy Summer Soups and Salads. $25 per class. Ext. 0.

Zion Ozeri: One history, Many Stories: a family album of Israel at 60. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space. Co-presented with Koffler Centre of the Arts. Ext. 133.

The Al Green Theatre is offering discounted rental rates for the summer for its dance studio located below the theatre. Contact **Maytal Kowalski**, ext. 269 or tmaytalks@mnjcc.org.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 25

ORAYNU CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY: Originally called the Secular Jewish Association, the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism has grown to 130 families. At the recent celebration, the congregation honoured Avrum Rosensweig, founder of Ve'ahavta, a Canadian humanitarian and relief organization. Incoming Rabbi Karen Levy presented Rosensweig with a cheque for Ve'ahavta's partner, the Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva, Israel.

FAMILY FUN DAY: Jewish Vocational Service joined the Toronto Police Service's 12th division last week for its annual Family Fun Day, as a step toward breaking down walls that divide people. Among the children's activities was the fish pond seen here.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Irving Pomeranz	Jun 13/09	85 Skymark Dr
Lisa Levitt	Jun 13/09	6 St. Thomas St
Donny Jubas	Jun 13/09	5444 Yonge St
Shirley Brown	Jun 14/09	1 Glen Park Ave
Stephen Borins	Jun 13/09	6 Connable Dr
Dorothy Kohen	Jun 15/09	240 Heath St W
Gordon Segall	Jun 15/09	55 Ameer Ave
Yoram Hellerman	Jun 17/09	233 Steeles Ave E
Goldie Posner	Jun 16/09	500 St. Clements Av
Irwin Haller	Jun 16/09	14 Saranac Blvd
Herb Lavine	Jun 17/09	4 Forest Laneway
Dorothy Mills	Jun 20/09	115 Antibes Drive

HEBREW BASIC

Rose Wajcman	Jun 12/09	18 Hedgewood Road

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Zuk, Jack	June 11/09	54 Maxwell St
Hamate, Rachel	June 12/09	Private
Khalfina, Frouma	June 12/09	Private
Risman, Sharron	June 12/09	4005 Bayview Ave
Voykhansky, Lev	June 15/09	Private
Koven, Martin	June 15/09	89 Skymark Dr
Crystal, Toby	June 18/09	3560 Bathurst St
Farber, Russell Sydney	June 18/09	205 Cummer Ave
Drutz, Brian	June 17/09	19 Moonlight Ln
Rubenstein, Leonard	June 18/09	750 York Mills Rd
Korman, Dorothy	June 18/09	784 Centre St
Gerlyand, Mikhail	June 18/09	Private
Levine, Harold	June 18/09	120 Promenade Cir

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Coast to Coast

Few Canadians taking part in Lodz ghetto memorial

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Though neither of her parents hailed from Lodz, Rochelle Michaels felt an almost irresistible desire to visit the Polish city during a Jewish heritage and memorial program five years ago.

A member of the Lodzer Centre Congregation, Michaels was in the sanctuary when the event was announced from the bimah, and she witnessed first hand the immediate and visceral reaction of congregants.

People stood up and proclaimed they would never go to a memorial in Poland, she recalled.

"They were angry and very upset, and they spoke about personal experiences in Poland and said they would never go back."

At the same time, they were torn by the desire to return to the land of their birth to visit for the last time the cemeteries where family members were buried, she added.

Intrigued by the reaction and the program being assembled by the Polish government, Michaels decided to make the trip along with her then 14-year-old son, Sam.

"I felt it was important to go and bear witness," she said. "After a time at the Lodzer [Synagogue], I felt I wanted to go to Poland to take a part of their hearts with me, to honour the survivors and to recognize the victims."

Michaels said the program was incredibly emotional, and it was made all the more so by the efforts of the current generation of Poles to honour and recognize the Jews of their community who were killed in the Holocaust.

Altogether, several hundred Canadians participated in the 2004 memorial.

A program to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of Lodz's Litzmanstadt Ghetto – the "Jewish Memorial and Heritage Program" in short – is planned for Aug. 24 to 31.

So far, interest from the Jewish community has been "surprisingly very modest," said Andrew Pirowski, project manager for Panorama Travel, the official tour operator for the event.

Not only are Canadians reluctant to make the trip, so, too, are Americans.

"We have found people from the Toronto area. We have a group, but nothing compared to the numbers five years ago," he said.

"We had expected more, and the city had expected it would generate more interest. We understand the survivors are aging, but they have family and we expected they would continue their ties to their grandparents' roots."

The Polish government has set up a website to publicize the event (http://www.ghetto.lodz.pl/) and in it, Lodz mayor Jerzy Kropiwnicki noted that the commemoration will honour the city's Jews as well as the Poles who risked their lives to save them.

"This monument will become an evident symbol of humanity in the hell of German occupation, both for the Jews and the Poles," Kropiwnicki stated.

"There is no way to comprehend the crime that was committed here. We can only remember it. For a decent man, there is no choice but to side with a victim. For a decent city like Lodz, there is no choice either. And any previous neighbour relations – good or bad – are irrelevant. There is a crime, a perpetrator, a victim and a witness. I could not see any other role for my city but to stand up for the victim and to testify."

Michaels is planning to revisit Lodz this summer, and this time she's taking her younger son, Ezra.

Ezra, 14, consulted with his older brother, who has taken a variety of trips abroad and said his most memorable one was to Poland, followed by a visit to Israel.

"Ezra wanted to have that experience too," she said.

For the children of survivors – Michaels' father, Henry Kay, was from Kielce – such a trip holds "many memorable moments," she said.

Continued on page 25

Ex-Liberal candidate sues CJC, B'nai Brith

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies correspondent

WINNIPEG — Former federal Liberal candidate Lesley Hughes is suing Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada, charging they ruined her political career by saying that she's anti-Semitic.

During last fall's election campaign, Hughes generated national headlines when it was revealed she wrote an article for a community newspaper in 2002 alleging that Israeli, American, German and Russian intelligence agencies all had advance warning of the Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. She further claimed Israeli businesses were forewarned and vacated the building a week before the attack. The article was also posted on her website.

Lesley Hughes

As a result of the revelation, the former CBC radio broadcaster – she co-hosted the CBC Winnipeg morning show for a number of years – was forced to step down as the Liberal candidate for Kildonan-St. Paul and finished her run as an independent in the October election, finishing a distant third.

Now Hughes has filed a lawsuit against Conservative MP Peter Kent, B'nai Brith executive vice-president Frank Dimant and former Congress co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol, as well as Bernie Farber, Congress' CEO.

Hughes filed the suit June 16 in Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench. She alleges that the defendants "made untrue and defamatory accusations" that she is anti-Semitic. She charges that senior members of B'nai Brith and CJC went to see then-Liberal leader Stéphane Dion on Sept. 25, 2008, with her 2002 article and persuaded Dion to drop her as a candidate on the grounds that she was anti-Semitic and "unfit to hold public office."

She said that Kent, now the minister of state for foreign affairs (Americas) and the MP for the heavily Jewish Toronto-area riding of Thornhill, charged in a Sept. 26 news release that Hughes believed "extreme anti-Israel /9-11 conspiracy theories" and was "unfit to serve in public office."

Hughes states that as a result of being branded an anti-Semite, she has been unable to find work as a freelance journalist and broadcaster. Although she acknowledges authorship of the article in question, she says that all the accusations against her were untrue.

B'nai Brith legal counsel Anita Bromberg said her organization hasn't received any papers pertaining to the lawsuit yet and, therefore, has no comment.

"We have to wait and see what the nature of her complaint is before we can respond to it in any comprehensive way," Bromberg said.

Farber had a similar response, referring readers to a column he wrote about Hughes and her theories on Oct. 3, 2008, in the *National Post*.

"Let's be clear," he wrote. "CJC has never accused Ms. Hughes of being an anti-Semite. Nor is she the object of a witch hunt or the victim of thought police. She was damned by her own hand because of her unapologetic association with 9/11 Jewish conspiracy theories. If Ms. Hughes was, as she has suggested, simply 'reporting' alternate theories to the generally 'accepted' version of the events of Sept. 11, she would have done well to clarify that those theories were anti-Semitic in nature because they represented a collective assault on the Jewish people and the essence of the community's nature.

"The reality is that people sometimes make unfortunate choices to support unsubstantiated theories. When these allegations create harm like this one does, though, those people must be held accountable. In a press conference held on Oct. 2, Ms. Hughes maintained her stubborn and seemingly purposeful wilful blindness on her wrong-headed embrace of this terrible slander. No one who subscribes to these hateful fantasies, and then refuses to recant when challenged, is fit to serve in the national legislature of a proudly pluralistic nation that counts respect for diversity among its core values."

Neither Hughes nor her lawyer, Norman Cuddy, were available for comment last week.

Quebec court defers judgment on lawsuit against Canadian firms

Compiled by CJN Staff

A Quebec judge is not expected to decide until September whether a lawsuit by a Palestinian West Bank village against two Montreal-based companies can be heard here.

Quebec Superior Court Justice Louis-Paul Cullen heard arguments from both sides over three days last week.

Ronald Levy, the lawyer for Green Mount International Inc. and Green Park International Inc., presented a motion to have the case dismissed. The municipal council of Bil'in is seeking to have the court declare that the companies' construction of housing for Jewish settlers on land the village lost with the erection of Israel's security barrier is illegal. It also wants the 16 apartments it has built demolished and $2 million in punitive damages.

Bil'in's lead lawyer Mark Arnold argued that the companies are committing a war crime, violating both international law and Canada's own 2000 Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into territory acquired as a result of war.

Levy's main arguments are that Israeli courts have already determined that the individual plaintiff, the late Ahmed Issa Abdallah Yassin, wasn't the legal owner of the land on which the companies built. He also maintains that this case isn't within the jurisidiction of a Canadian court, and the fact the companies are registered in Quebec is irrelevant.

MINISTERIAL MEETING: Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, left, and his Israeli counterpart, Avigdor Lieberman, met in Ottawa last week, part of Lieberman's trip to North America that included talks with Obama administration officials in Washington. Lieberman and Cannon held discussions on "a range of bilateral issues that support the continuing partnership between Canada and Israel, and matters of mutual concern in the Middle East," the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade said in a statement. Cannon described the visit as "an opportunity to underscore the close friendship of Canada and Israel, which this year mark 60 years of diplomatic relations." Lieberman said Israel "very much appreciates" Canada's position on Israel and the situation in the Middle East in general.

People filled the street

Continued from page 24

One special recollection from the 2004 visit was a children's concert remembering the Jewish children who did not survive. The event attracted so many Poles that the venue quickly filled up and those who could not get inside stood outside in silence.

"When we came out they left a row for us to exit and faced us as though they wanted to share with us in that experience," Michaels said.

On the final day, the program was scheduled for the train station "to remember the last transport. People filled the street to honour those who survived," she said.

Many Lodzer congregation members remain bitter over their treatment at the hands of their former neighbours, But Michael believes "the country is changing, and [that] needs to be recognized."

Singles Events
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Voyage of the St. Louis remembered in Halifax

By JOEL JACOBSON
Atlantic Correspondent

HALIFAX — Lisa Avedon was only four years old in 1939, but she has vivid memories of her first reception in North America as a passenger on the S.S. St. Louis.

"There are a few pieces I remember today," the Toronto woman, 74, said, speaking June 17 at a ceremony in Halifax commemorating the fateful voyage of the ship. More than 200 people crowded the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic for an event co-ordinated by the museum and the Atlantic Jewish Council.

"I know I was seasick most of the trip and saw only my stateroom and a bit of the deck," Avedon said. "But I'll never forget sitting in Havana Harbour, where we were refused admittance at the last minute after being granted visas weeks before."

Avedon said her uncle, living in New Jersey at the time, came to meet her and her family and was sitting in a boat beside the ship that held 907 German Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. "I called to him, 'Take me with you' and I was ready to jump off the deck."

Soon, she was on her way back to Europe, as the Jews were also refused entry into the United States and Canada. The St. Louis' captain docked in Antwerp, Belgium, and the passengers found refuge outside Germany. When the Nazi machine moved into those countries months later, 255 were swept up and exterminated in the concentration camps.

"The fact that this [memorial event] is considered important in Halifax is important to me. It's vital that we're not forgotten," Avedon said. "When I think of the trouble many refugees have today [gaining entry to Canada], the story of the St. Louis has to be carried on. What's going on elsewhere is no different from my story."

With fire in her 74-year-old eyes, she added, "What is the United Nations doing? Are they helping anyone? There is no reason for humans to treat others this way. Considering the resources we have today, are we doing anything differently? People should be pressing their leaders to show compassion."

Dorothy Riteman, left, of Bedford, N.S., speaks with Lisa Avedon of Toronto, after Avedon, a survivor of the SS St. Louis, spoke June 17 to a Halifax audience. [Joel Jacobson photo]

Museum historian Dan Conlin reviewed the story of the St. Louis. He told how Canada's prime minister at the time, Mackenzie King, was ready to admit the Jewish immigrants until his immigration chief, F.C. Blair, known for his hatred of Jews, sent King a secret memo explaining that the passengers didn't qualify under immigration laws.

The oft-quoted phrase, "None is too many" has been attributed to Blair.

Conlin emphasized, "This should still haunt our minds [as Canadians] today."

Each name of the 255 who died in the camps was recited. A replica of the ship, built over 250 hours by museum volunteer Tom Power, and other artifacts, were on display and will be in a permanent exhibit starting in October.

Jewish vets hear from D-Day officer

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

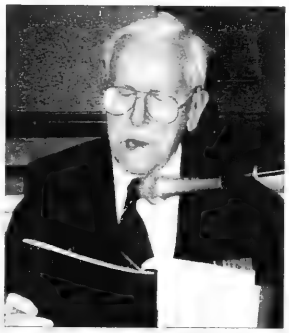
OTTAWA — As the years pass and World War II becomes for many just a story in the history books, there are fewer and fewer people with first-hand memories of the era and even fewer people with whom to share them.

A recent event at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) brought together members of the Jewish War Veterans Ottawa Post and their guests from Branch 638 of the Royal Canadian Legion, as well as members of the group Active Jewish Adults 50+ to hear the stories and reminiscences of a local war hero, Edmond Hutchison.

Post Cmdr. Phil Pinkus introduced Hutchison, whom he has spoken to at length about his war experiences.

"I know you will also be given an absorbing presentation focusing on an historical moment in time on the road to defeating the tyranny then enslaving Europe as well as to remove forever the threat to our way of life," Pinkus said.

Lt.-Col. Edmond Hutchison enlisted in the Canadian Active Service Force on Sept. 5, 1939, as company sergeant major. He and his two brothers were among the volunteers who signed up when war broke out. A year and a half later, after being commissioned as an officer, Hutchison was posted overseas with the Perth Regiment as an intelligence officer.



Edmond Hutchison addresses Jewish war veterans.

As he greeted his fellow veterans, Hutchison acknowledged their dwindling numbers. "We are a diminishing breed, so when there are so many of us together it is brilliant news," he said.

"It has been 64 years since the end of the war, so some of my memories may not be the same as yours," Hutchison said as he began his talk, titled "Selected Memories of World War II."

Audience member Jerry Penso is a regular in the SJCC gym and has known and chatted with fellow member, "Ed" for years. "I had no idea that Ed was a war hero," said Penso who attended the event to hear his friend's story.

Hutchison has been a member of the SJCC for nearly a decade and is well known there to regulars. In fact, it was fellow member and vet Albert Winer who suggested that Hutchison share his stories with the Ottawa Post.

In 1943, Hutchison was selected to return to Canada to attend the Canadian War Staff College at the Royal Military College in Kingston. Assignment completed, he returned overseas to the Headquarters 2 of the Canadian Corps, remaining there as an operations staff officer for the duration of the war.

The audience listened with rapt attention to Hutchison's detailed reminiscences of his war experiences, including the intricacies of the D-Day operation.

"Everything military had a code word, and Operation Overlord was called D-Day, a title given to it by Churchill, the greatest amphibian attack in history," said Hutchison. "Had the D-Day landing failed, the outcome of the war would have been very different. There was no margin for error and the penalty for failure would have been inestimable," he said.

Montrealer makes bid for Agriprocessors

Compiled by CJN Staff

Montreal businessman Hershey Friedman is expected to buy the bankrupt Iowa-based kosher slaughterhouse Agriprocessors Inc., according to information filed in a U.S. court last week.

Friedman, who owns a plastics company in Montreal, has formed a new company called SHF Industries LLC, registered in Iowa, which has agreed to pay part of the $21 million (US) that Agriprocessors owes to its largest creditors.

The company's bankruptcy trustee, Joseph Sarachek, has asked the court to allow the sale in order to save the plant from closing.

Agriprocessors, located in Postville, Iowa, has been owned by the Brooklyn-based Rubashkin family. It went bankrupt last fall after running afoul of U.S immigration authorities for employing illegal immigrants.

Friedman is the president of Polystar Packaging.

The *Des Moines Register* reported that Friedman and his two partners have agreed to pay at least $8.5 million of Agriprocessors' debt and to accept the plant on an "as is, where is" basis.

In May 2008, immigration officials raided Agriprocessors, arresting 389 workers, mainly from Mexico and Guatemala.

The plant was the largest kosher meat supplier in the United States before the raid. It filed for bankruptcy last November. Former company vice-president Sholom Rubashkin and three former managers also face federal charges related to hiring and harbouring illegal immigrants, as well as bank fraud, money laundering and non-payment for livestock.

Whether Friedman, who is known to be an observant Jew, intends to keep the plant kosher is not clear. It's currently under the supervision of the Orthodox Union.

The sale to the group headed by Friedman still needs the approval of a bankruptcy court.

There have been reports on the Internet that Hershey Friedman is the brother of Moshe Friedman, owner of the Montreal-based kosher Marvid Poultry Canada Inc.

But Moshe Friedman told *The CJN* that he's not related to Hershey Friedman and is not involved in his offer to buy the company.

In January, Soglowek Nahariya, a large Israeli meat processor, offered $40 million for Agriprocessors, but it withdrew its bid because it said couldn't fully investigate the company, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* reported.

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'I'm happy for the opportunity to celebrate'

Continued from page 1

In addition to attending Assaf's graduation ceremony on their week-long visit, MacLean and his family also attended the bat mitzvah of Ilan and Rona Ramon's youngest daughter, Noa.

"I'm happy for the opportunity to celebrate some happy occasions with the Ramons," MacLean said.

The Ramons and the MacLeans became close friends after Ilan and Steve met and trained together with NASA at the Johnson Space Center in Houston in the late '90s. After the Columbia disaster, MacLean became the casualty assistance and calls officer for Ilan Ramon, supporting his family and offering them the solace that only an experienced astronaut would be able to provide. "Our families are quite integrated," MacLean said.

Before the tragedy that ended Ramon's life, the MacLean and Ramon families had planned to tour the Nahalal Valley in Israel together in the summer of 2003, after their respective missions in space, Ramon's on the Columbia, and MacLean's scheduled to take place 12 weeks after that.

"Our families ended up together in the Nahalal Valley that summer, but not as we had intended. It was very sad."

In 2006 prior to his second visit to Israel, MacLean took a small Torah scroll belonging to Holocaust survivor Henry Fenichel of Cincinnati, Ohio, into space aboard the Atlantis shuttle as a tribute to Ramon, who had brought a scroll from Bergen-Belsen aboard the Columbia in honour of the survivors of Auschwitz in his own family.

"To do that for my friend was quite an amazing bonding experience," MacLean said.

After the Columbia break-up, MacLean dedicated his efforts at NASA to increasing the safety of crews and security of space vehicles as technical lead for the Canadian-built orbiter boom sensor system, which has a camera and laser that enable astronauts to check the bottom of the orbiter for possible damage, and as member of the NASA board responsible for ensuring the integrity of the shuttle's thermal protection system prior to re-entry into the atmosphere.

A file photo of Noa Ramon, whose bat mitzvah MacLean attended.

Although his current trip has focused on the personal, MacLean has also met with the Israel Space Agency (ISA), Canadian Ambassador to Israel Jon Allen and senior trade commissioner Catherine Gosselin to discuss the potential for including Israel in various co-operative initiatives with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

The ISA and the CSA signed a memorandum of understanding in 2004 that established the Canada-Israel Research Development Fund (CIRDF) and laid the groundwork for space research co-operation between the two countries. Because of the high costs and mutual interest in data from space, MacLean said most space research is done co-operatively, involving the input of several countries.

"The co-operative model we have with Israel is the most effective model for multinational space research projects," he said. Rather than work together on each element of a given project, Israel handles one part, and Canada a different part. Because no money is pooled or crosses borders, both agencies avoid a lot of bureaucracy that they would otherwise encounter.

"Israel is a great country to work with. We employ a very effective way of doing business with Israel that is incredibly efficient and smart and has governments leveraging money rather than using it."

Canada and Israel are considering several joint projects: developing micro- and mini-satellites and related technologies; creating instruments for earth observation and sharing observational data; working on hyper-spectral satellites; creating scientific education programs for youth, as well as graduate-level university exchanges.

"That Canadians get international experience is extremely important," MacLean said.

In addition, he said, there is a possibility for working together on optics, since Canada is a leader in this field and Israel is interested in expanding its optical capabilities. Also, Israel has a small launcher that Canada may want to use to launch a new satellite into space.

He said, however, that the highlight of the trip has been meeting with Ramon's family and friends. "The highlight for me has been visiting with these people, whom I have now known for some seven years," MacLean said. "It is quite amazing when you have someone with the character of Ilan and you see his friends and family… We share something very special."

This trip also marked the first time MacLean has taken a tour of the country. "It has been great to see so much more of Israel this time," he said, recalling the photo he took from space of Israel, the photo he shared with Ilan at one of their first meetings. "When you look at Israel from space it's so beautiful. And it's beautiful from the ground, too."

No truth to Schalit release reports, Barak says

JTA

An Israeli shows her forlorn mood at a rally last week on the three-year anniversary of the kidnapping of Gilad Schalit, demanding the release of the young Israeli soldier. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

JERUSALEM — There is no truth to recent reports that a deal over kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit is imminent, Ehud Barak said.

"The reports on the release of Schalit are incorrect and even damaging," the Israeli defence minister said during Sunday's cabinet meeting.

European diplomats and Arab officials have been saying since last week that Schalit was set to be moved to Egypt as part of a prisoner swap with Hamas that would also involve the lifting of the Gaza blockade.

Also Sunday, the Hamas official in charge of negotiations over Schalit said the recent reports had no basis in fact.

Schalit was captured by Hamas in a cross-border raid on June 25, 2006.

Jackson children's Jewish mother could regain custody

JTA

LOS ANGELES — Reports are conflicting over whether the Jewish mother of two of the late Michael Jackson's children will seek custody.

Jackson, the "King of Pop" who died last Thursday of unspecified causes, and Debbie Rowe are the parents of Prince Michael I, 12, and Paris Michael Katherine, 11. By virtue of having a Jewish mother, they are considered Jewish.

According to London's *Sunday Times*, sources close to Rowe said she won't fight Katherine Jackson, the pop star's mother, for custody of the children, and that she would be satisfied with more access to them.

But Iris Finsilver, Rowe's attorney, told the Associated Press that she was certain that Rowe would seek custody of the two children. Finsilver had previously confirmed that Rowe was Jewish.

Jackson married Rowe, his former nurse, in 1996, when she was six months pregnant, following his divorce from Lisa Marie Presley, the daughter of the famed late singer Elvis Presley.

Rowe signed a contract waiving her parental rights after she and Jackson divorced in 1999. She later contested the contract, among other arguments expressing her fears that the children were exposed to the teachings of the Nation of Islam through their nanny and some of Jackson's siblings.

An appeals court ruled in her favour in 2006, but ultimately the custody battle was settled out of court.

Legal authorities contacted by the *Los Angeles Times* agreed in general that under California law, Rowe would be likely to regain custody, even if Jackson had designated another guardian in his will.

Jackson had a third child, Prince Michael II, with a surrogate mother whose identity has not been revealed.

Israel could benefit from Iranian unrest

By LESLIE SUSSER

Like the collapse of the Soviet Union nearly two decades ago, the outcome of the post-election unrest in Iran could be of major strategic significance for the Middle East and for Israel.

Israeli analysts see three possible scenarios:

- President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the ruling ayatollahs use more force to reassert the authority of their regime.
- Ahmadinejad's presidential rival, Mir Hossein Mousavi, sweeps to power on a wave of popular support and reforms what still remains an essentially clerical regime.
- The unrest takes on a dynamic of its own, driving the ayatollahs from power.

In each scenario, Israel stands to benefit.

Clearly, regime change in Tehran could alter radically the political landscape of the entire region.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Middle East gradually adopted a new but equally bipolar character: instead of the Soviet Union and its proxies standing against the United States and its allies, Iran has supplanted the Soviet role as the prime adversary. It was Iran that fuelled the Arab-Israeli conflict through its proxies in Lebanon and Gaza – Hezbollah and Hamas, respectively.

If street demonstrations do lead to regime change in Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas could lose their Iranian patron and their major arms supplier, and the prospects for Israeli-Arab accommodation would improve dramatically. A new regime also could put the brakes on the Iranian nuclear threat to Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu goes even further.

"Under a different regime, the peaceful relations we used to have with Iran could be re-established," he declared in an interview with the German *Bild* newspaper.

Israel and Iran had ties until 1979, when the shah was overthrown and exiled.

This best-case scenario, however, is also the most unlikely.

More likely, Ahmadinejad and the radical ayatollahs led by Ali Khamenei will remain in power. Even if this is the case, however, they will be seen to have rigged the election and then used force to suppress the popular will. The regime will be perceived more widely as brutally suppressive, will lose international legitimacy and, if it persists with its nuclear weapons' program, could face a much tougher sanctions regime than otherwise would have been the case.

Israelis show their support of the protesters in Iran. *[Flash 90 photo]*

Iran in the future may need to be more attuned to domestic concerns and spend less on outside forces such as Hezbollah and Hamas. This scenario, too, would be favourable for Israel.

If Mousavi comes to power by forcing and winning a new election, he may be ready for a deal with the West on the nuclear issue. He also is likely to be less virulently anti-Israel than Ahmadinejad, and to provide less support for Hezbollah and Hamas.

Some Israeli analysts fear that this will end up being only half a revolution: Mousavi would come to power, show a more human face of Shiite Islam to the rest of the world, win international plaudits, and defuse criticism and scrutiny of Iran while maintaining the same anti-Israel and nuclear policies as the previous government. Under a cloak of respectability, this Iran could be even more dangerous than Ahmadinejad's, analysts fear.

Several leading Israeli Iran experts see the showdown in Iran as largely a family quarrel between members of the same conservative, clerical elite. They argue that there is not a great deal of difference between Ahmadinejad and Khamenei and the only slightly less conservative Mousavi, who is backed by Ayatollah Ali Rafsanjani.

Indeed, the protesters seem to be using Mousavi as a rallying figure because they have no genuine reformist of stature to back. By the same token Mousavi, who seeks the presidency to make minor reforms, is happy to use Iranians who want much more than he is offering to build his power base.

The big question for Iran, Israel and the Middle East is whether Mousavi is riding a tiger that at some point may usher in a new more democratic era in Iran, and with it a more malleable and stable Middle East.

Here the role of the armed forces could be crucial. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard surely will remain loyal to the Ahmadinejad-Khamenei regime, but what of the rest of the army? If there is to be a real revolution, army units would have to join the popular protest in relatively large numbers.

Although this doesn't seem likely now, Israeli analysts aren't ruling it out. They point out that despite Iran's unprecedented oil revenues over the past few years, the economy is in tatters because of heavy spending on exporting the Iranian revolution rather than on bettering the lives of the Iranian people.

Most analysts agree that Israel should not interfere or give any semblance of interfering in Iran, as to do so almost certainly would be counterproductive. Still, both Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres have expressed strong empathy for the Iranian protesters.

"It's a regime whose real nature has been unmasked, and it's been unmasked by an incredible act of courage by Iran's citizens," Netanyahu told NBC.

"Let the young people raise their voice for freedom," Peres declared in a Jewish leadership forum. "Let the Iranian women voice their thirst for equality."

Defence Minister Ehud Barak made a quick visit to Cairo to discuss the Iranian situation with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

In the regional divide between pro-Iranian radicals and pro-western moderates, Israel and Egypt are on the same side, together with other key countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan. A major shake-up in Iran could reshape the regional architecture and perhaps pave the way for far-reaching rapprochement between Israel and its neighbours.

U.S. talks with Tehran still possible

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JERUSALEM — Despite questions about the legitimacy of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election and his belligerent anti-American rhetoric, the White House remains open to discussions with Iran over its nuclear ambitions.

"It's in the United States' national interest to make sure that we have employed all elements at our disposal, including diplomacy, to prevent Iran from achieving that nuclear capacity," Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said Sunday.

As protesters filled the streets of Iranian cities after the disputed vote, Ahmadinejad accused the West of stoking the unrest, singling out Britain and the United States for allegations of meddling. Iran expelled two British diplomats last week and Britain responded in kind. Iran detained nine British Embassy employees Saturday and released four.

Ahmadinejad has said he would make the U.S. regret its criticism of the post-election crackdown and said the mask has been removed from U.S. President Barack Obama's efforts to improve relations.

Rice said Sunday that Ahmadinejad was falling back on his government's usual strategy of blaming the West and the United States in particular for its internal problems.

"The legitimacy of the government, while questioned by the people of Iran, is not the critical issue for the U.S. goal of preventing Iran from developing a nuclear capability," Rice said.

Both Rice and David Axelrod, Obama's top adviser, said Ahmadinejad doesn't appear to have the final say over Iran's foreign policy. Axelrod dismissed Ahmadinejad's harsh language and said being open to talks with Iran is not an effort to reward the country.

White House officials pointed to Obama's remarks last week, urging engagement. "My expectation would be ... that you're going to continue to see some multilateral discussions with Iran," Obama said Friday.

Officials in Washington said they want Iranian officials at the negotiating table – which, they say, was not destroyed during the post-election demonstrations in Iran.

"We are also mindful of the fact that the nuclear weapons in Iran and the nuclearization of that whole region is a threat to that country, all countries in the region, and the world," Axelrod said.

Meanwhile on Monday, Iran said five out of the nine detained local staff at the British Embassy in Tehran had been released, while the other four were being held for questioning, state television reported.

Iranian authorities say 17 protesters and eight members of the volunteer Basij militia have been killed in two weeks of unrest and that hundreds of people have been arrested.

Israel asks Russia not to sell missiles to Iran

By BARAK RAVID

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JERUSALEM — Relations between Israel and Russia have grown tense over a significant change in Moscow's attitude regarding the possible sale of S-300 air defence missiles to Iran, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calling his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, and asking him to prevent the arms deal from going through.

Ahead of a meeting between U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, next week, Israel has begun an international effort to pressure Russia not to complete the sale of the advanced air defence system.

The deal between Russia and Iran for the sale was signed more than a year ago, but external pressure, primarily from the United States and Israel, led Russia's political leadership to delay its implementation.

The Russian response to Israeli inquiries on the matter had been that they don't intend to complete the deal. The same message was reiterated during Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Israel last month.

A senior political source in Jerusalem said that in recent weeks there has been noticeable change in Russia's position on the matter of the arms sale.

The deterioration was first noticed during the visit of Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman to Moscow several weeks ago. Lieberman, who prides himself on his close ties with the Russian leadership, was surprised to hear the Russians presenting a position on the missile deal that was contrary to their earlier stance.

Medvedev told Lieberman that Russia has a signed contract with Iran and some payments had already been made.

"It's a lot of money," Medvedev told Lieberman.

"There is an economic crisis at this time, and we are having a very difficult time," the Russian president explained to the Israeli minister.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak met last month with the Russian chief of staff, Gen. Nicolai Makarov, at the Paris Airshow and asked that he also intervene to prevent the sale.

The S-300 is considered to be one of the most advanced air defence systems in the world. Its capabilities allow it to intercept aircraft flying 30,000 metres up from 150 kilometers away.

Foundation helps the disadvantaged in Tel Aviv

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The Tel Aviv Foundation works quietly but effectively.

Supporting projects and programs that don't receive funding through regular budgetary means, the 32-year-old foundation works co-operatively with the Israeli seaside city to improve the lives of its economically disadvantaged residents.

"Almost 40 per cent of Tel Aviv's inhabitants live in very deprived neighbourhoods," Abraham Ben-Shoshan, the foundation's director general, said in a recent interview in Toronto. "Our foundation helps them."

Financially backed by Jews in the Diaspora and Israel, as well as Tel Aviv's municipality, it works in four different but overlapping fields: education, welfare, art, culture and music, and quality of life (parks and playgrounds).

"For every dollar we raise, we receive $1 from the city of Tel Aviv," explained Ben-Shoshan, who has headed the foundation for the past seven years.

In the past three decades, the foundation has worked on 400 projects and programs, raised about $200 million (US) and received matching funds of $200 million from Tel Aviv, which is marking its centenary this year.

By his estimate, Canadian Jews provide 15 per cent of its funding, while American Jews give half. The rest comes from Israel, Europe, Latin America, Asia and Australia.

The current global recession has had adverse ramifications, said Ben-Shoshan, the former commander of Israel's navy.

"We raised $17 million in 2007, but only $8 million last year. A few of our donors were invested with Bernard Madoff, and that has had an impact."

Yet he's optimistic.

"Having been in the navy, I learned that weather is changeable" said Ben-Shoshan, who commanded the navy from 1985 to 1989 and believes he was its first Sephardi commander.

Abraham Ben-Shoshan

"You have to have courage to survive. That's what I learned."

He knows he can depend on the Diaspora.

"The Jewish People, whatever their situation, are always willing to support Israel, even if they don't agree with its policies."

The foundation, whose projects and programs benefit the poor, new immigrants and single-parent families, has established more than 40 kindergartens, a science centre for high school students and 12 libraries.

"Israel has few natural resources," said Ben-Shoshan, 69, who immigrated to Palestine from Turkey with his family in 1946. "So we promote our brain power."

The foundation – whose Canadian representative is Marra Messinger – has also built five Cafe Europas, which meet the social needs of the elderly population in general and of 30,000 Holocaust survivors in particular.

"For them, it's a psychological lifesaver," he said.

In addition, the foundation has built parks and playgrounds in every neighbourhood and channelled funds to the Jewish Arab Community Centre in Jaffa.

"If we didn't exist, the quality of life of people in deprived areas would be much worse," said Ben-Shoshan, who was director general of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs before accepting his present position.

"Our foundation is one of the most effective and efficient in terms of wise spending," he added, noting that its 10 per cent overhead is considerably lower than other social welfare and educational agencies in Israel.

Currently, the foundation requires funds to renovate two elementary school libraries and build kindergartens, daycare centres and after-school facilities with hot meals.

The foundation also wants to rehabilitate a late-19th-century synagogue and turn it back into a functioning shul, buy musical instruments for a music centre, help disabled students, expand the Cafe Europa concept, and feed the elderly poor.

"For me, this is a mission," said Ben-Shoshan. "I could have been a diplomat or an arms dealer, but I chose this."

Sharansky elected Jewish Agency head

JTA

JERUSALEM – Natan Sharansky was unanimously elected to head the Jewish Agency for Israel.

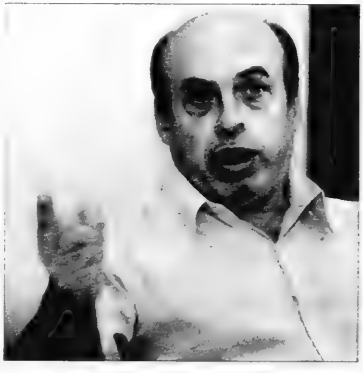
Sharansky was elected chairman last Thursday by the agency's board of governors at its meeting in Jerusalem. He was to be sworn in the same day.

His nomination for the four-year term by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had sparked controversy as the Jewish Agency works to assert its independence from political influence.

Sharansky, a former prisoner of Zion in the old Soviet Union, most recently served as chairman of the Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem.

He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment and hard labor in a Soviet prison in 1977 after he applied for an exit visa to Israel. After years of international pressure, including a massive rally in Washington, Sharansky was released in 1986 and went directly to Israel.

Sharansky founded the immigrant political party Yisrael B'Aliya in 1996 to accelerate the absorption of the massive numbers of Russian immigrants into Israeli society. Between 1996 and 2005, he served as a minister in successive governments.



Natan Sharansky

Israel Briefs

Leonard Cohen to perform

International music legend Leonard Cohen will perform in Ramallah two days after his upcoming performance in Ramat Gan, *Ha'aretz* has learned. The concert in Ramallah will be on Sept. 26, in the Palestinian city's Cultural Palace. About 1,000 fans are expected to attend. Cohen's decision came after pro-Palestinian activists attempted to dissuade the singer from performing in Israel. The activists had urged supporters to "apply pressure during his tour by local groups along his path," in an appeal circulated on various pro-Palestinian mailing lists. The sponsor of Cohen's concert in Israel, Discount Bank, confirmed the event; it is scheduled to take place at Ramat Gan Stadium on Sept. 24.

G8 demands settlement halt

The foreign ministers of the Group of Eight countries have called on Israel to halt all West Bank settlement construction. The statement from the G8 ministers, who meet in Italy on Friday, also urged the Israelis and Palestinians to "re-enter direct negotiations on all standing issues consistent with the 'road map' [peace plan]," according to media reports. The Quartet on Middle East peacemaking – which includes the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations – was also scheduled to meet Friday. That meeting was slated to include a session with a group of Arab League nations. The G8 includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, France and Italy.

IDF keeps lower profile

Israel's army will largely keep its forces out of four large Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The Israeli Defence Forces said it will strengthen the Palestinian Authority by remaining out of Kalkilya, Ramallah, Jericho and Bethlehem, according to reports. The move comes after the army recently removed several West Bank checkpoints in order to allow Palestinian residents free movement in the area. Soldiers would still enter the cities in order to thwart imminent attacks. Palestinian forces had been operating during the day and the Israeli army overnight.

Ex-ministers jailed

Two former Israeli cabinet members were sentenced to prison terms. Abraham Hirschson, an ex-finance minister, was sentenced by a Tel Aviv court to five years and five months in prison, plus a fine of more than $114,000, for embezzling about $500,000 from the National Labor Federation during his tenure as chairman of the organization. Hirschson was convicted June 8 of larceny, executive theft, fraud, breach of trust, illicitly obtaining funds, money laundering and falsifying corporate documents. Israel's Supreme Court sentenced former Shas lawmaker Shlomo Benizri to four years in prison and a fine of more than $63,000 following his conviction last year on bribery charges. The High Court sentence was more than double the prison term handed down last year by the Jerusalem District Court, which Benizri appealed. In their decision, the justices said they increased the sentence in order to fight corruption by Israeli officials.

Israeli drafted in first round

An Israeli basketball player was picked in the first round of the NBA Draft for the first time. Omri Casspi was selected by the Sacramento Kings as the 23rd pick in the draft. Israeli players had been selected in the second round of the draft three previous times. A first-round pick receives a guaranteed multi-year contract, while a second-round pick's contract is not required to be guaranteed – meaning if the player is cut from the team, he will not be paid. The 21-year-old Casspi is a six-foot-nine forward who helped lead his Maccabi Tel Aviv team to a league championship last year, averaging 12.6 points per game, according to media reports. He also was named to the all-league team and is a member of the Israeli national team. "I can't speak," Casspi said, tears pouring down his face, according to the Associated Press. "I've been waiting for this moment all my life. I'm as happy as can be. We made history. I feel like I am in a dream," he said.

– *JTA and Ha'aretz*

CJN Profile

Radio host Larry Green has got that swing

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

In a world torn by strife, change and instability, broadcaster Larry Green is a constant and assuring presence in the lives of Torontonians who have never even met him.

They know Green by virtue of his status as one of Toronto's most popular radio hosts.

Green, a seasoned pro, is the host of two shows on Jazz FM 91 – Afternoon Drive and Jazzology, which are respectively broadcast on weekdays from 2 to 6 p.m. and on Thursdays from 9 to 10 p.m.

Green's silky smooth voice, soothing down-home manner and effortless expertise are much appreciated.

"Larry contributes to the station on so many levels," said Ross Porter, the president and chief executive officer of Jazz FM. "As a veteran broadcaster, he is a valuable resource for all that works here. His knowledge of jazz is encyclopedic. Larry's relaxed, easy-to-talk-to manner makes him a natural host."

Not surprisingly, Green has enjoyed his eight-year gig at one of North America's première jazz stations.

"I love what I do," said Green, who was born and raised in Toronto's Kensington Market neighbourhood. "I'm happy."

Green's infectious personality shines through, whether he introducing a Sonny Rollins recording, waxing reverentially on Oscar Peterson or throwing in a Yiddish word or two.

Beyond this, listeners are always struck by Green's familiarity with the music he adores.

"Music has been a major part of my life," said Green, who played the saxophone in a band and took lessons with two of Canada's greatest musicians, Moe Kaufman and Morris Weinsweig.

Green, 69, the only child of Polish Jews, picked up an interest in music in general and in jazz in particular in Kensington Market.

"It was very multicultural, with different musical influences," he said.

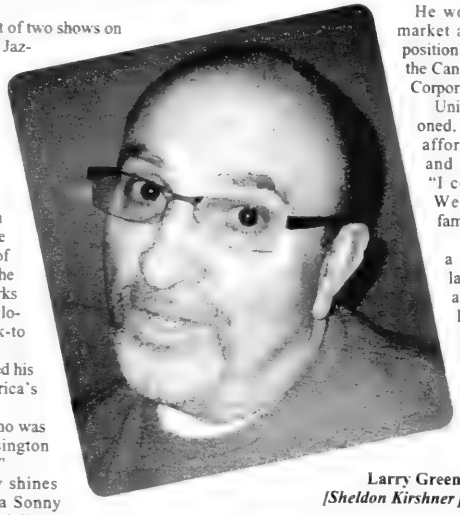
He did not grow up with a silver spoon in his mouth. Fred Greenstein, his father, barely made ends meet.

"He did various and sundry things," Green recalled in an interview at one of his favourite restaurants in the Beaches, where he currently lives. "He had a tough life."

Had fate not intervened, Green may have gone on to be a professional musician.

He was flying high as a saxophonist in a band that played at Ontario Jewish resorts when he was involved in a car accident in which he broke his jaw.

Sidelined as a musician, Green – a graduate of Talmud Torah and Oakwood Collegiate – took what jobs were available.



Larry Green
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

He worked in a supermarket and then landed a position in the mailroom of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

University never beckoned, since he could not afford the tuition fees and associated costs. "I couldn't afford it. We were not a rich family."

Green's days as a mailboy did not last long. Del Mott, a CBC announcer, liked Green and took him under his wing.

"He thought I was made for more than a mailroom," he said.

Mott arranged a job for Green at a Niagara Falls, Ont., radio station that billed itself as "the station at the edge of the nation."

He stayed for two years, while living in a room with only a bed and a hot plate. He hosted a rhythm and blues show, and learned how to run specialized equipment.

"I also learned to be careful about what I said on air."

After Niagara Falls, Green worked for stations in Oshawa, Guelph, Penticton, Vancouver and Winnipeg, honing his skills as a radio personality.

Lured by the bright lights of America, Green went to work for K-Jazz in San Francisco, still the pre-eminent jazz station in the United States.

Much to his regret, he had to leave far sooner than expected, sent packing back to Canada as an illegal worker.

For the next decade, Green earned his livelihood at CHUM FM in Toronto. He was a jack-of-all trades, doing the afternoon show and writing commercials and promotions.

"I learned how to write and that was a real skill to my benefit."

Unable to advance into the ranks of management, Green quit, landing up as the marketing manager of a local record company.

Always on the look out for better opportunities, Green jumped ship when Warner Brothers hired him as its national promotion manager.

In this capacity, he was in charge of, among other things, promoting releases from Atlantic Records.

"They utilized my experience in radio," said Green. "I was a perfect candidate for the job."

Staying at Warner Brothers for 16 years, his longest-lasting job, Green made a name for himself in the industry.

Subsequently, he was an operations manager and program director for Telemedia, a Quebec-based company, and a booking agent for radio and television talent.

He also hosted a music show on Citytv and a kids' program on CBC-TV, and taught at Humber College.

One day, out of the blue, he received a call from Jazz FM. Broadcaster Ted O'Reilly had just left and someone had to fill his shoes.

Green seemed like a good fit.

"I don't script anything in advance," he said. "I ad lib. And that's what jazz is. There's a lot to talk about. Sometimes, I have to pull myself back if I'm too wordy. Basically, I want to be an entertaining guy playing music."

On occasion, he blurts out Yiddish words such as *gatkes* and bris. "I never plan it. It just comes out."

Green neither selects the music nor the guests he interviews.

"Very rarely do radio hosts have control over these things," he explained. "Sure, I sometimes feel constrained, but I'm a professional and can work with the system. That's the honest answer. But I have the ability to make suggestions, and more often than not they accept them. It's not a closed door. I have room to negotiate."

Although he has been complimented for his mellifluous voice, Green is skeptical. "I don't think I have a great, deep, classic radio voice. Most people think I sound like Regis Philbin."

Green, who has been single since his divorce in the 1980s, wants to be known as a nice, regular guy to whom an audience can relate.

"That's the kind of a relationship I want to have with my listeners," he said.

Judging by his shows on Jazz FM, he has already accomplished this objective.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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Plenty of variety at Toronto's Fringe Festival

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

With 150 productions of every type, The Fringe, Toronto's largest theatre festival, has plenty of variety.

My Mother's Lesbian Jewish-Wiccan Wedding is a musical comedy based on a true story.

"It's basically the story about how my mother moved from Saskatchewan to Ottawa and in the process discovered her lesbianism and rediscovered her Judaism," the musical's co-writer David Hein says. "It's about how she came out to me, both as a lesbian and a Jew."

The musical features Stratford and Shaw festivals alumnus Lisa Horner as Claire Goldstein, as she comes out to her teenage son, ex-husband and homophobic Jewish mother.

"It's 95 per cent true," Hein says. "People have said it's a love letter to my moms."

His mother's wedding was held under a chupah and had the traditional breaking of the glass, as well as the not-so-traditional jumping over a pail with a broom.

"It's a lovely story about how they reconciled their beliefs," Hein said. "Things that I find typical, everyone thinks is bizarre."

He says when his mother came out, he found it easier to understand his mother as a lesbian than as a Jew.

"I was aware my family was Jewish, but we didn't celebrate any holidays or anything. It was stranger to me than her coming out as a lesbian. I had no idea what I was supposed to do."

The musical features 20 songs written by Hein, including *Don't Take Your Lesbian Moms to Hooters*.

Hein wrote the play with Irene Carl, his wife, whom he introduced to his mother at Hooters.

My Mother's Lesbian Jewish-Wiccan Wedding is performed at the Bread & Circus Theatre in Kensington Market, 299 Augusta Ave.

***

A relationship of different sorts between two women is the subject of the comedy *Build a Bridge and Get Over It*.

"It's about two girls who come from completely different backgrounds, who spend a weekend at a self-help retreat in north Ontario," says co-writer and actor Lori Pearlstein.

Kathy Mulligan and Jessica Goldman are two unlikely cabin mates who find themselves shut away in the woods surrounded by drum circles, primal scream therapy and parsnip burgers.

Lori Pearlstein co-wrote and stars in *Build A Bridge...*

"My character [Jessica] is a young Jewish professional, and the other character is a lesbian with no educational background. The play is about how we judge people on superficial issues."

Pearlstein says she knows many people who have faced severe hardships in their lives but got over it.

"I know someone who had a child die," she says. "Some let these hardships ruin their lives, but others don't. And if they can get over stuff like that, then I can get through the little things."

Pearlstein once worked at a retirement home where several residents were Holocaust survivors. One woman, she recalls, would tell a joke each morning.

My Mother's Lesbian Jewish-Wiccan Wedding

"If they can laugh after what they've been through, it puts everything in perspective," Pearlstein says.

She said that she wants this play to inspire people. "It is possible to wake up with a smile each day. I wanted to write a play that got people to question where they find the answers and if there even is one right answer."

Shannon McDonough, who co-wrote the play, plays Kathy Mulligan.

Build a Bridge and Get Over It is at the Tarragon Extra Space, 30 Bridgman Ave.

***

Slam poetry contest winner Ariel Platt writes and performs her one-woman show *Down to the Underwire*, a stream-of-consciousness monologue that touches upon every possible subject.

"Parts are 'laugh-out-loud' and parts are more dramatic," Platt says. "I cover a wide range of things, from heartbreak to eating bacon, to my family. Basically, life in general and what it's like to grow up in Toronto."

She delivers her monologue in spoken word poems. "Spoken word poetry is poetry for everyone. It's more conversational, like rap or hip hop. It's not 'snobby' poetry," she explains. "It's not like Shakespeare or anything."

She says she tries to infuse her sense of humour into her work so that people can laugh one minute and be struck by her sheer honesty the next.

"I write about my experiences and relationships that are quite personal, but often I think people can relate to them quite well. I say what many people are feeling but just don't say in casual conversation."

Her performance is a high-energy, staccato delivery; a series of three-minute poems. "It's all about performance. It's poetry from the stage not from the page."

Platt has a theatre background and has performed in slam poetry contests and at numerous events, including Cool Jew Cabaret.

Down to the Underwire has a "unique style for a Fringe show and something to which audiences can relate and find inspiring," she says.

Platt performs the show at the Helen Gardiner Phelan Playhouse, 79A St. George St., south of Harbord St.

***

More like something out of Cirque de Soleil, *Head First*, produced, created and performed by Femmes du Feu, is a bare knuckle, death-defying, aerial dance with a hefty dose of indie rock.

Performed by an all-female cast, *Head First* has two aerial dance pieces choreographed by Holly Treddenick and Sabrina Pringle, which combine expression, physicality and dance.

At the Theatre Passe Muraille Main Space, 16 Ryerson Ave.

***

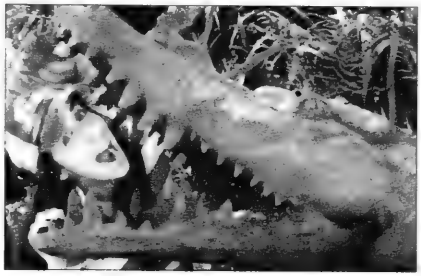
Finally, *Bags: Obsession of a Hoardaholic*, written and performed by Lee Michael Buckman, explores obsessive personalities.

"When I was writing this show, I thought I was outing my freak, but the more I spoke to people about it and heard their own experiences with obsessive nature, the more I realized how human and universal it was," Buckman says.

"The extra pens you stash in your desk. The packets of Sweet'N Low from the coffee shop. That was my mother's favourite. We found hundreds of them stashed in her stuff after she died. Or even hoarding your heart. I began this project to out myself as a hoarder and discovered we are all indeed hoarding something."

Bags: Obsessions of a Hoardaholic will be performed at the historic Glen Morris Theatre, at 4 Glen Morris St. (3 streets south of Bloor St.W., just east of Spadina Ave.).

The Fringe runs from July 1 to 12 at various venues around the city. Admission is $10. For dates, times and information on these and other performances, visit www.fringetoronto.com. Call the Fringe Hotline at 416-966-1062 or 1-866-515-7799. You can also buy tickets at the Fringe Club at 292 Brunswick Ave.



Ariel Platt brings her one-woman show to The Fringe

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ALLAN KING WAS GEMINI-AWARD WINNER

Vancouver-born filmmaker **Allan King**, who left his mark with such notable documentary films as Warrendale and *A Married Couple*, died in Toronto in mid-June at age 79.

King began working at the CBC in the 1950s and also worked for the BBC. Released in 1967, the CBC-commissioned film *Warrendale* offered a dramatic look inside a home for emotionally disturbed children. Because of its swearing and gritty realism, CBC refused to air the film, which played in movie theatres and became a requisite part of modern film study courses.

***Love and Human Extinction* is a tragicomedy by Shaista Justin.**

A Married Couple (1970), King's deeply intimate study of the emotional highs and lows of a marriage in turmoil, also set a new standard for cinéma vérité. The director's feature films included *Who Has Seen the Wind* (1976) and his television work included many episodes of *Road to Avonlea*. Among other honours, he won a Gemini Award and was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada.

TVOntario is airing a retrospective of King's work with seven groundbreaking documentaries, July 5 to 10.

* * *

Fringe Festival: Here are details of a few of the more than 150 Fringe Theatre Festival events around Toronto over the next 10 days or so. Eccentricity seems to be a common characteristic, but some of the entries may also be memorable and outstanding. For more details, call the Fringe hotline, 416-966-1062, or check out the website at www.fringetoronto.com.

• *My Mother's Lesbian Jewish-Wiccan Wedding*, a musical comedy by **David Hein** and **Irene Carl**, features hilarious songs, a live band, and a cast of 10. The story follows **Claire Goldstein** as she takes a female lover, discovers her lesbian sexuality, rediscovers her Jewish faith, and comes out to her son, ex-husband and mother. $10. Bread & Circus Theatre, 299 Augusta Ave. July 1 to 12.

• *Love and Human Extinction*, a tragicomedy by **Shaista Justin**, delivers a post-apocalyptic story about a businessman and construction worker who compete for the last woman alive. Justin's book, *Winter the Unwelcome Visitor*, was endorsed by Nobel prize-winner **J.M. Coetzee**. The thought-provoking, three-person play is at the Royal St. George Theatre, 120 Howland, on July 2, and runs through July 11. $10. www.fringetoronto.com

• *Bags: Obsessions of a Hoardaholic* is a one-man show written and performed by **Lee Michael Buckman**. $10. Glen Morris Theatre, intermittently from July 1 to 11.

• A bathroom on the third floor of the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre is the set of *Puck Bunny*, a play about hockey. Tickets are $10 to this Sheep in Fog production from Montreal. At Miles Nadal JCC most days to July 12.

• After appearances in Ottawa and Montreal, Australian performer-director **Jonno Katz** has brought his fifth solo show, *The Accident*, to the Toronto Fringe. $10. George Ignatieff Theatre, 15 Devonshire Place, intermittently from July 4 to 12. www.epicworlds.com

Maya Rabinovitch writes and directs *I Will Not Hatch*, a comedy about a woman taking an uneventful plane ride that's doomed to end in perfectly mindless tragedy. Suzie and the nine other passengers on this flight have roughly 30,000 feet left to live as she attempts to save the world from the danger she knows is lurking.

It stars **Erin Fleck** and **Andrew Cheng**. $10.

* * *

Young Rabbi Becomes Messiah: At first glance,

***Bags: Obsessions of a Hoardaholic* is a one-man show about obsessive compulsiveness by Lee Michael Buckman.**

How Jesus Became Christian, **Barrie Wilson**'s recently published exploration of the Jewish roots of Christianity, is a remarkable book simply by virtue of its existence. Imagine a similar work that offers a similarly provocative view of Mohammed – no doubt it would be greeted by a stream of *fatwas* and threats from imams, perhaps even fatal riots in the streets of the Muslim world.

How Jesus Became Christian is a deeply scholarly and thought-provoking take on a thoroughly Jewish historical figure whose disciples transformed his legend almost beyond recognition. Accessible and well-written, the book garnered a well-deserved Canadian Jewish Book Award last month. Published by Vintage Canada, it will interest anyone concerned with the historical Jesus and his Jewish roots.

Wilson is a Torontonian who converted to Judaism some years ago and has been involved with the downtown Kiever congregation for many years.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Israeli choreographers **Yaron Carmel**, **Gadi Bitton** and **Yaron Ben Simchon** put your Israeli folk-dancing talents to work over a three-day intensive workshop, with a Friday night Shabbat dinner and more. Miles Nadal JCC, July 3, 4, 5. www. israelifolkdancingtoronto.com or phone Sofie, 416-221-6280.

• **The Sisters of Sheynville** perform at the Mariposa Festival in the Orillia district on Sunday, July 5. www.mariposafolk.com

• Ashkenaz Foundation presents Ashkenaz at the Drake, featuring **Sagapool**, the world-music fusion band from Montreal. $15 at the door. Drake Hotel Underground, 1150 Queen St. W. Wednesday, July 8, 8 p.m. 416-979-9901, www.ashkenazfestival.com

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'Public statements, not beliefs,' spurred Koffler Centre decision

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Lori Starr, executive director of Toronto's Koffler Centre of the Arts, wants to make one thing clear.

The centre's decision in May to disassociate from Reena Katz' exhibit about the history of Kensington Market was not about the 33-year-old artist's personal convictions or beliefs, Starr told The CJN.

Rather, she said, it had to do with her "public statements that undermine Israel as a Jewish state."

According to Katz' Facebook page – which Starr saw only after the centre had made plans to co-sponsor her exhibit with the Toronto art festival Luminato – she is a member of the social networking website's groups Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, Oppose the Motion to Condemn Israeli Apartheid Week, and "No Place for Israeli Products Here" Campaign.

The centre, which had provided $20,000 to the exhibit, did not pull its funding. Baycrest, whose seniors were integral to the exhibit's interactive component, withdrew its support just before the scheduled opening date of May 20. It was to have run in Kensington Market until July 26.

Fallout from the Koffler's decision included the resignation of one of its 21 board members.

As well, four of 26 artists who were scheduled to be part of the Wrecking Ball – a fundraiser and celebration of the centre held June 18 – withdrew from the event.

However, Starr noted, "a number of" other artists contacted the Koffler Centre after the Katz incident and donated works to the silent auction held as part of the event.

On Katz' website, eachhand.org, the artist, along with independent curator Kim Simon, wrote in a May 15 letter that their request to meet with the Koffler board of directors had been rejected.

Communication between the Koffler Centre and Katz is now being done through lawyers, Starr confirmed.

She declined to elaborate, other than to say they are discussing the fulfilment of contractual obligations, and there is no current lawsuit.

The Koffler receives public funding from Canada Council, the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

Claire Hopkinson, executive director of the city-funded Toronto Arts Council (TAC), told The CJN that the Koffler Centre has been "a valued client since 1999." The centre receives $50,000 annually from the TAC – representing just under half of Koffler's government funding – for operating costs, but not for projects, through the council's visual media arts program. (Koffler's total annual operating budget is $1.5 million, which mostly comes from donors, patrons and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.)

Among the criteria for receiving the TAC funding are responsible budgeting, quality of the curatorial work, accessibility issues, value to the community, how well the organization is run, and conformity to policies of the City of Toronto, including human rights and non-discrimination, Hopkinson said.

"Currently we are in discussion with the Koffler as a partner, with regard to… issues that have arisen," she said. "I can't say more than that… Our first communication has to be with a client. We'll be meeting with them in the very near future."

"We're in dialogue with the [arts] councils," said Starr.

In a public letter to the community (posted online at www.kofflerarts.org), Starr said that Israel's "well-being and existence as a Jewish state is a core value" of the centre. "No organization could be expected to partner with an individual who actively works against one of its core values."

Starr, who is on the steering committee of the Council of American Jewish Museums, told The CJN that the centre "has no intention of preventing anyone from being critical of Israel's policies… However, our centre, like our community, is committed to Israel's existence as a Jewish state."

She said the centre, which is an agency of UJA Federation, has a history of "developing and presenting artistic works that reflect a diversity of ideas and expressions and debate about Israel's policies."

The Koffler's mission, according to its website, is "to create a more civil and global society by fostering mutual understanding through the exploration of arts and culture."

The centre has learned "a valuable lesson about due diligence," Starr said. "I think that what we've learned is that while we'll still continue to make our decisions first and foremost based on the quality of work as we move forward, we need to perhaps take into account, redefine what it would mean for us as a Jewish cultural institution doing more due diligence."

"You have to engage in a more thorough research process that brings you beyond artistic matters."

The centre's disassociation from Katz's exhibit sparked "an enormous number of e-mails and phone calls," said Starr. "We've had hundreds supporting our actions… and we've also had – I wouldn't say hundreds – but we have had a smaller proportion of letters, e-mails and voice-mails from those who are rather confused about the actions we took" or are out-and-out negative.

"Some people have been confused that they thought we cancelled the exhibition or censored the artist… and there have been a number of voices who have expressed concern to us" over a cultural institution taking such a step.

Starr said she is "actively engaging" in discussion with people in the arts community who are "committed to civil dialogue. I'm reaching out to those who have expressed their concern.

In an e-mail to *The CJN*, Katz said that she's "deeply saddened and frustrated by the polarized situation Koffler has created in their unprofessional choices. These include: immediately going public with a press release slandering me; refusing my request to meet with their board of directors to clarify my political position; and violating the Toronto Arts Council's anti-discrimination policy, which they signed in receipt of programming funding."

She added that "Koffler's claim that my public position regarding anti-Zionism supports the extinction of the State of Israel is ridiculous and defamatory. I support democratic reform, not abolitionism. Our community desperately needs to end the silencing of dissent around Israel/Palestine, and open itself to respectful internal debate."

Book follows a would-be prophet and a delivery man

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

Adam Sol has a thing for prophets like Matisyahu has a thing for reggae. Two out of his three poetry books are titled with biblical prophets – *Jonah's Promise* (2000) and, recently, *Jeremiah, Ohio* (2008).

The Toronto poet's work is loaded with Jewish references, and it's too easy to credit the rabbis in his family as the main culprit.

"I connect deeply to Judaism," Sol says in an interview from his Toronto home. He says his prophet analogies in his poems are not the sole Judaic influence. Sol, 39, also "draws on the heritage of the great Jewish writers" such as Irving Layton, Philip Roth, A.M. Klein and others.

Adam Sol

His passion for the past has helped him gain momentum in the present. He recently was nominated for a Trillium Book Award for *Jeremiah, Ohio*, an award he won in 2003 for *Crowd of Sounds*. He didn't win the provincial $10,000 award, but he nabbed another auspicious honour – he will soon be performing his poetry on one of the most sought-after literary stages of the summer – the annual Scream Festival in High Park in Toronto.

"Not sure what to expect," he says of the outdoor venue, "but I'll push my limits further than I would in a quiet room."

His recent book of poetry may lend itself to a spacious stage ripe for dramatics. *Jeremiah, Ohio* is a novel-in-poems that follows two lost souls, one a would-be prophet and the other a bright but wandering cupcake delivery man. The book works as a quirky buddy movie when Jeremiah and Buddy ride from Ohio to New York.

Sol made sure to pepper his book with many references to the biblical Jeremiah, so spotting the parallels almost becomes a game in itself. The writer breaks traditional form by including various narrators in the book, especially unusual in a poetry volume.

As is the case with most poets, Sol doesn't make a career out of stanzas and similes. He teaches English at the Laurentian University at Georgian College Program, a job that suits him perfectly. "The classroom works for me. I am forced to read the best literature ever written," he says.

Sol is married with three boys, and his family circle offers him a good dose of Judaica to feed his poetic inspiration. His wife is Rabbi Yael Splansky, the associate rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple. His sister, Felicia Sol, followed the same path, and is a rabbi at Congregation B'nei Jeshurun in Manhattan.

Along with Judaism, music influences Sol as a writer. Maybe it's his time spent at synagogue. Or hearing the rhythm behind the stories of Samson, Esther or Jonah. "I love seeing how language marries music to meaning," he says. "Rather than plot or character or other devices, it's music that attracted me to writing."

Readers and critics are now flocking to Sol's poems to hear that music he infuses in his own words. It might not be a tune to whistle to, but it's a lasting riff that sings in the cerebrals long after the final period.

Sol is reading as part of The Scream in High Park, on July 13, 7 p.m. Pay what you can, $10 suggested. High Park mainstage. www.thescream.ca

Novel set in Terezin inspired by personal memories

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

Auschwitz is the iconic site of much literature dealing with the Holocaust, but Terezin, or as the Germans dubbed it, Theresienstadt, may be the site that has inspired the greatest variety of postwar artistic effort.

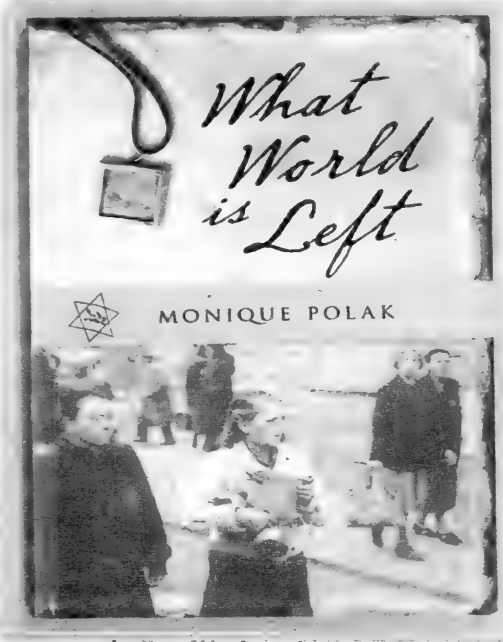
This may follow from the artistic wealth of the place itself during wartime, when not only clandestine but public art flourished, partly as a propaganda tool aimed at an international audience.

Norman Ravvin

The camp received a remarkable number of Czech, German and Austrian composers, actors, visual and cinema artists, who not only practiced their art but also held classes for children and created musical venues for public performance. Among them was Karel Ancerl, a leading Czech conductor. The music of Viktor Ullmann and Hans Krása – especially the latter's children's opera, *Brundibár* – has gained substantial popularity in recent decades. This follows the early and influential books dedicated to art by children at Terezin, most famously I Never Saw Another Butterfly. Published by the State Jewish Museum in Prague in 1959, its appearance in an English edition in 1978 coincided with a substantial increase in Holocaust scholarship and art worldwide.

Terezin's effectiveness as a source of Holocaust education and creativity arises from its singularities: the fact that it was not a death camp; the role of children in its legacy; and the particular form of German madness undertaken there, including the propaganda film *The Fuhrer Gives a City to the Jews*.

Monique Polak's *What World Is Left* (Orca) takes Terezin's history in a personal direction, deriving key aspects of its narrative from her mother's two-year internment there with her family. Among them was her mother's father, Jo Spier, a well-known Dutch newspaper artist before the war. Spier's fictional counterpart in the novel is a Dutch artist named Joseph Van Raalte, and it is through the eyes of his 14-year-old daughter, Anneke, that we come to know Terezin. Like other creative personalities incarcerated by the Germans, Van Raalte plays a part in the propaganda projects undertaken by the camp leadership. As the camp is dressed, almost like a film set, for a visit by Danish Red Cross officials, Anneke wonders if her "father is helping the Nazis carry out their evil plan." She considers, too, how she is "benefiting from my father's situation. It's



because of him that we have our own apartment. It's because of him that we haven't been shipped off on a transport. It's because of him that Commandant Rahm sent Opa to us."

As in much Holocaust fiction – even the most gruelling Auschwitz novels and stories of Tadeusz Borowski and Eli Wiesel – the perpetrators are not the narrative's main focus. In *What World Is Left* Germans make short and brutal appearances and then disappear from sight for long passages. In this, Polak's novel resembles Holocaust memoirs, which focus on the way that people survived, on the experience of victimhood and its postwar legacy.

In her author's note, Polak informs us that her mother did not share the story of her two years in Terezin until more than 60 years after the liberation of the camp. Further family recollections were available in an illustrated book by Polak's grandfather, published in Dutch in 1978.

What World Is Left has been nominated for a major American Library Association award. If it wins, the novel may be destined to become a part of the influential canon of Holocaust fiction inspired by personal memories.

Norman Ravvin's essays on Holocaust literature are collected in A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory. *He is the chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.*

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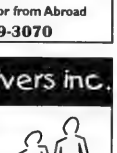

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Sports

Libman on the mound

Thornhill pitcher heads to Maccabiah Games

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Robbie Libman first got into baseball when he was just three years old.

This summer, the 17-year-old Thornhill native has a chance to put those years of training to the test at the 2009 Maccabiah Games.

Libman, a lefthanded pitcher with the Thornhill Reds, will be representing Maccabi Canada at the games this year in Israel.

This will be Libman's first time in Israel, and he's excited about it.

His team will be playing for the first few days and will spend the rest of the time touring the country. He sees the experience as a good way to reconnect with his Jewish roots beyond Toronto.

"I feel connected to other Jewish people around here, but I don't know about Israel yet, because I've never been there," he said. "I think it will be a learning experience."

Libman, who cites Toronto Blue Jays ace Roy Halladay and former Pittsburgh Penguin great Mario Lemieux as his sports heroes, already has some experience competing against other Jewish athletes. In 2007, he was on the Toronto baseball team that travelled to Orange County, Calif., for the JCC Maccabi (youth) Games.

It was "a lot of fun," he said.

The recent Vaughan Secondary School graduate, who plans to study engineering at Queen's University this fall, is familiar with a few people on his team – including the coach – both from school and from baseball practice, but the group will be meeting as a team for the first time just before they leave for the games.

He also knows some of the players on the Israeli team from a tournament last summer.

"I actually played most of the Israeli team last year in Pittsburgh. They were a good bunch of guys," he said.

It costs $7,500 to send an athlete to the Maccabiah Games and some competitors have had to do some fundraising to cover the cost. That can be an ordeal.

Fortunately, Libman was able to get some assistance from his parents.

"We did some fundraising a few weeks ago from the bank of mom and dad," he joked. "They're pretty helpful about it."

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Sports & Leisure

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Canadian team goes for hockey gold in Israel

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Until this year, Danny Schwartz didn't know hockey was played in Israel.

He'd never heard of the Canada Centre in Metulla, or that Israel had a national team that in 2005 won Division II Group B gold at an International Ice Hockey Federation championship.

And he certainly didn't know that Canada had won hockey gold in Metulla at the 1997 Maccabiah Games, or that the late NHL coach Roger Neilson had operated a hockey summer camp there, or that former Montreal Canadiens' bench boss Jean Perron coached Israel's national hockey teams.

He didn't know any of that. Nevertheless, Schwartz will be one of 22 Jewish Canadians – mainly from Quebec and Ontario – making up Team Canada's roster when the team faces off July 5 against Israel at the Israel Ice Hockey Federation's World Jewish Hockey Championships in Metulla.

Canada is sending one senior team (players 18 and older) and two junior squads (under 18) to the tournament, which winds up on July 15.

On June 28, the nine Montreal players head to Toronto for a four-day mini camp. They took off July 1 for Israel, where they'll get four more days to practice and acclimatize themselves before the first game.

Other competing countries will be the favoured United States – which won the first tournament in 2007 – as well as Israel, France and Russia.

In 2007, Canada bowed out in a semifinal match against the Americans.

"I've been training real hard at the gym and getting on the ice two, three times a week," said the affable 24-year-old, who works in his family's metal recycling business.

Schwartz is a "two-way centre" – meaning he can handle both offensive and defensive duties – and prides himself on being a face-off specialist.

He played in the Quebec junior AAA league for the St. Jerome Panthers and Vaudreuil Mustangs, winning the league's 2004 championship. Also on the Vaudreuil team that year was Kirkland native Jordan Topor, who will also be on the plane to Israel.

Other Montrealers who will be lacing up include goalie Josh Tordjman, who plays for the Phoenix Coyotes in the NHL; defenceman Casey Fazekas, who attends Babson College in Massachusetts; defenceman Oriel McHugh, who has played pro for Oklahoma City; defenceman Phil Levine, who also played Quebec junior AAA, and forwards Eric Satim and Sy Nutkevitch, both NCAA players.

Players hailing from Ontario include Ontario Junior Hockey League defenceman Brendan Schwartz; university forwards Aaron Stein, Mitch Goldenberg and Adam Weinberg; Dustin Laren of the Ontario Junior Hockey League; and Mikki Levy, who's played in the Nova Scotia Junior Hockey League.

The team's coach is Sherry Bassin, general manager and owner of the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League. Bassin has coached Canada to world junior gold medals. Assisting him will be Steve Simmons, a well-known Toronto sportswriter.

"I love the depth on our team," Simmons said. "We have a lot of players who can play various roles and I can't wait to see us on the ice together for the very first time when we get to practice.

"I know the players by name and by reputation, but kids like Kevin Willer, who plays at Elmira College, or Mike Nemirovsky, who is no kid, from the German Elite League, or former [University of Toronto] player Adam Weinberg have all kinds of skill. And I'm interested to see how the young guys like Laren and Brendan Schwartz, just 19-year-olds, will measure up.

"The fact we have an NHL-calibre goalie in Josh Tordjman gives us a great sense of confidence," Simmons added.

"I think we're a good mix," Schwartz said. "From my experience, it's not always the best talent that wins, it's more the team, and I think we're bringing a real team. I think as a team we'll do very, very well. We'll play for each other. When we get to the rink, it's going to be business."

One reason he thinks the team will gel is that almost all the Quebec players hail from the West Island of Montreal and have known and played hockey together since boyhood. Locally, they have "dominated the Jewish hockey community," he said.

Two under-18 teams – Team Canada White and Team Canada Blue – are being coached by former NHLer Steve Thomas and four-time Stanley Cup winner Jeff Beukeboom.

Although Schwartz was not aware before this year of hockey in Israel, he and "almost all" of the Montreal players have been to the Jewish state before, mostly as part of Birthright Israel trips, which Schwartz went on at age 18.

"You feel at home once you're in Israel, so to play our national sport there is going to be extraordinary," he said.

"Needless to say, we're very excited to get going. This should be an experience of a lifetime for everybody," added Simmons.

To follow the tournament online, go to www.israelicehockey.com and click on the World Jewish Hockey Championship tab at the top of the page.

With files from Paul Lungen.

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TIGERS ROAR: The boys baseball team from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto recently concluded a flawless season by winning the Toronto District College Athletic Association (TDCAA) Tier II championship. Following a perfect 6-0 season, during which the Tigers gave up no runs in their first four games, they defeated Chaminade College School in the semifinal 9-6 and followed it up with a 4-1 championship game win over Dante Alighieri Academy. TanebaumCHAT's ace pitcher, David Freiman, pitched more than 20 innings without giving up any runs, earned or unearned. Pictured, back row, from left, are coaches Noah Leszcz and Jake Gallinger, with players Ben Welkovics, Matthew Sitzer, Danny Krikler, Daniel Goldlist and Jonathan Rosenbluth; middle row, from left, David Warshafsky, Ryan Fisch, Freiman and Russell Budd, with coaches Steve Baker and Neil Epstein, and front row, from left, Noah Schwartz, Arie Cote, Zane Brickman and Eric Masters.

A person's essence

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

I have heard this many times from patients or family members: I can't bear the thought of people seeing me or him/her like this.

Sometimes the sentiment becomes a barrier to participation in programs or activities that might be beneficial to the person and provide relief for family members.

I have seen individuals deprived of the potential benefit of attending day programs for seniors with cognitive impairment because the family was concerned that someone might recognize their loved one and realize that he or she had become afflicted with dementia. The family might express a sense of "shame" at the thought that their beloved, previously highly respected member of the community might be seen in a state of dependence, unable to express his or her wondrous lifetime of accomplishments.

Over the years, I have been involved in the care of numerous prominent individuals who have been afflicted with dementia or other conditions that have compromised their cognitive function and/or behaviour. Sometimes members of the staff involved in care know of the person's prominence or may have some notion of his or her previous accomplishments.

In contemporary long-term care facilities, there is often an attempt to provide some place for memorabilia related to the resident's life and interests. It can be a useful way of engaging the person in discussions about his or her life, as distant memories are often preserved even in the face of the inability to retain or remember new information.

I recall one prominent physician I had known quite well during my academic career, whom I sat with during a centre-wide power failure. Staff members were asked to keep clients and residents company, so that they wouldn't feel isolated. There was some recognition of who I was, and during the meanderings of our conversation, I was asked, "And how are you doing?" I answered, "Fine," and went on to talk about activities that he had been involved with in the past, which I believed he might be able to relate to.

He listened carefully and actually made some comments that were relevant, even if somewhat tangential. The fact that he asked the same question of me 10 minutes later, to which I responded in a like manner, did not matter. The important thing for me and for him was that we had a conversation that included important aspects of his life to which he could relate, even if only for some minutes.

Tragically, illnesses such as the dementia of the Alzheimer's disease and other types do not choose those they afflict based on status in society or accomplishments. Even with all the steps that we are told to undertake to decrease the risks of these diseases, about one-third of individuals over the age of 85 will be afflicted. How our families cope with the implications of the illness and what are often years of gradual decline and dependency is the real challenge.

One thing, however, I can stress is that pride and vanity should not interfere with steps that might provide a beneficial interaction or activity for the loved one. I recall seeing a picture of the late U.S. president Ronald Reagan, who had Alzheimer's, raking leaves, a task he could apparently do based on long-remembered rote tasks that gave him some satisfaction.

The key message for families is to move beyond the need for pride and accept the reality for what it is, and make every moment and any opportunity for meaningful interactions, however limited, available for your loved one and for those devoted to and caring for him.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

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About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

With the barbecue season upon us, we are tempted to barbecue as often as possible. Here are some tips to allow you to grill all summer long in a healthy way.

Choose lean meats such as skinless chicken; turkey; fish; lean, smaller cuts of beef; burgers made from ground chicken; turkey or veal. Throw lots of veggies on the grill, too, as grilled vegetables are tasty. Try peppers, onions, mushrooms, zucchini, asparagus, corn or any other vegetable. This is a great way to get a big serving of veggies. Make extra to use the next day in a salad, omelette, sandwich, wrap or pita pocket.

For healthiest grilling, avoid charring or burning food, as this can leave potential carcinogens. however, food must still be thoroughly cooked. Use an instant-read thermometer to be sure of internal temperatures. Even precooked meats such as hot dogs should be thoroughly cooked. Use lower or indirect heat to avoid burning meat but make sure it's done.

Marinating is a healthy way to prepare meats for a barbecue, as it adds flavour and creates a bit of a barrier to prevent some of the hazardous carcinogens from forming.

There are also barbecue tools that can make grilling small or delicate foods easier. Look for vegetable baskets and racks for fish, kebobs and satays.

Wash all utensils, plates, counters and hands that have come in contact with raw meat. Do not reuse marinades that have had raw meat in them, and defrost and marinate all foods in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. Once cooked, food should be consumed within about one to two hours, depending on the temperature outside. Wrap leftovers and put them in the fridge or discard them. Happy grilling!

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Rediscovering baseball, and shul

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

It had been 20 years since I stood at the plate and held a bat high above my head, my toes digging into the sand and my eye focused on the pitcher.

On May 21, that changed.

For a couple of decades now, an Orthodox shul baseball league has taken to the parks in Downsview and Thornhill to battle for the coveted honour of being the best. This year, during my 12-month period of cardio rehabilitation, I asked my nephew, Ezra Rosenzweig – a natural athlete who walks with the athletic majesty of basketball great Kobe Bryant – if he could secure me a position on the Clanton Park Synagogue shul team.

I don't attend Clanton Park, but the rules have changed over time to allow for free agent daveners. Ezra approached the manager of the team, Immanuel "Gee" Greenberg, a very fine person, with my request.

I waited by the phone like a rookie waiting for the results of the draft. It rang. Ezra was on the line.

"We have a spot for you," he said. "It will cost you $150 for the season, but you'll get a jersey."

A jersey! Man, this is better than I could have possibly imagined! Questions, questions, questions. Will I wash it in hot water or cold? Should I use my $20, second-hand, first basemen's glove, or the fine-leather Wilson fielder's glove that I received in a trade for a 1984 Ford?

I was nervous. All the guys on the team are half my age, with strength comparable to that of the biblical King David. What would I muster at the plate and in the field? What could I draw upon when facing down a formidable and God-fearing pitcher from Shomrai Shabbos synagogue?

Game day arrived, and sure enough, that old friend, the pre-game jitters, came to visit.

I walked onto the Clanton Park baseball diamond, just off Palm Drive, and tossed the ball around with my teammates – the 2008 shul champions. I felt an immediate camaraderie with them and was taken by their respect for this "old guy" with a paunch and stale throwing arm who was giving baseball a second shot.

Soon, it was my turn at bat. I was sweating. I was sixth in the order. The next game I would be No. 8.

The first pitch was a courteous one. I swung. Damn! I pulled my hamstring and missed the ball entirely.

The pitcher touched his tzitzit. He was serious. He pitched again. I was in pain (and would be for the entire game).

"Strike 2!" I could hear my heart beating as loud as the sound of the shofar.

The next pitch would be mine. Like Danny in Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, my first at-bat was a religious experience.

The pitch made its way into the strike zone, an easy lob tailored just for me. I could hear the *thworp* the ball would make once I connected. "Strike 3!" the umpire yelled. I stood there, Charlie Brownish, then smiled and walked back to the bench.

The boys patted me on the back and reverentially said, "Way to go. Next time."

I went 0 for 5 that night. But things got better and in game 2. I walked twice, hit two singles, got a couple of RBIs, and pulled my hamstring again.

I was given the game ball.

Whenever I play, I smile for every moment of every inning, because after 20 years on the sidelines, I'm part of the finest frum shul league team in North America, with the greatest bunch of guys.

I am a ball player, and after years of searching, I have finally discovered a shul experience that works for me. Play ball!

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This Week

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ATTENTION READERS:
There will be no issue of *The CJN* July 23.

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Peres offers to meet Saudi king

By HILA RAZ
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Israeli President Shimon Peres invited Saudi King Abdullah last Wednesday to come to Jerusalem or to meet with him in Riyadh to initiate discussions that could open the door to the implementation of a comprehensive peace between Israel and all the Arab states.

Peres was speaking at an interfaith conference in Kazakhstan, addressing some 150 religious leaders from around the world, including a large delegation of imams, and called on King Abdullah to meet with him in Jerusalem, in Riyadh, or in any other place, "in order to fulfil his prayer for peace between all people, without differences of religion."

He praised a 2002 Arab peace initiative that offers Israel full normalization in return for a withdrawal from territory conquered in the 1967 Six Day War, a Palestinian state and an equitable solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

Peres quoted Jordanian King Abdullah II as calling the plan "a readiness for peace between the State of Israel and 57 Arab and Muslim states."

Peres also spoke about Islamist terrorism.

"Thousands, if not millions of Muslims, have lost their lives at the hands of extremists that call the name of Allah," Peres said. "In the twin towers of New York, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and atheists, all lost their lives as one."

Iranian delegates stormed out of the opening session of the interfaith conference as Peres began to deliver his address to the forum.

The delegates returned to the conference hall after Peres finished speaking.

About 80 delegations participated in the summit, representing different faiths and sects from 35 countries.

Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Yona Metzger, also attended the conference, during which he urged Hamas to let a cleric visit abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

"I'm holding in my hands a picture of my brother, a son of my country who was kidnapped. We don't know anything about him. His father and mother aren't receiving any information on him," Rabbi Metzger said.

He urged the religious leaders present "to call for a representative of the abductee's faith to be able to visit him and give him sustenance."

At the annual inter-religious conference last week that was held this year in Kazakhstan, Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger displays a photo of captive Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit, urging his colleagues to help secure the release of the soldier who has spent more than three years as a prisoner of Hamas in Gaza. ***[Flash90 photo]***

What if U.S.-Iran talks fail?

By BARAK RAVID
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Israel is urging the United States and other countries to start preparing for the possibility that Washington's proposed dialogue with Iran will fail, by having a "Plan B" that includes "paralyzing sanctions" and other measures against Tehran. The United States has so far resisted this idea.

The Israeli messages – sent against the background of the recent unrest in Iran following the elections there – have been delivered to the White House, the State Department and senior officials in the U.S. intelligence community by senior officials in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Ministry. Similar messages have been sent to senior officials in Germany, Russia, France and Japan.

Israel's argument is that if the Americans are indeed committed to imposing "paralyzing sanctions" on Iran should the dialogue fail, as both U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have said in the past, the work of drafting these sanctions must begin now.

"Israel is adjusting its messages to the new circumstances created by the unrest in Iran," a senior government official said. "These things must be stated clearly now so that there is no confusion about our position."

Continued on page 27

Pinchas
Candlelighting: 8:42
Havdalah: 9:48
Greater Toronto Area

Will Shoah claims come to fruition? – see page 28

The News in Brief

CANADA

Bialik Gets Grant

TORONTO — Bialik Hebrew Day School in Toronto has received a grant from the New York-based Avi Chai Foundation that will let students in grade 7 and 8 use digital filmmaking techniques to show how modern Jewish issues have roots in biblical times. The $10,000 (US) grant is one of 20 given by Avi Chai out of 200 applications to its educational technology grant program, which it started in 2007 to help educators use innovative technological approaches. Founded in 1984 by stockbroker Zalman Bernstein, Avi Chai supports Jewish camps and schools.

WORLD

Prof Gets Tenure

NEW YORK — A Columbia University professor who reportedly asked an Israeli student how many Palestinians he had killed was given tenure. Columbia approved Joseph Massad's bid for tenure, his second attempt, last month. Massad was part of a controversy several years ago over scholarly treatment of Israel at Columbia. In addition to the comment about killing Palestinians, he was accused of mistreating and intimidating pro-Israel students. He denied many of the claims and said he was the target of a "witch hunt." A university probe substantiated some of the claims against him and found that in one instance, he exceeded "commonly accepted bounds" of behaviour.

Franken Wins Seat

MINNEAPOLIS — Former Saturday Night Live comedian Al Franken, a Jewish Democrat, has won the Minnesota U.S. Senate race after eight months of recounts and legal challenges. In a unanimous decision, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled June 30 that Franken's 312-vote victory would stand. Republican Norm Coleman, who also is Jewish, then ended his legal battle, officially conceding the race. With Coleman's defeat and the decision by Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter to join the Democratic caucus, the Senate now has no Jewish Republican members. The House of Representatives has one Jewish Republican, Minority Whip Eric Cantor of Virginia.

Court Ends Probe

MADRID — Spain's National Court last week ended its investigation of alleged Israeli war crimes. A judge on the Spanish National Court said in May he would investigate a 2002 Israeli bombing that killed a Hamas leader in Gaza, despite the fact prosecutors advised against it and Israel probed the murder. The decision to end the probe came after Spain's parliament gave preliminary approval to a law saying that cases must involve a Spanish citizen or a defendant on Spanish soil. Previously, the court, under the principal of universal jurisdiction, said it could try rights and war crimes cases if the country of origin doesn't. It has investigated such cases throughout the world.

Rowe Seeks Rights

LOS ANGELES — Michael Jackson's Jewish ex-wife, Debbie Rowe, has asked a court to restore her parental rights to two children she bore him, partly because of the pop icon's links to the Nation of Islam. The pair married in 1996, with both parties saying the sole purpose of the marriage was to give Jackson children. Jackson's mother has temporary custody of the late singer's children.

Fined For Klezmer

BERLIN — A Dresden politician was fined for playing loud klezmer music from his office at City Hall to disturb a neo-Nazi rally. Stephan Kuhn of the Green party was ordered July 1 to pay a $210 (US) fine, which will benefit a group that helps victims of right-wing violence. Neo-Nazis held a march on Feb.13, 2008, on the anniversary of the World War II firebombing of Dresden by the Allies. Prosecutors said Kuhn disrupted a speech, thus interfering with the right to free assembly.

Jewish Groups Won't Oppose Al Jazeera

TORONTO — Canadian Jewish groups have indicated that they won't oppose the carriage of Al Jazeera English on cable and satellite services and that they'll sit on a committee that will review the channel's on-air content.

The news comes after an aggressive campaign to bring Al Jazeera English to Canada, which saw the satellite news network take the unusual step of consulting both Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and B'nai Brith Canada in February to work through concerns about its programming.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber said he hasn't offered an outright endorsement of the service, but said an invitation to sit on a consulting committee helped ease concerns. "We do not oppose [the service], but remain vigilant and concerned," he told JTA.

Similarly, B'nai Brith said in a letter to the CRTC, Canada's broadcast regulator, that "in the spirit of co-operation," it won't oppose the bid, but will remain vigilant.

Tony Burman, a former CBC news executive who is now managing director of Al Jazeera English, based in Doha, Qatar, wants his consultative committee to meet every six months to ensure there are no major concerns.

Jewish groups sounded strong opposition in 2003 when the Arabic-language version of Al Jazeera applied for a broadcast licence in Canada, and fears were raised that the network would beam messages of hate against Jews and Israel into the country. In 2004, the CRTC approved the application, but attached conditions so stringent that cable providers were unable to comply.

Al Jazeera English could be available here this summer.

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Rabbi Kelman remembered as pioneer of inclusion

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Joseph Kelman – founding rabbi of Toronto's Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue and a pioneer in Jewish community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities – died on June 27 of cancer, following a three-week illness. He was 82.

At his funeral on June 30, the rabbi was remembered as much for his innate goodness, cheerful disposition and optimism as for his achievements at his synagogue and in the community.

Obituary

Among the latter were his involvement in prison and hospital chaplaincy, leadership of interfaith missions to Israel, and founding the Ezra and Kadima Schools, the Kadima Centre, the Camp Tikvah Program, the Reena Foundation, Chai Tikvah and the Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School.

An estimated 1,000 mourners – friends, relatives, congregants, Reena clients, Jewish and non-Jewish clergy – filled the sanctuary and its balcony at Beth Emeth to honour the rabbi and hear eulogies from his brother, Rabbi Abraham Kelman; daughter Tova Gutenberg; two sons, rabbis Jay and Maury Kelman; grandson Joshua Gutenberg; colleague Rabbi Erwin Schild of Adath Israel Congregation; and *CJN* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat, representing the larger Jewish community.

Beth Emeth's Rabbi Howard Morrison, who officiated, referred to Rabbi Kelman as his rabbi, colleague and friend. "And I speak on behalf of thousands."

The congregation's rabbi emeritus gave his heart and soul to his shul, colleagues and the entire community, Rabbi Morrison said.

In November 2008, Beth Emeth honoured Rabbi Kelman for 50 years of service with its Yakir Hakahal (Precious to the Community) award.

Nine months earlier, he was honoured by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto for almost five decades of work on behalf of people with special needs.

The rabbi's efforts began in 1960 after a congregant approached him about a bar mitzvah for his developmentally delayed child. The result was Kadimah, a Jewish school for students with developmental disabilities.

Rabbi Kelman later co-founded Ezra, a program for students with learning disabilities; She'arim, a school for children with learning disabilities; and Reena, an organization that integrates adults with developmental disabilities into the community.

As well, he chaired a North America-wide committee on special education under the auspices of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism for more than 30 years, and was instrumental in having developmentally disabled children accepted into Ramah camps.

Among the rabbi's other honours was an honorary doctorate from Tel Aviv University, where the Kelman School for Jewish Education is named for him.

Continued on page 24

Rabbi Joseph Kelman
1927-2009

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(Adapted from a eulogy for Rabbi Joseph Kelman, Tuesday, June 30, 2009)

Saying farewell

From the editor's desk...

The sorrow we felt at the shocking, bitter news of the passing on June 27 of Rabbi Joseph Kelman founding rabbi of Toronto's Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, was the difference between saying goodbye to a beloved friend and saying farewell. The finality of farewell is so very hard and difficult, and sometimes even terrifying to accept. And yet accept it we must, for that is the way of all living things in this large and beautiful world that God created for us.

More than most men we will ever meet again, Rabbi Joseph Kelman, of blessed memory, strove with all his considerable energy, goodness, courage and resolve to help us see and believe that the world was indeed large and beautiful for each and every one of us. Where it was not, it was his mission to make it so. Where the world was imperfect for people cast to the side, he strove to make it more perfect, if not entirely perfect, for them.

More than most men we will ever meet again, Rabbi Joseph Kelman embodied in his life the truth that our ancient sages taught: "Who is honoured among individuals? The one who honours God's creations."

As we know, as we saw and experienced countless times in his synagogue and, indeed, wherever he walked, Rabbi Joseph Kelman was always in a rush to honour others. Founding ground-breaking places of learning and belonging such as the Ezra and Kadima Schools, the Kadima Centre, the Camp Tikvah Program, the Reena Foundation, Chai Tikvah and She'arim Hebrew Day School was merely partial proof of that.

He understood instinctively what many of us only learn much later in life: that to honour others is to honour God. For Rabbi Kelman however, honouring others was no mere perfunctory act. It meant reaching toward the very reason for life itself. It meant that no human being was to be without dignity; no one was to be treated unjustly; no life was to be scorned or shunted off to a siding somewhere or hidden in a far-off building not to be seen, or educated, or embraced or caressed as a son or a daughter. He was a true pioneer who, against great odds and often too against established doctrine, blazed a trail into the unlit, darker passageways of our community institutions, opening their doors and their services to the individuals for whom they had always been closed.

More than most men we will ever meet again, Rabbi Joseph Kelman gave tangible meaning to one of the core teachings in the Torah: *"ve'ahavta l'rayacha camocha."* (Love your neighbour – treat your neighbour – as you would yourself.) He taught us, by his example, that to love someone means to *do* for someone, to act, to advocate for, to stand alongside with, to aid, to assist, that same someone. He taught us that loving – in the most profound sense of the word – means doing, means taking action. In a very concrete way, Rabbi Kelman explained for us through his principled, generous approach to life what the songwriter in the Broadway play *Les Misérables* meant when he wrote: "To *love* another person is to see the face of God."

Rabbi Joseph Kelman 1927 — 2009

More than most men we will ever meet again, Rabbi Kelman judged no Jew by the outward level of his ritual observance. He judged no man by any outward trappings of appearance. He judged human beings only as he wished himself to be judged: by God alone.

One morning, many years ago, a man in his mid-40s, old enough to know more than he did and old enough to know that he should have known more than he did – a recent *avel*, mourning for his late father – was asked to lead the Shacharit service in the chapel. He walked to the *shulchan* (table at the front) slowly, with plainly hesitant steps. It was obvious to all of us that he was nervous at the prospect, never having led the davening before. He was unfamiliar with the service, clumsy with Hebrew, and clearly self-conscious.

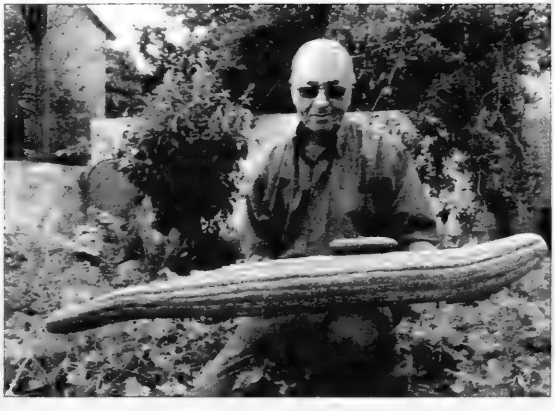
But he led the davening nevertheless, and, of course, he made many mistakes – mispronouncing, misplacing and misstepping throughout. After the service, he had no sooner unwrapped his tfillin and put away his tallit than Rabbi Kelman bounded over to him, put his right arm around the man's shoulders and said effusively, with his characteristic broad smile, "Kol hakavod! Yasher Koach! Good job!"

Like water to parched earth, his words and positive reinforcement raised the man's self-esteem and confidence. The rabbi's encouragement gave pulse to a newly beating Jewish heart.

It is no exaggeration to say that countless were the times and countless have been the individuals whom Rabbi Joseph Kelman helped in this manner. In one way or another, we have all felt his strong, supportive hand on our shoulder.

More than most men we will ever meet again, Rabbi Joseph Kelman was our teacher, and we revered him as we revere Heaven itself. And that is why, thankful as we are that he was in our lives – as our rabbi and our friend, encouraging us, inspiring us, helping us, teaching us – it is so difficult to say farewell.

We will not soon meet again, nor will our community soon feel again, the unique love and strength and goodness of this man. — *MBD*



YITZHAK & THE CUCUMBER STALK

Yitzhak Yizdanpana of Petach Tikvah, Israel, a 70-year-old retired bus driver, planted cucumber seeds in his backyard three months ago. One cucumber that germinated from those seeds has grown to 1.2 metres in length, and it is still growing at a rate of 2 centimetres a week! Yizdanpana says he did not use fertilizer or add any special growth mixtures to the soil. [Israel Sun photo]

Congress 'perplexed' at lack of hate charges

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Canadian Jewish Congress is asking Chris Bentley, the attorney general of Ontario, to review a decision not to prosecute a Toronto man for Internet postings that attack Jews.

"We'd like the attorney general to take a look at the file," said Len Rudner, director of Congress' Ontario region. "Our request for a review is based on demonstrably hateful content."

Early last week, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) announced that after investigating Salman Hossain and consulting with Crown lawyers, "it was determined that insufficient grounds existed to support willful promotion of hatred charges."

Len Rudner

Hossain first came to the attention of law enforcement officials almost two years ago after German police arrested three Islamic terrorist suspects. Hossain posted several messages that same day, the *National Post* reported.

"I hope the German brothers were gonna blow up U.S.-German bases in their country. We should do that here in Canada as well. Kill as many western soldiers as well so that they think twice before entering foreign countries on behalf of their Jew masters," he wrote.

Building on his views of Jews, he stated: "When do I get to shoot a few Jews down for attempting to blow up dozens of mosques in America right after 9-11… Why f—ing target the Americans when the Jews are better?"

Another posting that focuses on Jews stated: "Here's what I suggest we do… just throw out the Jews (by religion or blood) out of the instruments of mainstream media, finance/banking, government/politics, and the intelligence/secret services.

"That's how the Muslims have done it in the past, especially when they were in power and glorious. Leave behind the token Jew here and there just to appear non-discriminatory."

Mark Goldberg, chair of the community relations committee of Congress' Ontario region, said that the "statements alleged to have been made by Salman Hossain appear to reflect a deep hatred of Jews and speak to a mindset that embraces the most corrosive conspiracy theories."

Rudner said Congress is "perplexed" at the decision not to file criminal charges against Hossain. "The contents of his statements on the Internet meet the test" for hatred.

"He looks forward to the opportunity of shooting 'a few Jews' and hopes for the killing of 'western soldiers.' Such statements go beyond offensive and give every appearance of crossing the line into wilful promotion of hatred as defined by the Criminal Code," Rudner said.

Asked whether Congress would contemplate initiating a section 13 complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act, which makes it an offence to use the Internet to promote hate, Rudner said Congress would prefer to see Hossain prosecuted under the Criminal Code.

A police investigation has already been undertaken and documentation gathered. "I certainly don't see any downside to letting the matter proceed criminally," he said.

If the criminal track doesn't pan out, Congress' legal affairs committee would determine whether to lay a human rights complaint.

"We're considering all options at the moment," Rudner said.

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO gets new president

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

After the death of Canadian Hadassah WIZO (CHW) president Terry Shwarzfeld following a beating in Barbados in March, Marla Dan, Toronto president and first vice-president, stepped up to the plate.

"We were all shocked and concerned when we heard the news, but when it became apparent that Terry was not going to recover, we reviewed the governance structure, and I took over" as new president, said Dan.

Marla Dan

She had just entered the national scene as an officer, "but being Toronto president gave me a lot of skills. One of our thrusts is leadership, and I was given good, solid training."

As the new national president, she led the organization on its mission to Israel for Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron, and has travelled to Montreal and Vancouver for the local installation of officers.

"I represent Canada, and I am chief cheerleader. I give local officers support when they need it, and I make sure everything is running smoothly. We are all part of one organization, but we respect each city's individuality," she said.

A native of Edmonton, Dan, who is married and the mother of two teenagers, joined the organization 22 years ago as a newcomer to Toronto. "I wanted to meet other women, and I wanted to get involved in the Jewish community," she said. "I joined Tamid chapter when most members were single, and we've gone through our life cycles together."

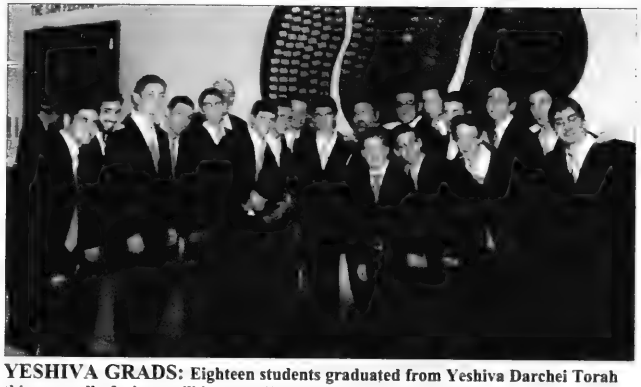
She has held almost every position in her chapter, as well as a position at World WIZO, and has travelled to Israel as a representative of Aviv Women, the organization's young leadership arm. "About the only job I didn't take on was chair of Hadassah Bazaar.

"CHW is about fundraising, but it is also about camaraderie. I've met women from all over the world," Dan said.

She acknowledges that women today have less time to volunteer than they did a generation ago, "but there are all kinds of ways to volunteer. If everyone gives a little time or a little money, then it all adds up. As a leader, my job is to say thank you for whatever you can give."

The organization has found ways to work around women's schedules, she said. "We have to respect their time, so we make our committees larger, and make sure everyone has lots of help. That is how volunteerism works."

During her three-year term, she aims to "make sure everyone knows what we do, and make us an organization that people want to support," she said.


YESHIVA GRADS: Eighteen students graduated from Yeshiva Darchei Torah this year, all of whom will be attending yeshivot in Israel next year.

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Canadians to bike in Israel to aid disabled vets

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Feel like helping the disabled veterans of Israel? Then you should consider getting on your bike, finding some sponsors and training for the second annual Courage in Motion ride, sponsored by Beit Halochem Canada: Aid To Disabled Veterans of Israel.

The five-day ride, now in its second year, is scheduled to take place in Israel from Oct. 19 to 23 and will see riders from around the world cycle from Latrun to Eilat – travelling between 40 and 100 kilometres daily, depending on fitness and skill levels.

Last year, Canadian and U.S. riders raised more than $100,000 for the charity, which provides emotional and physical rehabilitation to 51,000 Israeli veterans and victims of terrorism.

In a recent interview, Joni Kwinter, a Beit Halochem board member and co-chair of the ride, told *The CJN* that she hoped for a bigger rider contingent from Canada this year. She also hoped riders would take advantage of their finish-line destination and "have a good time" in Eilat, adding that the riders will share a Shabbat meal with the city's mayor this year.

She said aside from seeing the beauty of the Israeli countryside, one of the most moving parts of the ride is witnessing some of the Israeli veterans who participate.

"They sometimes tell their stories to others to inspire them," she said, adding that riders are also accompanied by members of the Israeli national racing team, who serve as guides.

Five-day ride scheduled for October

"Friendships do form, too," Kwinter said, noting that as of June, there were 25 riders registered to participate this year.

According to Kwinter, the Canadian arm of Beit Halochem sends about $2 million a year to Israel, making it the charity's "largest funder in the world."

Kwinter said the ride has proven itself "therapeutic" for the disabled veterans, whose families also take part.

"It was remarkable to see their enthusiasm [on last year's ride]. It really gave them a focus."

For more information or to register for the ride, visit www.cycleisrael.com.

Cyclists on the 2008 Courage in Motion. [Beit Halochem Canada photo]

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Benevolent society celebrates its 110th anniversary

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

The Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society, the oldest Jewish mutual benefit society in Ontario, and possibly in Canada, has been serving the needs of its members for more than a century.

The benevolent society recently celebrated its 110th anniversary with a dinner and dance at Beth Torah Synagogue.

Howard Federman, a fourth-generation member, is the organization's newly elected president.

The society was founded on Jan. 15, 1899, when some 15 men gathered at 10 Armoury St. in Toronto. Federman's great-grandfather, Morris Spiegel, who emigrated from Hungary, was a founding member of the organization, and Louis Brand was its first president.

Federman's father, Stan, is active with the Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society (THBS), particularly working with Steeles Memorial Chapel, which was founded by Spiegel. Federman's uncle, Wilfred Ross, a grandson of Spiegel, was the organization's longest-serving president.

Today, the benevolent society has more than 200 members, both men and women, who meet at least four times a year to hear speakers and to discuss philanthropic endeavours. THBS supports many Jewish and non-Jewish charities.

"Throughout the years, we have continued to increase the number of organizations we support both locally and in Israel," Federman said.

"During World War II, we sent comfort boxes to servicemen overseas and supported programs at Camp Borden. We also established five perpetual scholarships at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem."

Before the advent of public health care, the society provided hospital and medical benefits, with doctors on call for its members, Federman said.

"We also have a sick-benefit fund, which provides certain benefits when a member is ill and needs assistance, which is provided strictly confidentially and it is never discussed at any meetings," he said.

THBS provides burial plots for its members and maintains its cemetery properties.

An annual Chanukah party, which the society holds for its members, is a charitable effort. "We also invite non-members, as well as families with children from Jewish Family & Child. Many of them would otherwise find it difficult to provide gifts and entertainment for their children," Federman said.

"We also sponsor an annual picnic, where non-members are invited. This has become a favoured family outing."

Federman said that an important part of benevolent society membership is visiting sick members and attending members' funerals. "We hope that all our members, including new members, will be able to perform this important duty."

He stressed that THBS is not a fundraising organization and that most of the money it raises comes from members' dues. The society has a charity board that carefully researches numerous charities to determine their needs.

THBS supports Beit Halochem, which helps disabled veterans in Israel; the Canadian Cancer Society; the Heart and Stroke Foundation; the Israel Cancer Research Fund; Jewish Family & Child; the United Jewish Appeal; the United Way; hospitals and more.

"We welcome everyone, particularly people who are not affiliated with a synagogue or do not have a cemetery property," Federman said.

For more information about the THBS, visit www.thbs-canada.com or e-mail thbs@rogers.com.

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Travesty international

Last week, the human rights organization Amnesty International issued a report on the war late last year in Gaza between Israel and Hamas. The 117-page document is entitled *Operation 'Cast Lead': 22 days of death and destruction.* The title says it all.

The document, almost in its entirety, targets Israel. Of the six chapters and 117 pages in the report, one chapter – comprising 11 pages – discusses the Palestinians' role in the conflagration.

In a breathtaking dismissive sweep of the hand that typifies the human rights agency's long-standing approach to the predicament of the Jewish state, the report states: "Amnesty International has seen no evidence that rockets were launched from residential houses or buildings [in Gaza] while civilians were in these buildings."

To be sure, Amnesty said that the rocket attacks from Gaza against Israel "constitute war crimes." But this is an easy, non-controversial statement for Amnesty to make, because there can be no denying, either in fact or in law, the plain, simple truth of deliberately launching rockets at men, women and children in their homes, schools, daycare centres and synagogues.

It is clear, however, from the layout, tone, emphasis and weight of the rest of the report that Amnesty only had Israel and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in its gun sights.

Amnesty accused the IDF of killing hundreds of unarmed Palestinian civilians, destroying thousands of homes, using civilians, including children, as human shields and of perpetrating random attacks on civilians, of breaching the laws of war and committing war crimes.

The IDF responded to the attack from Amnesty as it does to most attacks against the Jewish state: swiftly and with vigour.

"We find it both questionable and objectionable that a well-respected and ostensibly objective international organization such as Amnesty could produce a report on Operation Cast Lead without properly recognizing the unbearable reality of nine years of incessant and indiscriminate rocket fire on the citizens of Israel. The slant of their report indicates that the organization succumbed to the manipulations of the Hamas terror organization," the IDF said.

The IDF emphasizes a point that Amnesty tends to diminish: "The terrorists' military infrastructure was hidden in and around civilian homes and dispersed to locations scattered around the Gaza Strip, home to an estimated more than 1.4 million people, one of the most densely populated areas on earth."

The war to uproot the terrorists and their infrastructure was justified and necessary. It was, as the IDF said, conducted with great effort "to minimize as much as possible harming uninvolved, noncombatant civilians." But such was the nature of the terrorists' plan, performance and purpose that, despite the best efforts of the IDF, Palestinian civilians were indeed killed – regrettably so, terribly so, but unintentionally so.

Amnesty downplays this critical aspect of the war to the point of dismissing it. Amnesty so unfairly, so determinedly targets Israel that it makes of their report an international travesty.

25 years ago in The CJN

Dr. Seymour Lechman, chair of the New York task force on missionaries and cults of the Jewish Community Relations Council, said missionary cults were targeting not only university students, but Jewish seniors in nursing homes and hospitals. Instead of asking them to renounce Judaism, they suggested that they adapt Christian tenets to their Jewish faith.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones
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The two-state solution (1)

The possibility of a two-state solution, written about in *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict*, by Benny Morris, and reviewed by Sheldon Kirshner, is neither bleak nor can it be assumed that this is something the Arabs agree to ("Two-state solution has run its course: Israeli historian," *CJN*, June 25). It is merely a hope for those who wish to see it. We know through polls that there is a Jewish majority that supports a two-state solution, although many don't. We don't know that the Arabs want it. They express support for it and then negate it by demanding a massive influx of Palestinians into Israel proper through a "right of return." Through the ambiguous Arab formula of two states and a right of return, the Palestinians receive monetary and diplomatic support from the West and appease the many Arabs who want Israel to disappear as a Jewish-majority country.

While U.S. President Barack Obama has strongly pressured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to declare his support for two states, he has done nothing to pressure the Arabs on their acceptance of Israel as a Jewish-majority state. The West and Jews in general are left to delude themselves that the Arabs will just come around. Maybe they will and maybe they won't. It's not enough reason for Israel to make concessions based on imaginary hopes.

Sam Einhorn
Montreal

* * *

The two-state solution (2)

Sheldon Kirshner's review of Benny Morris' new book, *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict*, refers to the Arab attempt "by military means to destroy the newly created State of Israel" and goes on to say that "having been defeated in the war, the Palestinians were robbed of the opportunity for self-determination" ("Two-state solution has run its course: Israeli historian," *CJN*, June 25). Robbed? They started the war, they lost, and yet they were the victims? Come on! Another problem with this review is that nowhere does he tell his readers that Morris was one of the first so-called "new historians," whose sympathies were decidedly pro-Palestinian. For Morris to reach the conclusion that there is no future for the two-state solution is, in itself, more than noteworthy.

Stephen Tannenbaum
Thornhill

* * *

Jew-hating Jews (1)

Lawrence Hart does a disservice to *CJN* readers by equating Jewish criticism of Israeli policies with pathological self-hatred ("Jew-hating Jews," *CJN*, June 25). This simple-minded formula allows Hart to avoid the issues and declare any criticism of Israel to be based on hatred. The Jewish community would be better served if legitimate criticism were welcomed rather than dismissed, and if Jews were permitted to argue for a better Israel rather than forced to accept whatever policy the current Israeli government finds expedient.

C. Peter Herman
Toronto

* * *

Jew-hating Jews (2)

I am of the opinion that self-hating Jews can be pigeonholed into two categories ("Jew-hating Jews," *CJN*, June 25).

The first group consisting of naive, possibly brainwashed, individuals who are ignorant of the facts and have no attachment to the basis and foundation of their heritage.

...HERE ARE THE COMMON CAUSES OF JEWISH BACK PAIN
1) POOR DAVENING POSTURE
2) CARRYING HEAVY GUILT INCORRECTLY
3) SLIPPED DISC
KRON

The second and more dangerous group is made up of individuals who, subconsciously, feel themselves to be failures in life. Outwardly, they may seem to be accomplished, urbane, even smart. But, in their very beings, they feel unfulfilled, failures. They seek recognition. And they achieve their purpose, albeit subconsciously, by expressing their self-hatred in this fashion, being in the forefront of the verbal and written attacks on Israel. This affords them an audience and particular recognition. They become someone to be reckoned with and receive the attention that they desperately crave. They should be treated as pathetic lost souls, with contempt and disdain.

Sam Mitnick
Cote St.Luc, Que.

* * *

Yiddish theatre

I would like to congratulate Bryna Wasserman and everyone else who helped organize the Montreal International Yiddish Theatre Festival ("World's Yiddish theatres come to Montreal for festival," *CJN*, June 25). By all accounts, it was a great success. Yasher koach.

It would have been interesting for your readers to know the genesis of the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT). Under the auspices of the then-Jewish People's School, with the assistance of Shimshon Dunsky, and a dedicated group of graduates of the school, Dora formed the Yiddish Drama Group, which is the basis of today's DWYT. Thanks to Dora's dynamism, leadership and perseverance, their goals were achieved. May the DWYT continue to enjoy many more years of well-deserved success.

Zipporah Dunsky
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

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Tears in the desert:
Darfur crisis continues

By NORMAN L. EPSTEIN

Halima is Zhagawa, an indigenous African tribe in Sudan's Darfur region. She's also a gifted doctor who has attended to victims of the atrocities there. One day, without warning, she was forcibly pulled from her clinic, mercilessly beaten and thrown in jail, where she was repeatedly raped by her sadistic captors. Only by the grace of God did she mange to survive.

Her grievous crimes were twofold: she told a United Nations team about an attack on a girls' primary school, where pupils as young as eight were raped. Her other crime was belonging to a tribe that's been systematically targeted for mass atrocities by the Khartoum regime and its proxy militia, the Janjaweed.

Her agonizing story is told in her memoirs, *Tears in the Desert*.

Sadly, not enough tears have been shed by international leaders.

Six years have elapsed since the start of a counter-insurgency campaign in Darfur, orchestrated by the government of Sudan, that has led to the systematic destruction of African life in Darfur, where close to 400,000 people have perished. The true number is not known, as epidemiological studies can only extrapolate the probable mortality. The Khartoum regime prevents unfettered investigations. The statistics include not only death by violence, but death by attrition – famine and disease.

As well, countless others have been raped and tortured, and some 2.5 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes. Tragically, the international community has been unable to muster the political will to resolve the crisis, and the Sudanese government continues to act with impunity despite recent developments.

In early March, an arrest warrant was issued for Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity. It was the first time that an international tribunal has charged a sitting head of government with such egregious crimes.

But despite the gravity of the charges, the international community continues to negotiate with Bashir and his cohorts as if they are part of the solution while they continue to be the source of the problem. After Bashir's indictment, the government of Sudan expelled 13 non-governmental humanitarian groups from Darfur that were providing essential services to 1.1 million people out of a vulnerable population of four million. The groups accounted for about 40 per cent of effective health care services and helped to stem infectious diseases such as meningitis and dysentery, as well as implement wide-scale vaccination programs and run multiple feeding centres. The genocide of attrition continues unabated.

Close to 400,000 people have perished

The channels of international diplomacy have only seen a flood of verbiage from world leaders, with barely any action. The international community vacillates on firmer action while the government of Sudan dictates the terms.

For example, the UNAMID security force sanctioned by UN Security Council Resolution 1769 is 1-1/2 years past its due date. Only half the force has been deployed so far. Although resources have not been forthcoming from various countries, the main issue is the Khartoum regime's obstructionism. It ingeniously sets up obstacles, then relents while reinventing other roadblocks to the rapid deployment of this critical force.

The peace process in Doha, Qatar, between the Sudanese government and Darfur rebels has stalled, mostly due to the government of Sudan not honouring earlier agreements, notwithstanding the boycott of the largest rebel group, the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), which contends that no serious negotiations can take place until security in the region is assured.

Furthermore, the UN Human Rights Council has deemed the crisis in Darfur to be not suitable for deliberation, which sends the message to the Sudanese government that there are few repercussions for its actions.

It is unfathomable that one of the worst human rights offenders in world does not meet the criteria for examination by this UN body, which only cements the image of the United Nations as a highly dysfunctional organization.

The Arab-dominated government in Khartoum certainly had a sordid human rights record prior to the crisis in Darfur. The longstanding civil war between the regime and African tribes in the south saw close to two million people die, mostly Africans. As well, villages have been razed and five million people were forcibly displaced between 1989 and 2002, using the same brazen tactics that have been employed in Darfur. Much of the conquered land was used for petroleum development. Only when southern rebels regained some of the territory and the rebels held the Khartoum regime to a draw did the government submit to concerted international pressure and sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). However, little of the spirit or detail of the agreement – which clearly stipulates wealth and power-sharing between the north and south – has been implemented. The tenuous agreement is on the brink of unravelling, with this region of Sudan being at risk of another bloodbath. So as Darfur burns, the south percolates.

The odious behaviour of the Sudanese government since it came to power in a coup d'etat in 1989 has at best marginalized and oppressed all African ethnicities (and even a few Arab tribes) and at worst showed pernicious contempt for many African tribes, resulting in their decimation. Much of it this behaviour pre-dated the genocide in Darfur, and the world has been largely oblivious or has taken a laissez faire attitude to what the government has done.

Whether it has been the Dinka and Nuer in the south, the Zhagawa and Fur in the west (Darfur), the Nubians in the centre and the Beja in the east, all have been subjected at one time or another to the brutal wrath and mass atrocities of the regime. Only the atrocities in Darfur have captured international attention, but the regime in Khartoum has escaped unscathed and intact.

It is unconscionable – with all we know about Darfur and the penetrating legacies of genocides of the past century, from Armenia to the Holocaust, culminating in Rwanda – that the world has allowed yet another genocide to linger. The moral compass of the international community seems directionless.

The question remains: what needs to be done?

The government of Sudan has, in effect, vetoed measures to bring peace and security to the region. Benchmarks must be met or punitive measures should be invoked against the regime.

First, the full deployment of UNAMID, with full manpower of 26,000, must be implemented expeditiously to protect civilians in Darfur and permit humanitarian aid to get through. Disarming of both sides must be a clear objective.

Second, the peace process in Doha must address grievances and the marginalization of Darfuris, as well as the repatriation of those who have been forcibly displaced.

Thirdly, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement must be enacted in all its detail, and it must serve as a template that brings peace and security to all regions of Sudan. If these measures are implemented, together with the removal of the indicted Bashir, Sudan can become a credible member of the family of nations once more.

If not, the international community must start to wield a stick.

There must be targeted economic sanctions against individuals and parties that are most responsible for the unmitigated violence in Sudan, including freezing Sudan's assets around the world. Sanctions must be applied where possible to prevent petroleum dollars from reaching government coffers. Much of this revenue is used to purchase weaponry, with little filtering down to the people. Finally, if Sudanese aerial attacks on civilian targets don't cease, a no-fly zone must be enforced.

Refugees from Darfur attend a Passover dinner in Tel Aviv last year organized by the New Israel Fund and a coalition of social action organizations working on behalf of refugees from Africa. [Photo by Michal Fattal/Flash90]

What can Canada do? It can facilitate this tougher stance by urging its international partners to adopt these measures collectively. Canada has recently demonstrated moral leadership with its boycott of the followup conference to the 2001 UN anti-racism conference, and there is a void of international leadership on the crisis in Darfur.

However, Canadian leadership is contingent on more of us demanding such leadership from our government. We must and can do more!

Halima's story of unbearable suffering, together with countless untold other stories, cannot simply be swept aside in a desert storm.

In the eloquent words of Eli Wiesel: "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Let us continue to torment the tormentor. Our humanity depends on it.

Norman Epstein is a medical doctor and a co-founder of Canadians Against Slavery and Torture in Sudan. To get more involved in Darfur advocacy, contact Benjamin Shinewald, national executive director and general counsel of Canadian Jewish Congress at bshninewald@cjc.ca.

Opinions

Praying or humming?

We were sitting one Friday evening in the current "in" place of worship in Jerusalem that prides itself of being both Orthodox and egalitarian. The congregation joined in heartily in the singing and the humming.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

At one point in the service, a colleague sitting next to me whispered in Yiddish: "*M'lozt nisht davenen* [they don't let you pray here]." He had a point.

The niggun – the wordless prayer that was once chassidic and has now become universal – seems to dominate many Jewish worship services. The chant is pushing out the word. The prayers are said quickly and often silently. It seems that you don't need to know how to pray as long as you can hum.

You don't need to know Hebrew, either. Although that's not so in Israel, elsewhere this form of worship eases the pain for those who don't know Judaism's language of prayer. Many say that, had they known Hebrew, they would have attended services more often. But congregations that use English in their services don't attract too many worshippers, either. The niggun seems to be doing much better than the vernacular.

Believing with Heinrich Heine, the German Jewish poet, that Jews pray theology, I'm uncomfortable with the "wordless prayer." Deprived of language, prayer can mean anything. And if it can mean anything, how do I know that it's Jewish?

On the other hand, since Heine's time, the world has also seen the abuse of language. On balance, therefore, the effort to reach Heaven without words may be a wholesome development.

Yet I remain worried, for when we abandon language, we also abandon content and thus sow the seeds of anarchy. What is perceived as warm and fuzzy has only the significance that individuals ascribe to it. That may mean that anything goes, including borrowings from others.

The postmodernism that dominates contemporary thought suspects every structure that offers over-arching answers and demands consistent uniformity. Liturgy has always been a vehicle for the free spirit, even if outer forms had to be observed. Piyutim, poetic prayers that take people beyond the established framework, are an integral part of Jewish worship. Wordless chants may be their contemporary successors.

Also when no words are spoken, denominational differences become less pronounced. The need to reach out to God and pour out one's heart transcends institutions. "Post-denominational" worship services in chassidic/Orthodox garb are coming into fashion.

Each time I feel that my davening is being interrupted and the content of my prayers obscured, I console myself with the thought that this may be a good thing after all.

Too much money?

My new-found freedom as a freelance Jewish educator provides me with a new approach to pluralism.

From the perspective of an organized, democratic and inclusive communal body, it behooved me to show full respect for all constituent communities, groups and denominations. Now, I feel free to criticize with a moderate modicum of disrespect where and when required! Perhaps this is a form of pluralism more people can abide by.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

Of course, other values kick in, and I cannot permit myself a public airing of the various and varied weaknesses of any one denomination or group. The arrogance required and the resulting isolation of putting myself outside the Jewish camp would be intolerable – to me and to others. For one thing, I still belong to a few of these groups.

I do, however, wish to criticize one aspect of contemporary Jewish life that plagues all of us. At a time of economic lows, it is strange to speak of overwhelming affluence, and yet, it might be precisely the right time to consider what 20th- and 21st-century wealth has done to Jewish life.

The most obvious sign of over-wealth has been the ridiculously lavish events that bar and bat mitzvah parties and weddings have become. At a recent 700-guest affair, a friend of mine remembered a British Christian wedding he attended some years back. It consisted of a brief morning service in a country church followed by a wedding breakfast with 30 guests. After a few speeches, everyone went home.

One can guarantee with full certainty that the traditional *Sheva Brachot* recited at a similarly modest Jewish wedding would be more than acceptable to God, and probably a major relief to family and friends. It would be a major blessing, too, if the rabbis of all denominations had the power to issue some form of sumptuary restrictions on these foolish wastes.

On another occasion, I was talking to a friend who expressed some shock at the idea of a kosher home that did not have two sinks in the kitchen. (There must already be homes with six kitchen sinks. Think meat, dairy and pareve, times two to accommodate Pesach!) Thankfully, my friend's close relative pointed out that their grandparents had fully kosher kitchens with one small sink.

Kashrut at home and in industrial plants has been completely exaggerated by the affluence of Jews who can afford luxuries that have become necessities. Some of the leniencies of meat and milk separation have been neglected because of our ability to have two and three of everything.

Tfillin that are worn in morning prayers are yet another example of the influence of big dollars on what was once affordable to all Jews. It is extremely difficult to find simple, inexpensive tfillin like the first pair I was given when I became a bar mitzvah. The more money, the more *hidurim* (pious embellishments – nice, but not necessary) we include, and the less available these things become to poor Jews, of whom we have many.

But, are not all of these examples trivial, one-time expenses that only affect very observant Jews? Not entirely. Most Jews still have a Jewish wedding, but there are other, less obvious examples that affect more Jews and will have an influence on the Jewish future. I refer to the institutions of Jewish education: schools and camps. The majority of Jews who use these facilities are demanding more luxurious settings, assuming that the fancier the equipment, the better the education.

In times like these, it is worth reassessing that assumption to determine just what makes a camp or a school a great place of learning. Will my old Camp Massad buddies please come forward to testify that the run-down facility on Black Lake was a place that moulded our Jewish and Zionist characters for life? The more we insist on every *hiddur*, ritual or educational, the more we restrict Jewish life to those who can afford it.

Even worse, the more we add ostentatious consumption to Jewish life, the less we appreciate the essence of our faith, our values, and our cultural legacy.

Mourning the death of a stranger

We all grieve the passing of someone close to us, someone whose path crossed our own, someone whose influence marked our lives. The death of strangers we note with gravity and sadness, but most often without the same lingering feelings of deep mourning. This layer of distance we feel toward those not part of our inner constellation protects us. Were it not so, we would be unable to bear our daily reading of the newspaper, listening to the radio, or watching news coverage.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

But there are exceptions to this hierarchy of mourning. Sometimes, the death of strangers touches us in profound and unexpected ways, for myriad reasons or for no apparent reason at all. In our culture, the death of celebrities can set off a wave of public grieving for a person whose life seems distant from the lives of those who mourn. The untimely death of Lady Diana, Princess of Wales, for example, caused this kind of widespread expression of grief. More recently, the death of pop star Michael Jackson left people "throughout the world," CNN reports noted, "struggling with their feelings" of loss. Often the lasting power of such public spectacles of grief result from an interplay of spontaneous expression and media construction, authentic feeling and (self-serving) artifice. The strangers whose deaths touch us most deeply reveal something about our aspirations, fears, desires and anxieties.

As it happened, the day the news of Jackson's death broke, I was exchanging e-mails with friends and colleagues about a tragedy that had occurred earlier in the month. As the media filled with retrospectives about the troubled pop star, we were still struggling to come to terms with the brutal killing of a man named Stephen Tyrone Johns, the security guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum who was killed in the line of duty. While the pop singer's death was followed by days of tribute, Johns' violent death fell out of public notice within a few days after the attack in the museum that cost the guard his life. Yet his death touched us deeply, and unsettled us.

Of course, Johns wasn't a stranger. He was known well by others who worked at the museum. And like others, I had come to know him over time in the course of frequent visits to the museum for research, conferences, workshops and committee meetings. In the weeks following the terrible shooting at the Holocaust museum, we spoke and wrote of the man we remembered – warm and good-humoured, yet at the same time thoroughly professional and conscientious. Our e-mails were filled with remembered encounters with Johns, as well as concern for his family and outrage at the senselessness of the tragedy.

While Johns was not a stranger to me, he was also not a personal friend. But his death touched me in deep ways. Not long after the shooting, I marked the 41st yahrzeit for my father. I thought of Johns' children and how the loss of a parent will stay with them, shaping their childhood, and even their adulthood. That loss will challenge them, but at the same time, the memory of his heroism can serve to inspire and guide them, to be a blessing.

The attack on the Holocaust museum by a white supremacist had frightening resonances, especially for the Holocaust survivors who serve as docents and were present that day. But the service that cost Johns his life, and the service of his fellow officers, reminds us of the difference between that bleak period of history and our own time – between then and there, and here and now.

The anti-Semitic and racist hatred that fuelled Nazi violence and resulted in the catastrophe of the Holocaust was abetted by both government sanction and the complicity of others. The self-sacrificing courage of Johns at the museum on the Washington Mall serves as a counter-example. The official tribute to him – the closing of the museum for a day to honour his memory, the second closing to accommodate his memorial service – as well as the many visitors to the museum after the shooting are a way to celebrate his spirit, as well as to resist the forces of hatred that, sadly, have been weakened but not yet defeated.

The Kirshner File

A cornucopia of books...

It's summer and time to read all those books you never got around to despite the best of intentions. The books under review run the gamut from the serious to the sassy and will likely appeal to a wide range of readers.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The seventh edition of Martin Gilbert's *The Routledge Atlas of Jewish History* (Taylor & Francis) is a great resource. Its 146 captioned maps are a gateway to a whole host of events, from the earliest Jewish migrations in the Middle East to the emancipation of European Jews from the 18th century onward.

In *The Other Within: The Marranos* (Princeton University Press), Israeli scholar Yirmiyahu Yovel argues that the Marranos – Spanish and Portuguese Jews forced to convert to Christianity in the Middle Ages – were a people apart, rejected by most Jews as renegades and by the majority of Christians as Jews with impure blood. This is a penetrating work.

During the 17th century, Portuguese settlers, some of whom were Marranos, landed in what was then the Spanish colony of Jamaica. Historians believe that 50 to 100 Jewish families gravitated to Port Royal, the island's premiere town, and buried their dead at Hunt's Bay, which is now one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in the western hemisphere. Marilyn Delevante's *The Knell of Parting Day: A History of the Jews of Port Royal and the Hunt's Bay Cemetery* (self-published) is an illustrated account of an exotic Jewish community whose members made tremendous contributions to Jamaican society.

Montreal's Baron de Hirsch cemetery, Canada's largest Jewish final resting place, was established to meet the needs of mostly impoverished newcomers. Danny Kucharsky's lucidly written book, *Sacred Ground on De La Savane* (Vehicule Press), delves into its origins and sheds light on Montreal's Jewish community.

At the start of the 20th century, Yiddish was widely viewed as a corrupt form of German, yet in the Russian empire it was respected and regarded as a medium for literary criticism and a vehicle for science and learning. In *The Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish, 1903-1917* (Syracuse University Press), Barry Trachtenberg examines this phenomenon. A companion volume, *Adventures in Yiddishland* (University of California Press), by Jefferey Shandler, looks at how Yiddish has evolved around the world. Yiddish has affected Jewish humour, and in *Shtick Shift* (Barricade), Simcha Weinstein presents fresh insights.

Hebrew is a sonorous language, and in *Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature* (The Jewish Publication Society), edited and with an introduction by Curt Leviant, its richness is revealed in verse and prose across the arc of 2,000 years. The paperback edition of *A Fire in their Hearts* (Harvard University Press), by Tony Michaels, vividly examines the defining role of the Yiddish socialist movement in the American Jewish experience.

The renowned New York conductor, Leonard Bernstein, is the subject of Barry Seldes' biography, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (University of California Press). Seldes demonstrates how Bernstein balanced his career with his interest in progressive politics.

Larry King, the CNN talk show host, bares his rags-to-riches life in *My Remarkable Journey* (Viking), a breezy autobiography in which he discusses his rise to television stardom and love life (he's been married eight times).

The Middle East is a complex region, and the following books may serve as guides to the perplexed.

Martin Gilbert's *The Routledge Historical Atlas of Jerusalem* (Taylor & Francis) contains 69 maps and more than 100 photographs and prints, and is an important resource about this much-contested city. *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom* (Harvard University Press) breaks new ground. Gilles Kepel, a French Mideast expert, meditates on Islamic terrorism, the war on terror, U.S. policy in the Mideast, Israel and the clash of civilizations.

In *Egypt After Mubarak* (Princeton University Press), Bruce Rutherford thoroughly analyzes the dynamics and personalities of Egyptian politics and the prospects for Egypt once its pro-Western president, Hosni Mubarak, passes on. Iraq teeters on the brink between progress and chaos, and in *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton University Press), Adeed Dawisha intelligently explores the trajectory and complexities of its convoluted politics from 1921 to the present.

Canada is home to more than 500,000 Muslims, many of whom are Arabs. In *Being Arab* (McGill-Queen's University Press), Paul Eid, a Canadian of Arab origin, explains how second-generation Muslim and Christian Arabs negotiate their religious and ethnic identities. He does so by focusing on the experiences of students from five colleges in Montreal. This is an intriguing and challenging study about identity, multiculturalism and prejudice.

The Holocaust burns a hole in the heart, yet it must be studied and re-studied.

Martin Gilbert's *The Routledge Atlas of the Holocaust* (Taylor & Francis), with 333 maps and accompanying text, clarifies and illuminates this disaster.

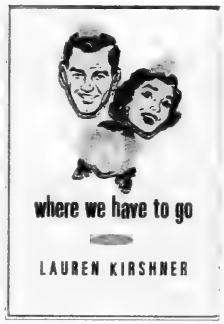
The Minsk Ghetto 1941-1943 (University of California Press), by Barbara Epstein, recounts a little known chapter in the annals of the Holocaust. This meticulously researched book is about the communist-led resistance movement inside the ghetto and its ties with anti-fascist non-Jews. Whereas in the rest of Europe ghettoized Jews were generally left to fend for themselves, the imperilled Jews of Minsk had allies who were willing to help. This fact drives Epstein's compelling story.

During the Nazi occupation of Warsaw, a group of Jews in the ghetto, led by the historian Emanuel Ringelblum, created Oyneg Shabes, an organization that was to document the lives of its oppressed and starving inhabitants. Oyneg Shabes deposited thousands of documents in milk cans and tin boxes and buried them. Samuel Kassow's *Who Will Write Our History?* (Random House) tells the tragic tale of Ringelblum's attempt to preserve the memory of a doomed population.

The Massacre of the Jews of Lithuania (Gefen), by Karen Sutton, is an accomplished work of scholarship, while *Rezso Kasztner: The Daring Rescue of Hungarian Jews* by Ladislaus Lob (Pimlico) is a defence of a controversial figure by a man who owes his life to him.

Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past (Yale University Press), by Neil Gregor, is a magisterial account of how a German city associated with National Socialist ideology, Nazi party rallies and the staunchly anti-Semitic propagandist Julius Streicher came to terms with the legacy of Nazism.

My daughter the novelist



For far too many years, I have read non-fiction at the expense of fiction. But recently, I read Lauren Kirshner's novel, *Where We Have To Go*, which was published by McClelland & Stewart last month. As you might have guessed, Lauren is my daughter, my beloved youngest daughter. This piece, therefore, is not a review but a reflection of my profound pride as a father in her accomplishment. At the age of 27, she is a published novelist, and if a laudatory review in *Quill and Quire* – Canada's premiere literary journal – is anything to go by, Lauren is on her way to becoming a strong new voice in Canadian literature. *Where We Have To Go*, as told by the sensitive narrator Lucy Bloom, is the story of a dysfunctional Toronto Jewish family torn by turmoil. It is also a luminous coming-of-age tale that unfolds against a tableaux of self-doubt and self-discovery. The characters are compelling and the situations are plausible. It is a poignant novel about angst, disappointment, sorrow, love and personal freedom, leavened by flashes of zany humour and enlivened by magic realism. Well done, Lauren.

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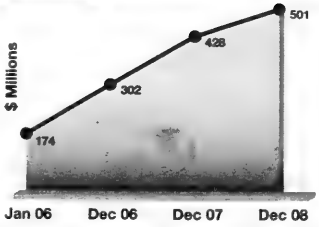

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Jewish, Muslim students work together at Mackenzie

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

"First you're a human being before you're anything else. That's how I look at it," says Nazir Amir, who recently finished his last year of high school at William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute.

Amir – along with fellow graduating students Somayya Saleemi, Alec Levin and Eitan Gilboord – sat around a table in the school's library shortly before completing final exams to talk to *The CJN* about the harmonious relationship between Mackenzie's Muslim Students Club and its Jewish Culture Club.

Amir, the Muslim group's treasurer and vice-president of public relations for the past year, wonders whether other schools can use Mackenzie's example "as a model... to promote understanding, tolerance and awareness. I definitely think Mackenzie is a shining beacon."

The valedictorian of his graduating class, Amir, like Saleemi, applied from out of the school's geographic catchment area because of Mackenzie's "MaCS" program, which offers enrichment in mathematics, science, computers and English for students in grades 9, 10 and 11.

His parents, refugees from Afghanistan, immigrated from India when he was one year old. He plans to pursue a biomedical degree at York University and, eventually, a career that involves helping others.

Levin, president of the Jewish Culture Club for the past year, described Mackenzie as having "a very constructive environment," in part because of its high academic level and "strong values" of the students.

Neither Amir nor Saleemi had met anyone Jewish before high school, aside from one teacher each, whose classes they had been in when they were in elementary school.

Gilboord, the immediate past president of National Conference of Synagogue Youth's (NCSY) south Toronto chapter, and Levin are both children of Canadian-born Jews who had one Muslim friend growing up – a neighbour to both of them.

"He went to our bar mitzvahs," recalls Gilboord.

"We've all been brought up to be respectful of other people," Levin said.

"The point for us is to strengthen the bond that's here in Canada," said Amir, adding that the clubs avoid politics.

Gilboord said that the Jewish Culture Club doesn't try to "ignore" politics, but focuses on trying to strengthen bonds rather than to break them.

Saleemi said the conflict in Gaza earlier this year "made us realize we should do something to show that we're similar more than we're different."

She told *The CJN* she became friends with a Jewish girl on her first day at Mackenzie. "She invites me for dinner on Friday. Her mom makes the best hummus... She's pretty religious. I learned a lot from [her]," said Saleemi, 17, who also intends to pursue a biomedical degree at York.

"We can all be friends," said Levin, 18, an athlete and alumnus of Associated Hebrew Schools who plans to study life science next year at the University of Toronto.

Gilboord – a 17-year-old who switched to Mackenzie from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto in Grade 11, and plans to study arts at Ryerson University – said that he has spoken to other students on an individual basis about Israel, "but there's no hate speech going on [at Mackenzie]."

Saleemi, who was born in Canada to Pakistani immigrants, was president of the Muslim Students Club for the past two years. She said her club's activities include an annual Hajj seminar to explain the Muslim festival, and Friday prayers followed by discussions that are open to the entire school, where students can ask questions about anything they've heard in the media.

Amir added that his group looks at ways to overcome misunderstanding and prejudice.

The Muslim club meets weekly and this year attracted about 10 to 12 students. The Jewish Culture Club is larger, with about 40 participants at a time, reflecting the larger number of Jewish students at the school.

Levin said topics of discussion at the Jewish Culture Club's weekly lunchtime sessions have included Jewish holidays and issues, the Holocaust and modern-day genocides, and Israel. NCSY provides pizza and a staff person.

"We also reach out to other students and promote a good environment in the school," Levin said.

Next year's club presidents will "definitely" work together, he added.

The two clubs joined forces twice for the school's Food Days, an opportunity for clubs to raise money either for themselves or for charity.

The first time, they served bagels, lox and cream cheese. On a subsequent occasion, it was samosas, biryani and tacos.

They donated the money they had raised to Free the Children.

Saleemi said the effort had "a significant impact" within the school. "Everyone – students, teacher – noticed that everyone had collaborated."

It was "a source of pride for the school," Levin said.

KICKING OFF MACKENZIE'S 50TH: Pictured from left, Helen Green, principal of William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute; Toronto District School Board trustee James Pasternak, and Linda Miller and Larry Anklewicz, co-chairs of the school's reunion steering committee, plant a maple a tree in front of the Downsview school to launch preparations for Mackenzie's 50th anniversary celebrations. A reunion will take place in May 2010. More information is available at mackenziereunion.com.

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Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and the community at this time.

May the Almighty comfort all those who mourn his loss along with the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

UJA Federation allocates additional million dollars for vulnerable

New budget also maintains allocations to beneficiary agencies

By Howard English

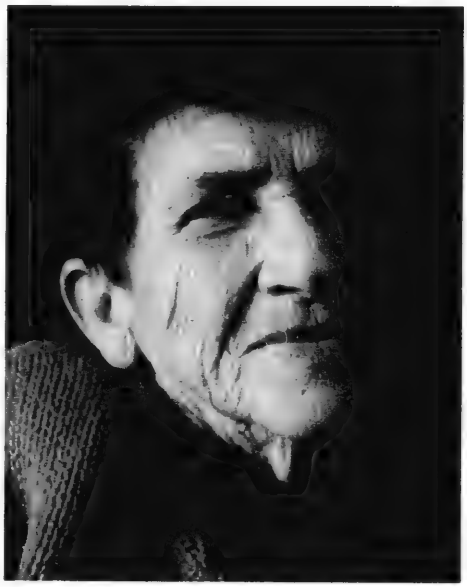
With Canada confronting an economic recession, the new UJA Federation of Greater Toronto budget is focusing on those in danger of being left behind by the downturn.

The organization's financial blueprint recently passed by the Board of Directors allocates an additional one million dollars for the community's most vulnerable, including increased funds for child welfare, supplementary financial assistance for the poor and employment services, more money for counseling, and increased spending to assist victims of domestic abuse.

"We recognize that, in these times of economic turmoil, our most vulnerable have urgent needs and we are urgently required to meet them," said UJA Federation senior vice chair Alan Winer.

The budget also maintains or increases allocations to UJA Federation beneficiary agencies and sets aside $2 million for future needs during this fiscal year that ends on June 30, 2010.

"In order to maintain and even increase our allocations to our partner agencies and schools during these challenging times, Federation worked hard to reduce its internal operating expenses and make available the maximum dollars for distribution," said UJA Federation president & CEO, Ted Sokolsky. "Thanks to the leadership of our Board and the great work of our United Jewish Appeal Campaign volunteers, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto was one of the very few federations that was not only able to maintain its allocations this year, but actually increase them overall."



UJA Federation's new budget focuses on the vulnerable.

Other budget highlights include:

- An additional $100,000 to support services for seniors
- An increase of more than $500,000 for day school tuition subsidies
- Approximately $600,000 for children with learning disabilities and $400,000 for supplementary school programming
- More than $12.6 million overall for formal Jewish education
- Continuation of UJA Federation's partnership with the southern Israeli region of Eilat-Eilot, designed to transform the area into a centre of higher education, health care and environmental innovation
- A project to help the Ethiopian community of Bat Yam integrate into Israeli society
- More than $930,000 to serve Jewish students on university campuses, which are, increasingly, the focus of troubling incidents
- Additional initiatives to engage Russian and Israeli Canadians
- $200,000 to nurture Jewish identity among 25 to 35 year-olds

The 2009-2010 budget is based on this year's annual campaign results, which is expected to reach $65 million, and Winer is confident about the new campaign as well.

"We approach this challenge with confidence that UJA Campaign 2010 is going to be strong and reflect our community's incredible compassion and generosity," he said.

Former She'arim students thrive in first year of special program

By Daniel Horowitz

After Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School decided to close a year ago, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto began discussions with three schools - Associated Hebrew Schools, Netivot HaTorah and TanenbaumCHAT - about setting up a special program to meet the ongoing unique needs of She'arim students.

All three agreed.

Associated took students who were going into Grades 3 to 6; Netivot took care of Grade 7 students, while TanenbaumCHAT established a special Grade 8 program.

The former She'arim kids at each school are educated in a separate program with additional support. UJA Federation financing of this program costs approximately $600,000 per year.

One year later and judging by 13-year-old Leora Newman, the first TanenbaumCHAT Grade 8 valedictorian, it's money well spent.

"TanenbaumCHAT has been amazing," says Leora. "First of all, we had a different teacher for every subject and the small class sizes and the individual attention really helped me. I started developing more confidence in my abilities and I feel ready now for high school. I never thought I'd be standing up on the stage giving a valedictorian speech, but I did and I am so honoured and happy."

"I can't say enough about what TanenbaumCHAT has done for my daughter," says Leora's proud mother, Roberta. "Leora has made tremendous progress in the last year thanks to the dedication of the teachers and staff. All the parents were so relieved and excited when UJA Federation, TanenbaumCHAT, Netivot HaTorah and Associated stepped up. They made a commitment to our children and they have honoured that commitment."

Roberta and Marvin Newman beam as their daughter Leora was named the first valedictorian of the special Grade 8 program for former She'arim students at TanenbaumCHAT's Wallenberg Campus.

Eleven-year-old Ilan Eklove started his Jewish education at Netivot HaTorah before it became clear to his parents that the school was just not a good fit for their son. They moved him to She'arim, and this past school year, he attended the special Grade 5 program at Associated on Atkinson Avenue in Thornhill.

"It's critical that the community understands that approximately 10 percent of all children have a learning disability of one degree or another," says Ilan's mother, Susan, who is also a special education teacher. "The community has a responsibility to have places like this for these kids so that they don't simply fall between the cracks in the system. These special programs at Associated, Netivot and TanenbaumCHAT have given these kids such wonderful opportunities. They have great, state-of-the-art facilities, knowledgeable teachers and principals and our children have the opportunity to integrate with the school's other students both educationally and socially. It's a win-win situation."

At a special ceremony celebrating the end of Grade 5, Ilan Eklove was one of four recipients of a specially commissioned award recognizing personal growth and self-improvement.

"I can't explain the feelings of pride and joy that we felt when they announced Ilan's name," says an emotional Susan. "He got so much out of his year at Associated. He is totally flourishing now, with an increase in confidence and skills, and he made so many new friends as a result of the special program. Remember, we are parents who are committed to giving our kids a Jewish education, and it's my hope that, after next year, they'll be able to continue their Jewish education and all that it offers."

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Moroccan-U.S. relations are special

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

A rather intriguing and elaborate-looking letter sat one day on the desk of George Washington, 12 years before he became the first president of the independent American republic. The letter presented a pressing problem: it was in Arabic and there was no one around at the time able to read it and interpret its contents. The year was 1777.

Finally, one man, a Jew, was found in New York who could translate the letter's contents. It was a congratulatory letter from the people of Morocco to the 13 colonies, welcoming them warmly into the community of nations. The letter was not only the first-ever recognition of the colonies as a separate, independent entity, it also went on to clearly announce thedesire for a relationship of friendship with the United States. The letter was signed with the royal seal of Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdullah of the Barbary Coast.

When Washington finally became president, he lost no time in responding. The people of the American republic, he said, humbly accept the good wishes of the people of North Africa. He reciprocated with wishes for peaceful and friendly relations. He went on to say that the United States of America was most interested in purchasing a parcel of land upon which an embassy compound could be built. Would the sultan be able to advise as to a suitable location for this endeavour?

In this amazing exchange, Morocco became the first country in the world to recognize American sovereignty, and the first parcel of American consular land in the world was purchased in Morocco.

Piracy and the Barbary Coast are almost synonymous, and in his original letter, the sultan proclaimed that any vessels bearing the American flag would enjoy freedom of passage and could dock at will along the coast and refresh themselves.

When the present King of Morocco visited America for the first time, then-U.S. president Bill Clinton, in welcoming the king, acknowledged all of the above, as well as the continuing friendly relations between the two countries, relations that span more than two centuries.

It need not be said, of course, that the Moroccan government has always been progressive and open. It is pro-western while maintaining its own relations with other Arab nations. Its Jews had, and continue to have, all rights and privileges.

The fact that one of its prominent ministers today is Jewish, as well as the fact that the administration of the United States will be appointing a Jew as its ambassador to Morocco, both attest to the uniqueness of Morocco.

One prays that the new generation of Moroccans will continue in this way and not fall into the abyss of ignorance and prejudice now seen in Arab and European media.

Preparing for September

ON CAMPUS
By Justin Dahan

The international spotlight has been pointed directly at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since last month's speech in which he said, among other things, that for Israel to accept a demilitarized Palestinian state, Palestinians must first recognize Israel as a Jewish state, a statement that, of course, did not please U.S. President Barack Obama.

Netanyahu made his position very clear, and it's a position that many Jewish people agree with, but only a few have the gall to say in public.

On the other side of the world, in gearing up for next year, Jewish organizations on campus are turning the spotlight away from politics, and instead working on creating a welcoming atmosphere for Jewish students for the next school semester. It's not that politics are unimportant, but for these groups, the first priority is to provide a positive environment for Jewish student participation.

Instead of focusing on the news in the mainstream media, these organizations are adhering to their roots. With this in mind, Chabad Ottawa, for example, has already planned numerous events for September and even a few for October. Adam Berktin, president of the Chabad Student Network of Ottawa, has worked tirelessly to send Facebook invitations to these events to as many Jewish students as he can.

One of the main attractions Chabad has planned for Ottawa puts a small twist on a tradition they have established – providing a home for Jewish students every week to enjoy the Shabbat spirit. This event has never had as much recognition as it is currently enjoying, since Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky is bringing chassidic rapper Matisyahu to join Ottawa students and Chabad at a Shabbat dinner this month.

Matisyahu is coming to Ottawa to perform in the Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest, an annual summertime festival featuring international artists from various genres. He will perform on Saturday, July 11, at 9:30 p.m. – after Shabbat, of course.

During Bluesfest, Matisyahu will have his usual Jewish following, but along with those who are familiar with him, he will also get to present himself to a new demographic: a crowd that has likely never heard of him. He will be given an opportunity to represent the Jewish community. With the current mainstream media portrayal of Jewish people including protests and other negative activities, Matisyahu will have to face a crowd that may start off hostile, and he will be forced to deal with the daunting task of changing their opinion of him and the people he represents. Through his songs, he preaches about Judaism and about spreading the Jewish way of life. Matisyahu will be given the opportunity to educate those who have been misled about Jewish people. We need to raise more awareness of Judaism, and Matisyahu will have a chance to speak to the masses and do this.

Aside from the Matisyahu event, Chabad, like Berktin, has been working tirelessly to get its schedule for next year prepared. Berktin has received warm reviews from those who have seen the list of events in his e-mails.

As difficult as it is to make a schedule so far in advance, he has not disappointed. Students who don't attend events will not be able to say they didn't have enough notice, nor will they be able to say they didn't know about activities. For this, all of Chabad should receive kudos.

Jewish Life

We need to bring camp home

CLASS ACT
By Daniel Held

School is out for the summer, and for thousands of Jewish youth, that means that they (or their parents) have been packing duffel bags and heading off to camp. The last decade has seen remarkable growth in Jewish summer camping. Bunks have filled up, new specialty camps have been created, and significant research has been undertaken to study the phenomenon. Camping has shifted from a place of perceived recreation to being a cornerstone of a holistic Jewish education.

But what is it that creates the magic of a Jewish camp?

Camp is an intense 24/7 adventure in Jewish living. Prayers, meals, songs, Shabbat, Hebrew language, social action, Israel and so much more are wrapped into each day and form a uniquely Jewish atmosphere. The breadth of the experience is one that can't be replicated at day schools or synagogues. It's unique to an environment where the kids wake up, eat, play and pray together.

Camp is camp, and it is distinctly not home. Campers feel a sense of freedom at camp to experiment with new experiences. I've worked with campers who try keeping kosher or Shabbat for the first time, who experiment with new forms of prayer or who try to immerse themselves in Hebrew. Camps purposefully isolate themselves not only from parents and the news, but also from the other realities of the outside world. In this isolated community, campers and counsellors can reinvent the norms of life and Jewish living.

Camp creates a unique culture that's bolstered by the sense of community. When counsellors and campers call the dining hall the *chadar ochel* or sing *Birkat Hamazon* together, they're asserting a form of peer pressure that's part of the process of acculturation into the camp community. The language they use, the songs they sing and even the clothing they wear form part of the Jewish culture that permeates every aspect of the experience.

At camp, role models abound. Counsellors and unit heads, specialists and camp directors serve as "cool" models of active Jewish living. The relationship built between camper and counsellor is unique and is a direct result of the intensity of the experience. When else does a student live in the same room and eat at the same table as their educator for four, six or eight weeks? Many of my friends, years after leaving camp, are still in touch with their counsellors.

Camp is fun. It seems that after one summer, many campers are hooked. They return year after year and have trouble imagining life without camp.

Notwithstanding the magic of camp, the experience poses a troubling educational framework. A story is told of a camper who loved *Havdalah* at camp. Each week he would write home to his parents and describe with wonder the experience of the entire camp gathering together in a circle, arm in arm under the stars, while they sway and sing the words of *Havdalah*.

When he returned home, his mother went out and bought spices, a candle and some grape juice. On Saturday night, when the stars were out, she turned to her son and said, "Come, let's make *Havdalah*." The boy looked around and said, "*Havdalah*? How can we do it without a lake, guitar and all the campers and counsellors?"

The educational experience of camp is, in many ways, unparalleled. The challenge we must face, however, is to extend that experience through the other 10 months of the year.

In only a few weeks, camp will end and the campers will return home. It's important that we help them see the intense experience of 24/7 Jewish communal living as being transferable from the isolation of camp back into their homes and their everyday lives.

18th Maccabiah Games, Pt. 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Last week, we began our look at the world's premier Jewish sporting event, the Maccabiah Games, which begins July 12 in Israel.

It's no surprise that there will be delegations from the United States, Canada, France and Australia. But according to the Maccabiah site, there will also be Jewish missions representing Grenada, Puerto Rico, India and Thailand – approximately 60 countries in total. And they will be competing in a huge variety of sports, some familiar to the Olympic community: swimming, sailing and triathlon; and others not: 10-pin bowling, chess and footsal, a type of indoor soccer. **[tinyurl.com/maccab22]**

The official Maccabiah 18 site gives a good overview of this year's games in English, Hebrew and Spanish. **[tinyurl.com/maccab14]** On the home page of the site, there's a media player with selected clips about past games. Intriguingly, one of the tabs is labelled "Live," which implies that we'll be able to watch some coverage of the games as they unfold. **[tinyurl.com/maccab13]**

You can view a lovely film highlighting the American delegation's visit to Israel for the 17th games in 2005. Watch for a short clip of Mark Spitz, Olympic champion and Maccabiah veteran of the 1965 and '69 games. **[tinyurl.com/maccab24]** As well, there's an inspiring promotional video for this year's games. **[tinyurl.com/maccab16]**

Mark Spitz isn't the only Maccabiah veteran who also brought home Olympics medals. Other famous names include judoka Arik Ze'evi, who won bronze for Israel in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens; American swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg, three-time Olympic gold-medal winner at the 2000 Games in Sydney, and windsurfer Gal Fridman, who won Israel's first Olympic gold medal at the Beijing Games in 2008. One of the athletes to watch this year is U.S. swimmer and five-time Olympic medallist Jason Lezak. Lezak scored two golds in Beijing as a member of relay teams that included Michael Phelps. This summer, Lezak is forgoing his chance to compete in the world championships so that he can swim at the Maccabiah. **[tinyurl.com/maccab17]**

The Maccabiah is known as the Jewish games and is open to Jewish athletes from around the world. However, the competition also welcomes all Israeli citizens regardless of religion. In 2005, Asala Shahada, an Israeli Arab teenage girl from the town of Sakhnin, won gold in the women's 200-metre breaststroke. "The Maccabiah belongs not only to all the Jews, but also to all the Israelis, and I am a proud Israeli," Shahada said. **[tinyurl.com/maccab18]** Those sentiments were not universal. An Israeli Arab dance group cancelled its participation in the same games. According to the group's manager, Widad Atalla, "It is a Jewish endeavour; it is not connected to Arabs." **[tinyurl.com/maccab19]**

People attend the Maccabiah games for all sorts of reasons. In 2001, Denver's Todd Schayes came as a player-coach, but it seems he was interested in more than just basketball. During the televised opening ceremonies, the 36-year-old athlete held up a sign that read: "Single male. American. Looking for Israeli wife. Contact Todd Schayes at the Tel Aviv Hilton." And more than 4,500 women did. Unfortunately, none of them seemed to be his bashert. Although the *New York Times* did report about one Israeli Yiddishe mamma with more than a bit of chutzpah. She called "and said she has a son, not a daughter, and asked if Todd would give her his list when he had finished so she could find a bride for her boy." **[tinyurl.com/maccab20]**

Fortunately for Schayes, the story didn't end there. Back in the States, Elaine Housman of Kent, Conn., was reading about the athlete and his exploits in her local Jewish paper. "I screamed, 'I have found the man for Diane!'" Housman wrote Schayes to tell him about her 30-year-old niece, Diane Lipner. As reported in the *New York Times*, Todd and Diane's e-mail relationship developed into a full-blown courtship and culminated in their 2003 wedding. **[tinyurl.com/maccab21]**

Although Schayes' quest started in front of TV cameras at the Maccabiah games in Israel, his relatives say he really doesn't seek the limelight. "He's very low key, very mellow," said Jon Housman, a cousin of the bride. "He told me: 'I'm not a hopeless romantic. I'm a hopeful romantic.'"

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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One-state solution: another way to eliminate Israel?

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Efforts to delegitimize Israel continue to run amok: UN anti-racism conferences used as forums to single out and vilify Israelis in racist terms; Israeli Apartheid Week as an annual Israel hate-fest on various campuses; Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ontario) and other Canadian unions and organizations working feverishly to isolate Israel through boycott and sanctions campaigns, and more.

Into this inimical atmosphere stepped the organizers of a "one-state solution" conference held recently at York University under the more academic title, Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace.

In "What's discussed openly in Israel is toxic in Toronto" (*Toronto Star*, June 23), Haroon Siddiqui strung together a number of quotes from conference organizers and participants, making it appear that the conference was a balanced, academic exercise, carried out in a climate of open, tolerant discussion and debate. Siddiqui wrote: "The dialogue was civil, [Prof. Sharryn] Aiken [one of the organizers] reported from the meeting, which was closed to the media."

That assessment came as surprising news to a number of those in attendance including one of the Israeli academic participants, Na'ama Carmi from Haifa University.

In "Middle East conference anything but academic" (TheStar.com, June 30), Carmi presented a very different picture, explaining that the dialogue was anything but "civil."

Carmi, who belongs to the left in Israel, opposed banning the conference, even though she feared it might be hijacked to become yet another anti-Israel event. Still, she wanted to participate in order to bring "another voice." What she discovered, however, only confirmed her initial fear.

As she put it: "Not in my worst dreams did I imagine an atmosphere that was totally incompatible with academic discourse... A hostile atmosphere toward people with different views generally, and Jewish-Zionist Israelis in particular, was created. Anyone who challenged the Palestinian perspective was intimidated or even labelled a racist. The audience vocally applauded those whose views it approved. At times, those presenting a different view were subject to abuse and ridicule [her own 'psychological state' was questioned]... And all of this without any apparent attempt by the organizers to stop it."

Carmi concluded, "This was not an academic conference, but an 'academic' version of Durban."

This, of course, could readily have been anticipated by a glance at the program. By inviting a number of prominent anti-Israel political polemicists as participants, the conference organizers could not conceal the fact that they were apparently less interested in real scholarly debate than in promoting a political agenda.

As the conference began, Stephen Scheinberg and Neil Caplan, two Canadian academics affiliated with Canadian Friends of Peace Now, wrote an op-ed in the *National Post* titled "One state is no solution" (June 23). With historical perspective about why a two-state solution is the only viable option for conflict resolution, they argued: "Current calls for a one-state solution mask a desire for the disappearance of Israel as a Jewish state. They not only reinforce the demands of fundamentalist groups like Hamas, but also cater to demagogic seekers of 'justice' and anti-Israel campus groups."

Today, these "demogogic seekers" pass themselves off in some media circles as "progressives," whereas they represent the height of intolerance. Their position amounts to the following: "A state for the Palestinian people? But of course. A state for the Jewish people? How dare you!"

They well know that a "bi-national" state for Jews and Palestinians from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River would, because of demographics, quickly become another Arab-majority state in which the Jewish minority would be at risk. But this is the very idea: to eliminate Israel as a "progressive" step.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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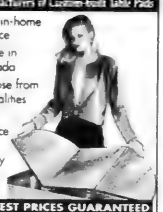
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Kehila program director plans move to Israel

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Shlomo Beldeb, program director at Sephardic Kehila Centre, says he has made major life changes about every 10 years.

"I left Morocco with my family when I was nine, I was in school here for 10 years, I worked in my family's furniture business for just over 10 years, and I've worked at Sephardic Kehila Centre for 12 years."

Now, Beldeb, 41, is moving to Israel with his wife Elizabeth, a flight attendant with Air Transat, and their four children.

Also secretary to chief Rabbi Haham Amram Assayag, Beldeb said he began working at the centre when the building was brand new. He was married the day it opened in September 1997.

A program for last month's dinner to honour the Beldebs, said that "whether they were preparing our sons and daughters for b'nei mitzvot, leading youth Shabbatons or organizing countless programs, [they] were a guiding force for our growing kehila.

"Shlomo could lead a choir, a Kehila tour or a group through Morocco, always with a smile on his face. Equally as busy, Elizabeth devoted herself to many causes, including Ezrat Achim, [an organization that feeds families for Shabbat] and the Mikveh Ma'ayan."

Beldeb, who is leaving with his family on a Nefesh b'Nefesh flight this summer, said it was always in their minds to make aliyah, "but we felt we had a mission. The job was meaningful and we'll certainly miss it here, but our kids [ages 11, nine, seven and four] are getting older, and we want to move before it gets harder for them."

He feels that every family is destined to move to Israel. "It is a matter of whether it is us or our children. It is a question of who will make the sacrifice.

"Too many people push the move back and back, and then, ironically, they are buried in Israel. The longer you wait, the harder it gets."

Moving to Israel is part of a Jew's journey, he said.

"When we were slaves in Egypt we were strong and united because others were against us. Then we spread out to the whole world, and our purpose was to spread God's name.

Elizabeth and Shlomo Beldeb

"Now, the whole world knows who the Jews are, and so it is time to move back to Israel. It is our final destination, and by moving there, I am doing my part."

The family is looking at their move as an adventure, he said. "I'll try to find the same type of work when we get there, and my wife will continue working in the same industry. The kids are all excited."

He is not at all worried about his family's safety in Israel, he said. "The world is like a mask; who you think is not safe is safe, and who you think is safe may not be."

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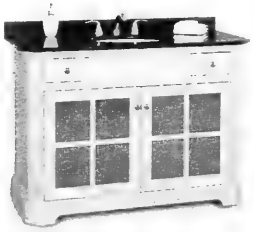

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Veterans thrilled by reversal on Allied benefits

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Elderly Soviet Jewish veterans of World War II who gathered at the YM-YWHA for a commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the Crimea on June 26 received some excellent news.

Mark Groysberg, president of a Montreal organization of the World War II Russian-speaking veterans, told them that they and their families are now eligible for benefits from the Canadian government.

Amendments to the War Veterans Allowance Act extending benefits to all needy Allied veterans received Royal Assent on June 18, reversing a change to the law 14 years ago. The bill received the unanimous support of all parties.

In 1995, the Chrétien government amended the same act so that Allied veterans who moved to Canada after World War II were no longer eligible to apply for benefits.

Under the new changes, low-income Allied veterans of World War II (and the Korean War), who have lived in Canada for at least 10 years and live here now, may once again apply.

They are eligible for the guaranteed monthly war veterans allowance, as well as health benefits such as prescription drugs and dental care, services intended to allow veterans to remain in their own home, long-term care in an institution and funeral subsidies, the same benefits available to veterans of the Canadian forces.

Although implementation is scheduled for next January, eligible veterans and their relatives may receive payment for benefits back to Oct. 14, 2008, when the bill was passed by Parliament.

The amount of the benefits is based on such factors as location and duration of military service, health of the veteran and income. Spouses or common-law partners, or survivors, are also eligible to apply, and dependent children may also be considered.

The former Soviet Union is one of 32 countries that were allied with Britain during World War II that are listed by Veterans Affairs Canada.

The news is especially significant to the nearly 100 members of Groysberg's association, the vast majority of whom are Jewish. Jews had a high rate of service in the Soviet military. Groyberg said upward of 500,000 Jews are believed to have served in the Red Army alone, and many emigrated to Canada after the collapse of the Soviet Union. They receive no benefits from their former country, Groysberg said.

Groysberg is not a veteran himself and was born after the war, but his parents and father-in-law served in the Soviet war effort. He is a well-known leader in the Russian Jewish community in Montreal and publisher of the Russian-language Voice of the Community newspaper.

For the past five years, he has been lobbying the federal government to change the law to once again extend veterans' benefits to all Allied servicemen and women living here.

Some of the Soviet Jewish veterans met with Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson in Ottawa in March 2008 to press their case.

The members of the organization are now very elderly, most in their late 80s and 90s, Groysberg said, but are thankful.

Groysberg sent a letter to Thompson expressing gratitude on behalf of the organization.

"Although the Russian-speaking veterans had never served in the Canadian army, they had fought in an army that was Canada's ally, against the common enemy," he wrote.

"That is why, as Canadian citizens, they have the right to obtain the same privileges as the rest of Canadians."

The Crimean battle, between April 8, 1944 and May 12, 1944, was a series of offensives by the Red Army to liberate Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea, from German occupation.

One of the organization's members, 87-year-old Jakov Gelfandbein, was decorated for his heroism in that bloody campaign.

For more information on the benefits, visit www.vac-acc.gc.ca or call 1-866-890-6813 (service in English), 1-866-890-9437 (service in French) or, for the hearing impaired, 1-800-465-7735.

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New kashrut body created for bakery

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Last September, Winnipeg's Vaad Ha'ir's sold its roughly 100 kosher licensees – mostly manufacturers of packaged foods – to Rabbi Dovid Jenkins and his New Jersey-based Global Kosher organization and essentially ended its kashrut supervisory activities.

Although the changeover went smoothly for the most part, one very important Jewish community institution, Gunn's Bakery – the only source of locally made kosher pastry – was left in a form of kashrut limbo.

It was still considered kosher, but not under the supervision of the new Winnipeg supervisory body and its WK hechsher – short for Western Kosher (formerly Winnipeg Kosher). Sources tell *The CJN* that the new WK didn't want to supervise the few remaining non-factory institutions and food outlets that only serve the local Jewish community.

As of June 1, Gunn's kashrut situation has been resolved with the creation of a new kashrut authority specifically for the bakery, the Vaad Hakashrut of Winnipeg. Its supervising rabbi is Rabbi Ari Ellis, who is in his first year as spiritual leader of the Herzlia Adas-Yeshurun Synagogue, the city's largest Orthodox congregation.

Rabbi Ellis said that WK staff will also serve as mashgichim for the new Vaad Hakashrut of Winnipeg and that Gunn's products will remain acceptable in institutions that are under WK supervision.

"OU policy is not to get involved in supervising local services. They prefer to leave that to local rabbis," said Rick Stokoloff, office manager for Western Kosher, which is affiliated with the Orthodox Union's OU hechsher.

Gunn's, located in north Winnipeg, has been supplying Winnipeggers with kosher bread, baked goods and pastries for 72 years. As the only bakery in the city that makes kosher pastries, it supplies individual customers as well as shuls and hotels that cater Jewish simchahs. (City Bread, Winnipeg's only other kosher bakery, is considered a factory. It ships its products across Canada and doesn't make pastries.)

Fivie, left, and Bernie Gunn [Myron Love photo]

It was reported at the time of the changeover that the new Western Kosher would not directly certify Gunn's because the bakery, with its mix of pareve and dairy products, didn't conform to the higher standards of the new hechsher.

On the other hand, the bakery's products were still to be considered kosher, and Rabbi Gabe Brojges, WK's Winnipeg-based rabbinic administrator, would continue to inspect the bakery. Gunn's products would also continue to be acceptable for catering purposes.

Unofficially, Rabbi Ellis assumed responsibility for Gunn's kashrut right after Pesach.

"There were two factors at work here," Rabbi Ellis said. "Originally, Rabbi Jenkins [who is affiliated with the OU hechsher] would just be acquiring WK's national factory accounts and not become involved with the local kashrut providers. It didn't work out that way."

The other factor, Rabbi Ellis refers to, is the problem of striving for one kashrut standard for North America.

"In Israel," said the rabbi, who had been studying in Israel for 10 years before coming to Winnipeg last summer, "there are three levels of kashrut. Some communities are stricter than others. While I'm not critical of the stricter standard in North America, it leaves no room for some leeway where it might be appropriate."

Rabbi Ellis said that Gunn's is redoing its packaging to include a new Vaad Hakashrut of Winnipeg logo. Everything will be clearly marked either "dairy" or "pareve," he said.

"We are trying to increase the separation between dairy and pareve production and products," he says. "It has never been an issue of Gunn's ingredients and products not being kosher. The issue was making sure there was no mixing of dairy and pareve products."

Rabbi Ellis doesn't see a problem with Gunn's being open on Shabbat.

"We can deal with that the same way that we deal with chametz before Pesach," he said, referring to the practice on that holiday of Jews not owning non-Pesachdik food and dishes by selling them to non-Jews for the duration of the chag, adding that there could be some form of profit-sharing with non-Jewish employees.

Bernie and Fivie Gunn, Gunn's co-owners, are happy with the new arrangement.

"It was important to us to have a rabbi in Winnipeg we could call on whenever we have questions about kashrut," Fivie Gunn says. "We've had to change a few things but we are prepared to do what we are asked to do.

"As far as we're concerned, it's business as usual."

Shul to perform same-sex commitment ceremonies

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Winnipeg's oldest and largest congregation, is going to be performing same-sex commitment ceremonies as of Jan. 1, 2010.

"We are hoping that some gay couples will take advantage of our new policy," said Rabbi Alan Green, senior rabbi of the Conservative shul.

"This is the culmination of a three-year process," he said. "We wanted to do this step by step. In 2008, we began by explicitly selling joint burial plots in our cemetery to openly gay couples. This year, we began accepting gay couples as family memberships, rather than just as individuals. Conducting [same-sex commitment] ceremonies is the last step."

Rabbi Green, however, said he is not expecting same-sex couples to bust down the doors in a stampede for commitment ceremonies.

The Shaarey Zedek, which has a membership of 1,100, may well be the first Conservative congregation in Canada to begin performing same-sex commitment ceremonies.

Rabbi Green said that the Conservative movement's stand on homosexuality remains ambiguous.

In December 2006, the movement's legal authority, the committee on Jewish law and standards, endorsed three opinions on the question of homosexuality. Two upheld the movement's traditional stance barring gay clergy and commitment ceremonies, while a third opened the door to gay rabbis and commitment ceremonies, according to a JTA report.

"In the end, the decision [on whether to perform commitment ceremonies] has been left to the discretion of individual congregations," Rabbi Green said.

In 1999, Winnipeg's Temple Shalom, under the leadership of Rabbi Michael Levinson, began conducting same-sex marriages. The late Rabbi Levinson left the small Reform temple, which has about 120 member families, seven years ago. The congregation was without a permanent rabbi until last summer.

> ***'We are hoping that some gay couples will take advantage of our new policy'***

Judith Huebner, a past president of Temple Shalom, said that the congregation's new spiritual leader, Rabbi Karen Soria, has officiated at numerous same-sex wedding services over the past year. Many of the couples were not affiliated with the congregation, Huebner said.

Rabbi Green said that Rabbi David Mivasair in Vancouver conducts commitment ceremonies. Rabbi Mivasair, who on his website identifies himself as a Progressive, is the spiritual leader of Vancouver's Ahavat Olam congregation and Seattle's Eitz Or. Or Shalom Congregation, which identifies itself as a Renewal congregation in Vancouver, conducts commitment ceremonies in cases where both individuals are Jewish.

While Shaarey Zedek's commitment ceremony will be modelled after the traditional marriage ceremony, there will be a difference, Rabbi Green said. "The concept of kiddushin in the traditional marriage ceremony sanctifies the marriage between a man and a woman," he explained. For same-sex ceremonies, he will be using the term, "brit" – or "covenant" – rather than "kiddushin."

Rabbi Green said that there will be some traditionalists in his congregation who will not be in favour of same-sex commitment ceremonies performed by their rabbis, but he believes that the vast majority of the congregation will support the new policy.

"It is a matter of fairness," he said. "Besides, the more traditional members of the congregation will only be exposed to a [same-sex commitment] ceremony if they are in attendance at the ceremony."

Elliott Leven, a Jewish gay activist, said the Shaarey Zedek's decision to allow same-sex commitment ceremonies is a "pleasant surprise."

"That's very good news. I have been writing letters to the Shaarey Zedek for the last couple of years, asking them about their position on this issue, but I never got a reply," Leven said.

"I hope that other congregations follow the Shaarey Zedek's lead."

Winnipeg community to honour senior rabbi

> ***Spiritual leader has long-time connection with Toronto shul***

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Rabbi Peretz Weizman has played a major role in the religious life of Winnipeg's Jewish community for more than 50 years.

The now 86-year-old rabbi has officiated at countless bar mitzvahs, weddings, conversions, *gets* and funerals, as well as overseeing kashrut in the community for many years.

Ahead of his move to Toronto this fall, the community will be honouring him with a dinner on Aug. 23, which organizers hope will attract as many as 400 people. The organizers hope to raise $100,000 from the dinner to establish the Rabbi Peretz Weizman Holocaust Education Fund, to create a permanent display at the new Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada Corridor Museum as a lasting legacy and a living memorial history of the Holocaust.

Rabbi Peretz Weizman

He decided to move to Toronto because his wife, Reva, who is in poor health, is a resident of Baycrest. She had been a resident of the Sharon Home, the community's north Winnipeg Jewish nursing home. Last fall, the Sharon Home board opened an expanded south Winnipeg seniors residence and closed the north Winnipeg branch. Rather than have Reva relocated to the south Winnipeg residence, her family decided to move her to Baycrest. Over the past year, Rabbi Weizman has been commuting between Winnipeg and Toronto.

Last month, Rabbi Weizman was honoured on a smaller scale by the Chavurat Tefilah Synagogue, with which he has been affiliated for the past seven years. At the May 31 event, the north Winnipeg Orthodox synagogue dedicated its annual tea to the rabbi, and the shul has ordered a new Torah mantle with his name inscribed on it.

The Holocaust has influenced Rabbi Weizman's life significantly. Originally from Lodz, he was the youngest son in a family with close ties to the Gerer Rebbe. He recalls playing with the Gerer Rebbe's youngest son (who later became the Gerer Rebbe himself) when both were boys.

Rabbi Weizman was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. He experienced the hardships of life in the Lodz Ghetto and worked as a slave labourer in a factory. He often recalled those experiences in his dvar Torahs, which also included chassidic and talmudic stories and Midrash, further spiced with gematriah, jokes and anecdotes.

Rabbi Weizman came to Winnipeg in 1953. "My wife, Reva, was a cousin of Rabbi Milton Aaron, the rabbi at [Winnipeg's] Shaarey Zedek Synagogue at the time," Rabbi Weizman recalled. "He came to meet us in Israel and felt that I would make a good rabbi for Winnipeg."

The new rabbi quickly immersed himself in the life of the community as a rabbi, cantor, teacher and shochet. As a shochet and rabbi in charge of kashrut supervision here, Rabbi Weizman was proud of the fact that for many years the Vaad Ha'ir of Winnipeg (now Western Kosher) had an exclusive contract to ship beef to Israel.

Rabbi Weizman's word on kashrut was accepted without question by leading Orthodox rabbis, including Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Pinchas Hirschprung, in North America and Israel.

In 1957, a new synagogue, the Bnay Abraham, which was initially Orthodox, opened, and Rabbi Weizman was invited to become its spiritual leader. That was a position he filled until the mid-1990s, when the congregation decided to hire a younger rabbi.

In 1999, however, Rabbi Weizman, who became rabbi emeritus at Bnay Abraham, found his services in demand at Toronto's Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue as the interim rabbi, while the congregation sought a replacement for the retired Rabbi Joseph Kelman. Rabbi Weizman served at Beth Emeth for 18 months, until Rabbi Howard Morrison was hired.

Rabbi Weizman's association with Beth Emeth actually goes back 20 years. It is the shul where he davens when he is in Toronto to visit his daughter, Tzila Schneid.

On returning to Winnipeg, he once more became the spiritual leader of the Bnay Abraham, in place of his departed successor. In 2002, his traditional congregation voted to merge with two other large Conservative congregations in north Winnipeg to form Congregation Etz Chayim. Although Rabbi Weizman once again became rabbi emeritus, some of his former Bnay Abraham congregants joined the smaller Chavurat Tefilah, and the rabbi also began attending that synagogue on a weekly basis.

"I have spent the majority of my life in Winnipeg, and I have learned a lot here," he said. "Most importantly, I learned about the cycles of life – birth, marriage, life and death. In Europe, I mainly experienced death. I am thankful to Canada and Winnipeg."

He is excited about the upcoming dinner in his honour. "All creation likes to be noticed and appreciated. That's why grass and trees grow, and wildflowers come in so many colours," he said.

In July, Rabbi Weizman will be filling in for Rabbi Morrison for the month at Beth Emeth, where he will also give lectures every Thursday morning after davening when he is in town. He will be back in Winnipeg in August for the tribute dinner. Following that, he plans to put his house up for sale and move permanently to Toronto.

For more information about the dinner honouring Rabbi Weizman, call 204-477-7460 or e-mail jhc@jhcwc.org.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Rapper performs at Toronto club's hip-hop karaoke events

By RIVA GOLD
Special to The CJN

By day, he's a philosophy lover who sports thick glasses and a button-down shirt. Come nighttime, he's a popular Toronto-based hip-hop artist who goes by the name Mighty Rhino. Meet Noah Aaron Moses Goodbaum.

Goodbaum, 21, performs regularly at the Revival Bar on College Street, a hot spot for Toronto's hip-hop karaoke scene, where rap lovers perform the lyrics of hip-hop classics before a live audience

Goodbaum, who grew up as a member of Congregation Darchei Noam, Toronto's Reconstructionist synagogue, says that hip hop has a strong religious element at its core.

"I have a Jewish grounding – a spiritual springboard for my work. There are certain values instilled in me by Judaism – devotion to learning, or valuing righteousness in word and deed over superficial displays of piety. All of these ideas have informed my understanding of the world as a human being, and thus my art."

He adds that his original raps are "informed by a pluralism and a universalism which Reconstructionist Judaism contributed to. A lot of my raps feature a call to religious universalism, partly informed by the ethics of thinkers like [the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, Rabbi] Mordecai Kaplan."

Many of Goodbaum's raps feature cursing alongside a call to spiritual renewal. "I like mixing the sacred with the profane, because of the redemptive effect of beauty mined from ugliness," he says.

He has also performed political raps, covering topics from former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's message of global peace to the prospects for an independent Kurdistan.

Goodbaum is currently producing a demo tape of his material.

In addition to his own raps, he also performs the works of famous rappers such as Busta Rhymes and Raekwon the Chef at hip-hop karaoke events.

Noah Goodbaum, a.k.a. Mighty Rhino, performs raps that combine the sacred and the profane.

"A lot of the performers [in the hip-hop karaoke scene] are very ordinary people from modest backgrounds, who just want to pay tribute to the culture they love," he says.

While some karaoke events bring out competitive and aggressive tendencies in audiences, Goodbaum describes the hip-hop karaoke crowd as warm and receptive.

"You're working with a beautiful artistic and cultural legacy, which means a lot to the audience. Even if your performance is bad, you still get cheered."

Then again, Goodbaum isn't exactly bad at this. He has developed a large fan base of hip-hop lovers across North America, including famous rappers such as Masta Ace and Maestro Fresh Wes.

Goodbaum attributes his popularity to the standup "preaching" act he performs before every set. "MC'ing is about moving the crowd and controlling the mike," he says.

He chose the name Mighty Rhino in part to honour the Mighty Sparrow, a calypso artist, and to pay tribute to the Sparrow's showmanship and energy. "I want to be a live wire," Goodbaum says.

The energy at hip-hop events can be electrifying. "I like the hyped-up, manic pace of it all," he says. "I like to think that in rap, either you 'move' them intellectually, and make them pause and think and reflect, or you 'move' them by making them jump and scream and dance."

His success stems also in part from the contrast between his reserved manner and the culture he loves. "People find it bizarre and engaging to see this meek guy with intellectual and religious pursuits doing crazy stuff in rap culture," Goodbaum says. "In my normal life, I'm often very reserved, but on the mike, there's a certain frenzy and adrenaline in me."

Goodbaum's fan base includes other rappers.

But acceptance was not instantaneous for the young artist. "I have certain disabilities that would appear to be inhibitors – cerebral palsy, a non-verbal learning disability, and obsessive compulsive disorder. They got me looked at askance when I was younger – it's a bizarre potpourri of conditions."

Today, Goodbaum simply refers to these challenges as his "eccentricity collection."

"I'm someone who seems ought not be involved in hip hop," he says. "But hip hop has become meaningful for such a broad stratum across the globe."

He has also caught the attention of filmmakers who have asked to make a short documentary about his life. As the film deal is still in its early stages and no contracts have been signed yet, he did not want to reveal their names.

Part of Goodbaum's love for hip hop stems from the fact that it transcends boundaries and has proved to be universal.

"Hip hop has always stood in the face of a certain conventional expectation of how it should be," he says.

"It represents the experience of humans whose understanding has otherwise been marginalized, and a lot of its technique is so avant-garde I feel the world hasn't caught up. I haven't caught up," he adds.

Goodbaum was introduced to hip hop by his older brother, Digs, in 2001. "The first rap song I heard was *What's Golden* by Jurassic 5. He spit a verse, and I thought, 'This is my calling for life, this is how I want to spend my time.'"

Goodbaum's brother, a student of music composition at Concordia University, was a teenager during the golden age of rap music.

"I visited him, and we'd dance to hip hop for exercise in his living room. I started buying albums, and for whatever reason, even though it would appear unconventional to outside eyes, I fell in love with rap.

"It was hard to make sense of the world growing up," Goodbaum says. He recalls a lot of darkness, bitterness and anger in his childhood. Between the ages of seven and nine, he lost his mother and his two maternal grandparents.

"Then when I turned to rap. I got lost in it, and suddenly the world was a brighter place for having lost myself in it," he says. "Now I can turn to a record any time and experience the euphoria, the overwhelming joy."

For Goodbaum, hip hop is an idiom unto itself. "It's an entire alternative universe and it's dizzyingly complex, which makes it puzzling and baffling to outsiders but also extraordinary to those who care about it."

For more information about Mighty Rhino, e-mail shallahrhinoceros@gmail.com.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Kitchen science, good food

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

The Science of Good Food by David Joachim and Andrew Schloss with A. Philip Handel (Robert Rose Inc.) is an excellent encyclopedic guide and reference book that will bring the science of food to home cooks and professionals alike.

This A to Z reference book contains more than 1,600 entries, arranged alphabetically and cross-referenced, touching on a variety of scientific disciplines, from biology and chemistry to agriculture and nutrition. You'll learn how copper bowls affect eggs, what kind of grill gives you the best crust on a steak, how butter tenderizes cake, why artichokes make certain foods taste sweeter and what causes some people to think cilantro tastes like soap.

There are 200 colour photographs and more than 100 recipes that show the reader how to put the information into practice.

Food industry professional Andy Schloss, writer, teacher and author of 13 cookbooks, and one of the co-authors, explains: "The ultimate goal throughout the book is to provide practical information that you can use to create better-tasting food. The straightforward explanations of the what, how and why of food and cooking are intended to help you become a better and more confident cook. After all, cooking and science are really after the same thing: helping us to enjoy life. We hope this book helps you do just that."

Entries are broken into three sections called What It Is, What It Does and How It Works. There are also practical tips included in Kitchen Wisdom boxes, while more detailed science information appears in Science Wise Boxes, and food trivia items are included in a Fast Facts section.

When the weather is hot and you don't feel like spending long hours in the kitchen making time-consuming meals, there's nothing simpler or more satisfying than a hearty salad. Here is a simple salad, along with some helpful kitchen science from *The Science of Good Food* for your reading and eating pleasure. Enjoy the sweet taste of success!

* * *

The most common cabbages are green, red and savoy types. Savoy cabbage has a somewhat looser head than green and red types, with softer, ruffled leaves. It's also milder in flavour. These types can be eaten raw in salads like coleslaw, or fermented to make sauerkraut. Cabbage can also be braised, steamed or boiled, then used as a wrapping for ground meats.

Napa cabbage more closely resembles an elongated version of green or savoy cabbage. It has broad pale green leaves in a somewhat tightly packed, bullet-shaped head. Napa cabbage tends to be moister, more tender and milder in flavour than other cabbages.

APPLE AND CABBAGE COLESLAW

Always start coleslaw by salting the cabbage to rid it of extra moisture. The easiest way is in a colander set in a sink. That way the excess cabbage juice runs down the drain and doesn't dilute the dressing.

2 lb. cabbage, any type, cored and thinly shredded
2 large Granny Smith apples, coarsely grated
2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
Dressing:
1/4 cup sour cream
3 tbsp. mayonnaise
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 tbsp. orange marmalade
2 tbsp. ketchup
1 tbsp. hot pepper sauce
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 bunch green onions, trimmed and thinly sliced

In a large colander set in a sink, toss cabbage and apple with 1-1/2 tsp. of the salt and let stand for 10 minutes.

Dressing: in a large bowl, combine remaining salt, sour cream, mayonnaise, vinegar, marmalade, ketchup, hot pepper sauce and pepper.

Squeeze excess moisture from cabbage and apples and add to the dressing along with green onions; toss to combine. Refrigerate for about 1 hour before serving. Makes 8 servings.

More recipes can be found at cjnews.com

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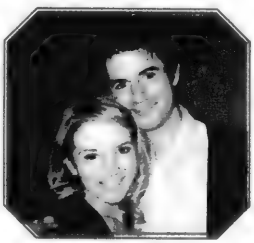
FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish News

Mazel tov to Sandra & Harry Mingail, who met on a blind date, and are now celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary! Love from Laura, Joey, family.



Mazel tov to Lauren Nightingale & Matthew Ginsburg on your recent engagement! Proud parents, Karen & Benny Nightingale and Karen & Jon Ginsburg.

Mazel tov Sama & Fay Rosen on your 60th wedding anniversary. Wishing you good health and happiness always. Much love from your children, grandchildren and family.

Kitty & Ralph Wintrob have been married for 50 years! Mazel tov and lots of love from Suzanne, Kyle and Brett.

Dr. Mark Waxman, Linda Silvert and Dr. Robyn Waxman announce the graduation of their son and brother, Bryan, from dentistry at U of T. Proud grandparents, Pearl Waxman and Fran Simms.

Mazel tov to Barbara & Irving Green on their 50th wedding anniversary! Love from Steven, Anne, Haley & Ben, Brian, Marcy, Jacob and Daniel.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @
for the :-) generation

What's New deadlines: Reminder – there is no issue on July 23. Monday, July 20, is the deadline for the July 30 issue and Monday, July 27, is the deadline for Aug. 6. I receive calls on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 235, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Sunday, July 12

JACS

First of two garage sales to benefit JACS. (Jewish Alcoholics Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others), 1081 Alness, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Next sale, July 26, 696 Sheppard Ave. W.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Risa Levitt Kohn, guest curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum and professor and director of the Jewish Studies Department, San Diego University, speaks on "The Curator's Overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit in Toronto." Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14

FREE CONCERT

If the current CUPE strike is over, North York Concert Band will perform at the Barry Zukerman Amphitheatre, Earl Bales Park at 7 p.m. In case of rain, a smaller scale performance will take place inside the Earl Bales Community Centre. For more information, call 416-392-3846.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Shaare Zedek Medical Center's 19th annual golf tournament, Copper Creek Golf Club, On the Green. Includes 18 holes of golf, use of driving range, barbecue lunch and banquet dinner, registration gift, auction, raffle prizes and more. Proceeds to Shaare Zedek in Jerusalem. For more information or to register, call 416-781-3584, or www.hospitalwithaheart.ca.

RELIGION AND JUDAISM

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation Brotherhood and entertainment & cultural committee present **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, asking "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" 8 p.m., Sisterhood Hall. Refreshments. Members free, non-members $2. For more information, call 416-789-3213.

Other News

GOLF DAY

Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel, holds its 12th Annual Golf Day, Thursday, July 16, at Angus Glen, South Course. **Zohar Sharon**, Israeli world-champion blind golfer and a member of Beit Halochem, will also be playing. Enjoy golf, camaraderie, on-course activities, food and more. For more information, call Beit Halochem Canada, 905-695-0611.

PLAYDATE NURSERY

Carefully structured programs for toddlers at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. Choose from Me & My Bubbie, Me & My Mommy, Me & Shabbat, Me & My Nanny. 30 morning sessions from mid-October to mid-June. Play groups available for 1-2 years, and 2-3 years. Now taking registration for the fall/winter sessions. For more information, call 416-633-3838, ext. 289.

PROSTATE CANCER

Man to Man and Side by Side prostate cancer support groups present a prostate cancer awareness night meeting, July 29, 7:30 p.m., Toronto Botanical Garden Floral Hall, 777 Lawrence Ave. E. Guest speaker **Dr. Kenneth Pace**, on "Robotic-Assisted Radical Prostatectomy: Fact vs. Fiction." Free parking. For more information, call 416-932-8820.

ADULT MINI SCHOOL

Melton Adult Mini School offers sophisticated Jewish learning. No exams. No papers. Thirty weeks. For information, call **Loretta**, 416-633-3838, ext. 240, or 416-789-7400.

Continued on page 23

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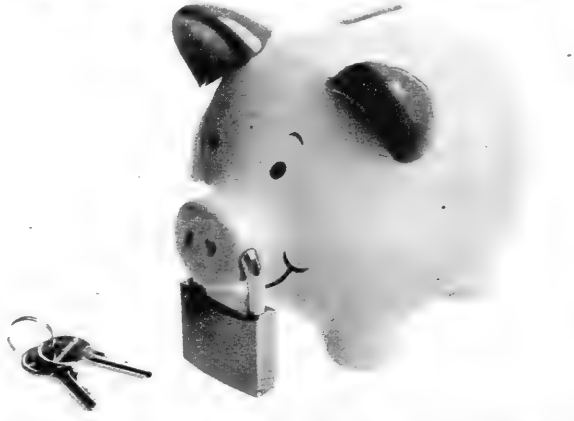

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TREE PLANTING:
The senior kindergarten students of United Synagogue Day School's Bathurst campus worked hard this past school year to raise money to plant trees in Israel. With the help of their teachers, Michelle Glassman, left, and Yonah Balsam, they raised enough money to plant 34 trees.

What's New

Continued from page 22

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Canadian Friends of Hebrew University presents a lecture series, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Unveiling Secrets of the Past, Revealing Truths in the Present," with world renowned scroll experts **Risa Levitt Kohn** and **Rachel Urowitz**. Various dates and locations. For more information, jlev@cfhu.org or www.cghu.org.

FOR SENIORS

Baycrest volunteer study – Are you a retired boomer (aged 55 and over) in good health, who is not currently volunteering? Sign up to volunteer at Baycrest and be part of a new study supported by the government of Canada that will examine the health benefits of volunteering. Call Baycrest Volunteer Services, 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park – Registration now open for Casino Rama, Wednesday, July 22. Casino Niagara, Tuesday, Aug. 18. Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, Aug. 13, noon. Social bridge, Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Bingo, Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Mah Jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. Non-members welcome. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell. For information, call 416-630-9444.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Summer session started the week of July 6. Register soon to avoid disappointment.

Tuesday, July 14, lecture with **Arnie Gotfryd** on "Creation versus Evolution: Is the Torah Literal or Literary?" 10-11:30 a.m. Members $3, non-members $6.

Wednesday, July 15, Betel Backyard BBQ. 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Members $5, non-members $8.

WAGMAN CENTRE, 55 Ameer Ave., 416-785-2500, ext. 2267. For program information, ext. 4637.

Flower pressing, July 14 and 28, 1 p.m.

Book Review Club facilitated by **Marilyn Fine**. Thursday, July 16, 1:30 p.m. classrooms A and B. Members will receive a copy of a book to read one month prior to each program.

Creative Arts Studio, glass painting on bowls, vases, even perfume bottles. Mondays 1-3 p.m.

Billiards Club – join fellow pool players every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, 2-4 p.m., Music Room.

Stay connected to friends and family through e-mail, or surf the net Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Internet Lounge.

E-Pals Program – exchange friendly weekly e-mail messages with trained volunteers, based on your interests, situation and language. Call ext. 2247.

Dear Abby Discussion Group meets Thursdays, 2-3 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge. Discuss real life delicate scenarios.

Early Riser Summer Breakfast Program. Begin the day with a healthy dairy breakfast. Fridays, July 17 and 31, from 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Cost $5 per day.

Torah Study Group held on Sundays, classroom A and B, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Soul Food Poetry Discussion Group. Learn the biographies of different poets and their work. Wednesdays, 3-4 p.m., Fireside Lounge.

Tea and Talk, Wednesday, July 29, 3-4 p.m., Assembly Room.

Emily Fern, recently returned from Peru, discusses her experiences working with burned children. Members $3, non-members $5. Must reserve at ext. 4637.

Summer youth volunteers will serve pareve chocolate and vanilla ice cream every Wednesday afternoon during July and August. Wagman Lobby, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Suffering from arthritis? See the massage therapist with Health in Motion at Terraces of Baycrest. Massage therapy releases soft tissues and improves lymph and blood circulation. Call **Inna**, 416-785-2500, ext. 5174, to book an appointment.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Active Seniors at Miles Nadal offers computer classes for beginners, starting in August. Learn how to use and send e-mail and more. For information, cost and registration, ext. 155.

Also from Active Seniors, **Ian Leventhal**, involved in the redevelopment of the early Jewish area in Shanghai, will talk about "The Jews of China, From the Silk Road to the Shanghai Ghettos." Includes audio-visual presentation. Thursday, July 16, 1:30 p.m. For information, ext. 155.

Fringe of Toronto Theatre Festival @ the J, until July 12. Sheep in Fog Theatre Group from Montreal presents *Puck Bunny*, by **Lindsay Wilson**, directed by **Alexandra West**, featuring **Joanne Sarazen**. Tickets $10. Phone 416-966-1062, or go to www.fringetoronto.com.

Register now for Summer Hebrew Courses. Modern Hebrew for Beginners, levels A and B; Intensive Grammar Course (Hebrew verb system); Expand Your Vocabulary (intermediate); Hebrew Through Song; Hebrew Grammar Essentials. To register, ext. 0. For more information, ext. 154, or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Cooking classes with **Elise Burton**, Easy Summer Soups and Salads. Register now: two classes July 21 and Aug. 26, 6:30-9 p.m. Fees $25 per class.

Zion Ozeri: One History, Many Stories, a family album of Israel at 60, is on in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space until Aug. 31. Co-presented with Koffler Centre of the Arts. Ext. 133, or harrietw@mnjcc.org.

Al Green Theatre offers discounted rental rates on its dance studio for the summer. Regular $40 per hour, summer discount $10-$20. Contact **Maytal Kowalski**, ext. 269, or tmaytalk@mnjcc.org.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

The outdoor pool is officially open. Call ext. 291 for pool membership.

Aged 13-16 and interested in learning about the Maccabi Games. Call **Grant** at ext. 257 or gsmith@bjcc.com.

WHAT'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES CHANGED

The new email addresses for sending submissions to What's New are lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 26

EDUCATION AWARD: Julia Koschitzky, chair of the L.A. Pinchus Fund for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, presents the Max M. Fisher Prize for Jewish Education in the Diaspora to Paul Shaviv, director of education at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

SCHOOL HONOURS TORONTO DOCTOR: Dr. Zane Cohen, chair of the division of general surgery at the University of Toronto and former chief of surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital, was the honoree at the recent Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School Tribute Gala. Cohen has taught doctors and surgeons from all over the world. Seen from left are Andrew Tanenbaum, gala co-chair Jodi Tanenbaum, honorary committee members Paul Pape and Gillian Lansdowne, Cohen and gala co-chair Aviva Rajsky.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL — Steeles Memorial Chapel

Dorothy Mills	Jun 20/09	115 Antibes Dr	Kapustin, Marat	June 19/09	Private
Cyla Feldmann	Jun 20/09	241 Rosepark Dr	Clinton, Helen	June 19/09	10 Kenneth Ave
Judith Hamburger	Jun 20/09	75 Graydon Hall Dr	Kiselyov, Iosif	June 20/09	10 Tangreen Crt
Dr. Sherwood Appleton	Jun 21/09	89 Skymark Dr	Geller, Anna Gola	June 21/09	273 Winnett Ave
Pauline Holtzman	Jun 23/09	15 Tangreen Crt	Rubinowicz, Eliasz	June 21/09	7300 Yonge St
Honey Kroch	Jun 23/09	1555 Finch Ave E	Bobrowsky, Rabbi Morris	June 22/09	63 Charleswood Dr
Marshall Korn	Jun 22/09	230 Worth Blvd	Landzberg, Brenda	June 22/09	368 Highcliffe Dr
Gary Katz	Jun 23/09	44 Jackes Ave	Muskat, Zelik	June 22/09	550 Glencairn Av
Wilfred (Chic) Salzman	Jun 25/09	449 Walmer Rd	Majerovic, Jakub	June 23/09	135 Antibes Dr
Bella Wosnick	Jun 27/09	79 White Lodge Cr	Khatinsky, Tuba	June 21/09	4300 Bathurst St
Minnie Saffer	Jun 27/09	29 Argonne Cr			
Erwin Dresner	Jun 26/09	23 Westgrove Cr			
William (Bill) Dicker	Jun 28/09	22 Regent St			

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HARRY LEWKOWICZ ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 26 at 11:00 a.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
Workmen's Circle Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Subscribe @ cjnews.com

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ANDREW LUKACS and EVA LUKACS ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.
Elgin Mills Cemetery
1 light east of Leslie St., just south of Elgin Mills
Oraynu Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend
For information please call Agi at 416-322-2107

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The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SALOMON DADOUN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Emeth Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling. To place any other related notice, please call 10 DAYS prior to publication date.

Obituary

Rabbi Kelman

Continued from page 3

Rabbi Abraham Kelman said that, when his brother saw there was a need, he responded, "because he cared deeply."

The closing of She'arim last year hurt Rabbi Kelman terribly, his brother said. "He was ready to go on an individual campaign to continue the work."

It was only at the behest of his family that he reluctantly agreed not to, his brother added.

"He was a gem of a person. In many ways he was a one and only."

One family member after another attested to Rabbi Kelman's devotion to them, despite the demands of the rabbinate and the hours he spent on community needs.

He spoke to his siblings and children every day, called his out-of-town grandchildren weekly before Shabbat, and wrote letters to his extended family following simchahs.

As well, Rabbi Jay Kelman said, his father never missed a family dinner, although he often left immediately afterward for a meeting.

Rabbi Maury Kelman spoke of his father's tremendous energy, idealism and constant desire to learn from everybody.

Rabbi Schild – a native of Germany who was welcomed into the Kelman family's Markham Street home as a refugee in the 1940s – recalled Rabbi Kelman's ability to mediate, and his rare combination of passion and a centrist philosophy.

"We often associate passion with the extremes," noted Rabbi Schild. "I think my friend and colleague exemplified the potential and the power of the middle.

"He could reach out to all members of the community, irrespective of their place on the social or economic or religious spectrum."

Rabbi Kelman "remained true to the traditional background of his family," said Rabbi Schild. "He considered himself an Orthodox rabbi, and yet he was able to lead a wonderful Conservative congregation to greatness in the community."

Rabbi Schild called Rabbi Kelman "a healing influence in the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the rabbinate in general… He embraced us all."

Rabbi Kelman, one of six children, was a native of Vienna who immigrated at age three. An eighth-generation rabbi, he lost his father, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kelman, at age nine. His mother, Mirl, only 36 at the time, was a national president of Mizrachi and an organizer of a march through Kensington Market to protest against Jewish businesses remaining open on Shabbat.

The future rabbi attended King Edward Public School, Harbord Collegiate and Yeshiva University, following studies with Toronto's Rabbi Abraham Price.

Rabbi Kelman married his first wife, Ruth, in 1953. She predeceased him in 1999. They lived in Quebec, New York and Massachusetts, where Rabbi Kelman served his first pulpits.

In 1959, they returned to Toronto and the fledgling Beth Emeth congregation. Under Rabbi Kelman's leadership, the shul grew to more than 1,500 families at the time of his retirement in 1997.

Gutenberg – who had returned from Israel to attend her father's funeral just 36 hours after celebrating her son's wedding – said her father "truly left this world having made a difference.

Her youngest brother, Rabbi Maury Kelman, had stayed in Toronto and kept the news of their father's death from her and their brother, Rabbi Jay Kelman, for 24 hours.

"One of the last conversations my father had was to tell Jay to come to the wedding," recalled Gutenberg, praising their younger brother's strength in ensuring that no one learned of their father's death until after the celebration. "You did what Daddy would have wanted you to do."

Rabbi Kelman leaves Sara, his wife of eight years; his brother Rabbi Abraham Kelman; his sister Claire Goldstein; his children Tova Gutenberg and rabbis Jay and Maury Kelman; and 10 grandchildren. He was predeceased by his first wife Ruth, and by his siblings Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Celia Silber and Tobie Silverman.

Feature

Little Synagogue opens in Calgary's Heritage Park

By RACHEL BARSKY
Special to The CJN

CALGARY — The Little Synagogue, the latest addition to Heritage Park Historical Village in Calgary, opened recently.

About 2,000 people celebrating the June 28 opening gathered at Switzer's Grocery and Confectionery in Heritage Town Square to begin a lively Torah procession through the gates of the park and into the Montefiore Institute, or, as it is known, the Little Synagogue.

The synagogue's opening and dedication is a dream come true for Irena Karshenbaum. Karshenbaum and the project's team of volunteers relocated and restored the tiny institute, which was built in 1916 on the Joseph Chetner farm near Sibbald, Alta., and served as a school, synagogue and community centre for about 30 Jewish families.

Harsh farming conditions caused the Jewish colonists to abandon the Montefiore Institute in,the 1930s. In 1937, the government sold the building to a non-Jewish family, who moved it to Hanna, Alta., and turned it into a two-bedroom home.

Emanuel Cohen, a board member of the Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society, tracked down the institute. The building had remained in the same family for generations, and they had no idea they were living in the Jewish settlers' institute, and one of the few surviving, original prairie shuls.

The society purchased the shul for $55,000 and transported it to Calgary. Volunteers worked tirelessly to raise funds – the project cost approximately $1 million – develop interpretative materials, gather and build furniture, and collect books to replicate the synagogue's library.

The society's efforts paid off. As Calgary businessman and philanthropist Sam Switzer installed the Montefiore Institute's Torah with the lieutenant-governor of Alberta, Norman Kwong, the pride and sheer happiness among the evening's participants was palpable.

These feelings continued throughout the ceremony, which was MCed by board member Daryl Fridhandler and included speeches by Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier; Kwong; Calgary Jewish Community Council president Gerry Barron; Calgary Centre MP Lee Richardson; Heritage Park president and CEO, Alida Visbach; Karshenbaum, and Culture and Community Spirit Minister Lindsay Blackett.

The speakers said that the Little Synagogue symbolizes the Canadian values of diversity, inclusion and freedom of religion, and that the Jewish community has contributed to Alberta since the province's first Jewish pioneers arrived in 1889, and to Canada as a whole. The speakers also said that that the Little Synagogue will expose many non-Jewish visitors to Heritage Park to the province's Jewish history.

When people visit the Montefiore Institute, they will come away not only with a deeper sense of Jewish culture and religion, said Kwong, but also with a deeper sense of the things that unite us all, regardless of our backgrounds.

Cutting the ribbon to open the Little Synagogue are, from left, Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society president Irena Karshenbaum; Mary Kwong, wife of Alberta's lieutenant-governor, and Lt.-Gov. Norman Kwong. [Rachel Barsky photos]

Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society president Karshenbaum's speech was especially touching. It is the 120th anniversary of Jewish life in Calgary, she said.

Thirty years ago, Karshenbaum and her parents immigrated to Canada from the former Soviet Union.

"Where I come from, we had to hide being Jewish," she recalled, in tears. "With the Montefiore Institute, the Jewish community is not hiding – we are celebrating who we are."

Karshenbaum told the crowd about her father, Ilya, who died shortly before she began the project. She said that after her family had immigrated, her father received a letter from a non-Jewish woman in Moscow who needed a wheelchair. Her father raised the money for the wheelchair, purchased it on his next visit to Moscow and gave it to the woman. "What is your wheelchair project, your Little Synagogue project, your tikkun olam?" Karshenbaum asked the crowd.

After prayers and the blowing of a shofar by Darryl Gurevitch, Karshenbaum and Kwong cut the ribbon.

Members of the community spoke about the significance of the Montefiore Institute at the event.

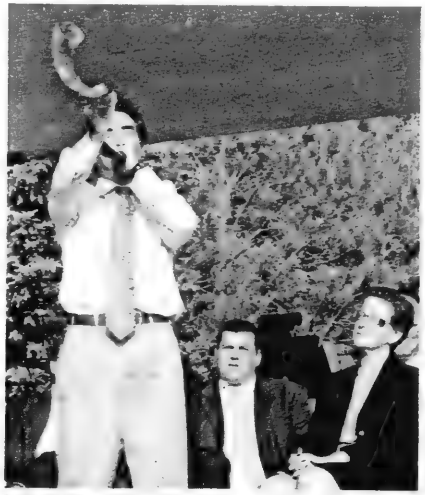
Fridhandler said: "Remembering history is so important. We're bringing Jewish culture and the community into the public space, so others can learn about our religious traditions."

Becky Rabinovitch, 23, said: "The fact that you have so many people who haven't come out to events in years come to this event is a testimonial to how important it is. It's just really cool."

Calgary realtor Gary Fayerman said: "I think it's really important that the Jewish community gets behind anything that's important to Jewish heritage and culture in Calgary. It's nice to see young kids performing, and that so many people came out."

Cantor Alex Stein led the choirs of Akiva Academy, the Calgary Jewish Academy and Voices Jewish Senior's Choir in singing *Hatikvah* and *Shehechiyanu*. The reception included music and dancing with singer Florence Shustack and the "Take the OY Train" Klezmer Ensemble.

For more information about the Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project, visit www.littlesynagogue.ca.



Darryl Gurevitch blows the shofar at the Little Synagogue's opening .

A Torah procession begins the Little Synagogue's opening ceremony.

The Montefiore Institute, also known as the Little Synagogue, is the latest addition to Heritage Park Historical Village in Calgary.

On Campus

Journalism student wins award

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

When 19-year-old Josh Cooper began his academic career in broadcast journalism to pursue his dream of becoming a sports broadcaster, he never imagined he'd be accepting an award for a radio documentary he produced on Holocaust denial.

Late last month, Cooper – who completed a two-year broadcast journalism program at Fanshaw College in London, Ont., and will begin the third-year post-graduate program at the college to study television news in September – beat out more than 30 hopefuls to receive a $2,000 award for the best second-, third- or fourth-year entry at an annual contest held by the Radio and Television News Directors' Foundation in Toronto.

Josh Cooper, right, receiving the award from RTNDF President Ken Kingston

The RTNDF was established by the Association of Electronic Journalists in 1978 to offer financial assistance to students in Canada.

The four-minute piece for which Cooper received the award was inspired by the Pope's decision in January to lift the excommunication order against Bishop Richard Williamson, who said he doubted the accuracy of the accepted facts about the Holocaust.

Bishop Williamson was quoted in an interview with Swedish television, saying that "the historical evidence is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler" and that "there were no gas chambers."

He also said that only 200,000 to 300,000 Jews perished in Nazi concentration camps.

The piece also makes mention of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has often made claims that the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust are greatly exaggerated, the Nazis did not have a plan to systematically annihilate the Jews and that gas chambers were not used to kill Jews en masse.

Speaking about the phenomenon of Holocaust denial, Cooper interviewed 87-year-old Holocaust survivor Wolf Schweitzer and London-area Rabbi Mordechai Silberberg.

Although reporting about issues such as Holocaust denial is a far cry from sports broadcasting, Cooper said that his Jewish background and his interest in Middle East politics influenced his decision to tackle the issue for a class assignment.

"I've gotten more into news since I began the program, and I've done more news pieces. I'm very interested in Middle Eastern politics. I'd heard what Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been saying, and I had connections to speak to a Holocaust survivor and it all worked out perfectly," Cooper said.

He said that when he heard about the RTNDF contest from his professor, he thought about which of his pieces would make the best submission.

"I got better marks on other documentaries, but I felt that it was a historical tragedy and it will touch people's hearts, but at the same time, it was a newsworthy subject, so it was perfect," Cooper said.

He said that it was only at the award ceremony that he realized he would have to speak after the award was presented to him.

"I didn't know that. So, I'm not the best public speaker," he said with a laugh.

"My dad gave me a pin to wear, made of gold and diamonds. It was my grandfather's. They gave it to him when he [completed] 50 years in [his field of] dentistry. I wore that. He died a year ago, but the day I accepted the award was his birthday," Cooper recalled.

He added that beyond the recognition for his work, he was happy he had the opportunity to shmooze with some of the broadcasting industry's well-known figures such as Scott Metcalfe from the radio station 680 News in Toronto.

"This weekend was just such a great weekend. I did a lot of networking. I might have an internship with 680 News set up."

Cooper said he still has ambitions to work in sports broadcasting, "but for now, I'm keeping my options open. I'd love to work in news."

שיאר נינו

גידי קורן וחברים

מה יהיה

ריב מוחלט של ישראלים מתנגדים לבניה בהתנחלויות, אובאמה הבהיר שעל כך תקום או תיפול תמיכתו בישראל, ועכשיו כל מדינות השוק האירופי הצטרפו לקריאה. וליברמן, שר החוץ הישראלי, מודיע לשרת החוץ האמריקאה קלינטון שהוא ימשיך לבנות בהתנחלויות. בביקורו בצרפת הציע נשיא צרפת סארקוזי לנתניהו, בצעד מאוד לא פולוטיקאלי קורקט, להפטר מליברמן. מה שמעניין אותי לגבי הפגישה הזאת, שנערכה בארבע עיניים, איך היא הודלפה? הרי לסארקוזי אין עניין להדליפה, וסביר להניח שדקה אחרי הפגישה עם נתניהו הוא עבר לעסוק בעניינים אחרים ושכח ממנה, כך שסביר יותר שהמדליף בא ממחנה נתניהו. עוד תכונה ישראלית מגונה- הדלפות ופה גדול.

כך או כך, מדינה דמוקרטית כמו ישראל מנהלת מדיניות חוץ קיצונית שרוב אזרחיה מתנגדים לה. זהו סימפטום מסוכן של שיטת בחירות פסולה שבה המיעוט יכול לשלוט על הרוב. עד שלא תונהג בישראל שיטת בחירות אזורית, שמאפשרת למספר קטן של מפלגות לשלוט ולייצג- תמשיך הפוליטיקה הישראלית להיראות כמו זאת של איטליה. אלא שלאיטליה אין סיכוים קיומיים מהסוג של ישראל, והיא יכולה לאפשר לעצמה ראשי ממשלה שמכהנים בממוצע שנה וחצי.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

אמנסטי

אמנסטי אינטרנשיונאל קבעה שגם החמאס וגם ישראל בצעו פשעי מלחמה בעזה. אני מפקפק בקביעה זו. פשעי חמאס הוכחו מעל לכל במה, כולל הפגזה מאסיבית של אזרחי ישראל לאורך שנים. ישראל נגררה בתוך שעבר למלחמה בניגוד לרצונה, ובה הצליחה להסביר לחמאס שלא ישתלם לו להתקיף. למיטב הבנתי עשה צה"ל את כל שביכולתו להגביל את מספר הקורבנות שלנו. היה ברור שלחמאס חמאס בשטח בנוי, תוך הסוואה בין ילדים ונשים, תביא לקורבנות רבים. להאשים את ישראל בפשעי מלחמה זה בערך כמו להאשים אדם שתוקף את מי שמנסה להורגו. הביטוי התלמודי "הקם להורגך- השכם והרגו" מעולם לא היה כל כך נכון!

אבל ישראל יכולה לעשות עבודה יעילה יותר להסברת מצבה. יד על הלב- כל אחד מאיתנו חייב להתגייס למשימה זאת ולא לחכות רק לנציגי המדינה הרשמיים שעושים זאת בכל הזדמנות במסגרת עבודתם. בחודש האחרון יצא לי מספר פעמים להסביר את המצב הישראלי למדענים מארצות שונות שהתעניינו מה קורה במזרח התיכון. אחרי הקשבה מרוכזת, בכל המקרים הם הזדהו עם מצבינו והסכימו שגם הם לא היו מוכנים להיות מותקפים על ידי טרוריסטים מעבר לגבול.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

ב"ה

A World of Jewish Experience

The Clergy, Executive, Board of Directors and Staff of the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue extend heartfelt condolences on behalf of the entire congregational family, to Sara Schafler Kelman, Rabbi Abraham Kelman, Claire Goldstein Tova Gutenberg, Rabbi Jay Kelman, Rabbi Maury Kelman and families on the passing of their beloved husband, brother, father and grandfather

Rabbi Joseph Kelman ז"ל

Acknowledging Rabbi Kelman's many years of devoted service and accomplishments to our Synagogue and the Jewish Community. He was a pillar of our community and an inspiration to all who knew him. He will be deeply missed.
May his memory be for a blessing and may the Kelman family find comfort with all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue | www.bebi.org
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Cotler urges Germany to clamp down on Iran

By BENJAMIN WEINTHAL
Special to The CJN

BERLIN — Former Canadian justice minister and current Liberal MP Irwin Cotler is urging the German government to take a leadership role within the European Union and impose tough, multi-pronged sanctions on Iran.

"Germany is uniquely placed to take leadership… Germany can speak with moral authority born out of its understanding of state-sanctioned incitement to genocide," said Cotler, a Mount Royal MP and the Liberal party's special counsel on human rights and international justice.

He made the comments last Thursday at a forum at Berlin's Jewish community centre titled "Western Democracies, Iran and the Prevention of Genocide," which was sponsored by the Coordinating Council of German Non-governmental Organizations Against Anti-Semitism.

Iran's president has threatened to "wipe Israel off the map," and the Islamic republic has been sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council for refusing to suspend its nuclear enrichment program, which can be used to make nuclear weapons. Iran claims its nuclear program is for civilian use.

"Here is an opportunity for leverage," said Cotler about Germany's $5.7-billion dollar trade relationship with Iran. He sharply criticized Daniel Bernbeck, the head of the German-Iranian Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Tehran, who told Associated Press that he sees "no moral question here at all" about commencing business deals with Iran during its suppression of the popular movement against recent Iranian election results.

An "important role for civil society is to hold the Daniel Bernbecks to account," Cotler said.

In early June, Cotler introduced the Iran Accountability Act (IAA) in Parliament, which seeks to pressure Tehran to modify its behaviour in three areas: human rights, adherence to the international Genocide Convention, and its nuclear weapons program. The IAA would sanction firms that refine petroleum for Iran's gas-starved economy and would allow Ottawa to disrupt the operation of businesses supporting Iran's military and nuclear sectors.

In contrast to U.S. legislation, which focuses exclusively on economic sanctions, the IAA also aims to force Iran to comply with the Genocide Convention and international law.

Lax trade regulations in Germany concerning the supply of so-called dual-use technology, which can be used for military and civilian purposed, caused an unfolding scandal involving the German engineering giant Siemens. The company sold surveillance technology last year to the Iranian regime that was used to block and monitor Internet, Twitter and cellphone communications of protesters after the June 12 election, which Iranian opposition leaders and external observers say was rigged in favour of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Cotler said the IAA can be a "model or template that other parliaments can adopt."

When asked whether German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who is also the Social Democratic Party candidate for chancellor, would seek comparable legislation to sanction Iran, foreign ministry spokesperson Niklas Wagner told *The CJN* in an e-mail that with respect to Iran's nuclear program, Steinmeier will "continue to push hard within [Germany's] federal government and within the European Union" for sanctions if Tehran doesn't compromise.

Critics argue that Germany's "discouragement strategy," which urges German firms to voluntarily restrict trade with Iran, has failed – in 2008, commerce mushroomed by 10.5 per cent over 2007.

Germany has consistently been Iran's largest EU trading partner.

Asked about Cotler's appeal to the German government to initiate a criminal legal proceeding charging Ahmadinejad with violating the Geneva Convention's prohibition against incitement to genocide, Wagner said, "The federal government and the foreign office have frequently taken a clear position on the unacceptable anti-Semitic statements on Israel by Iranian politicians.

"These statements are completely irresponsible and unacceptable and demand our joint condemnation. We will continue to respond decisively to such statements in the future."

Daniel Barbarie, a spokesperson for Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, told *The CJN* that "Canada already has in place restrictions to limit relations with Iran under the Tightened Controlled Engagement Policy" and has brought its laws in line with UN Security Council restrictions on Iranian nuclear research.

He added that Canada "will continue monitoring developments related to Iran's nuclear program and reviewing our options on potential further action."

Cotler urged the international community, particularly Germany, to engage in "political action" because "silence is not an option" and "indifference is a danger." He cited the example of Canada not participating in the recent UN anti-racism followup conference, known as Durban II, due to the expectation it would be an anti-Israel and anti-Semitic affair.

"It takes one to exercise moral leadership. Canada did it with Durban II. Germany can do it with Iran."

'Israel can determine for itself'

Continued from page 1

Before the protests in Iran began, Israel's assessment was that the planned American-Iranian dialogue had little chance of succeeding, the official said. But in light of the protests and the Iranian hard-liners' need to shore up their rule, Israel's intelligence community believes the chances of the dialogue even beginning, much less succeeding, are near zero.

However, Washington has so far rejected the "Plan B" idea.

American officials have told their Israeli counterparts they are aware of the frustration in Israel, Europe and the Gulf states over Washington's insistence on going ahead with the dialogue with Iran, and that they also do not believe the chances of success are high.

Nevertheless, they said, if the United States starts laying the groundwork for stiffer sanctions now, this would signal to the Iranians that Obama is not serious about dialogue with Tehran, which would foil any chances of success that the dialogue might have.

Israeli officials said co-operation with Germany, Britain and France has been fruitful, and that the three European powers have been working with Israel to achieve two goals: getting the United States to assess the progress of the dialogue with Iran during the UN General Assembly meeting in September rather than waiting another few months, and securing publication of the military appendix to the International Atomic Energy Agency report on Iran due to be submitted in September.

Meanwhile, U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden said Sunday that Israel will decide for itself whether to attack Iran.

In an interview with ABC television, Biden said: "Israel can determine for itself – it's a sovereign nation – what's in their interest and what they decide to do relative to Iran and anyone else. Whether we agree or not, they're entitled to do that. Any sovereign nation is entitled to do that."

Biden insisted that pressure from Israel or other countries would not affect the Americans' planned dialogue with Iran. "There is no pressure from any nation that is going to alter our behaviour as to how to proceed," he said, adding that Washington believes this dialogue serves America's interests, as well as those of Israel and the rest of the world.

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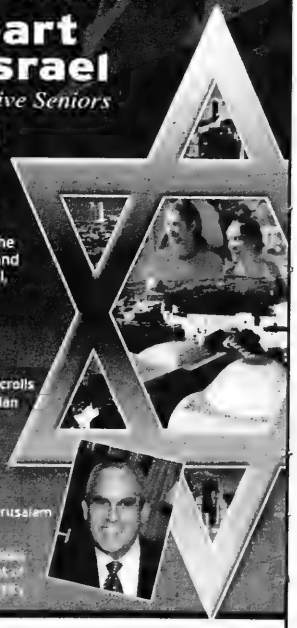

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Israel Briefs

Schalit an honorary Italian

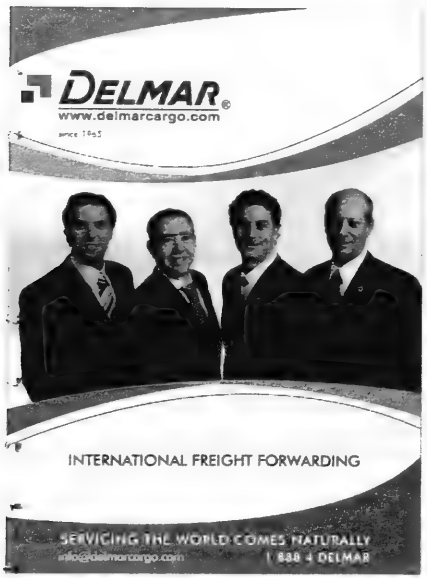
Rome has given honorary citizenship to Gilad Schalit, the Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas three years ago. Schalit's father, Noam, was in Rome to receive the honour in a July 1 ceremony at city hall. A giant photo of the soldier hung in the piazza, with the words "Rome wants its citizen Gilad Schalit free" – words Rome Mayor Gianni Alemanno repeated at the evening ceremony.

Amnesty report biased: Israel

Amnesty International was manipulated by Hamas in its report that accused Israel of committing war crimes during its Gaza military operation, the Israeli army said. "We find it both questionable and objectionable that a well-respected and ostensibly objective international organization such as Amnesty could produce a report on Operation Cast Lead without properly recognizing the unbearable reality of nine years of incessant and indiscriminate rocket fire on the citizens of Israel," read a statement released from the office of the spokesperson of the Israel Defence Forces. The report released July 2 accused Israeli forces of using civilians, including children, as human shields and conducting random attacks on civilians during the operation in December and January. The IDF spokesperson said that "the IDF utilized various fighting methods and advanced technology to minimize harm to the civilian population, while engaging terrorists who were operating from densely populated areas and using the local population as a human shield."Amnesty said in its report that it didn't find any evidence that Hamas used civilians as human shields. But in a small section of the 117-page report, it said rocket attacks from Gaza against Israel "constitute war crimes."

Submarine sails Suez Canal

An Israeli submarine sailed the Suez Canal to the Red Sea as part of a naval drill last month, defence sources said, describing the unusual manoeuvre as a show of strategic reach in the face of Iran. Israel has long kept its three Dolphin-class submarines, which are widely assumed to carry nuclear missiles, away from the Suez so as not to expose them to the gaze of Egyptian harbourmasters.



Last chance for Holocaust restitution?

By DINAH SPRITZER
JTA

Analysis

It has the tone of a newspaper from Berlin in 1936, except it's from Vilnius in 2009.

The face of a rabbi is enlarged on the cover of a Lithuanian tabloid with the words, "Give it now!" emblazoned across the top. The subject, Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of international affairs for the American Jewish Committee, is cast as the villain, looking down on a miniature Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, portrayed as defenceless at the hands of some Shylock.

The image, which appeared on the June 26 edition of the popular right-wing daily *Vakaro Zinios* (*Evening News*), alludes to Rabbi Baker's demand that the Lithuanian government return Jewish property after eight years of promises to do so.

In lieu of restitution, Lithuania wants to pay just one-third of the value of Jewish property confiscated by the Nazis and Communists – $46 million – over 10 years and starting in 2011.

Lithuania's Jews and their advocates, including Rabbi Baker, are not satisfied.

"It is far too little, far too late," he says.

The Lithuania case represents the stalling tactics, lack of political will and nationalist-fuelled resentment of Jews that have frustrated efforts by Jewish owners, heirs and their advocates to recover property stolen by the Nazis and the Communists in central and eastern Europe.

The economic crisis has made it even more difficult to get local politicians to take action on restitution.

In a significant gesture, 46 countries last month signed a declaration at the close of a Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague aimed at easing the restitution process for Jewish property taken during the Nazi era. The Terezin Declaration is a non-binding set of guiding principles aimed at faster, more open and transparent restitution of art and private and communal property taken by force or under duress during the Holocaust.

However, questions linger over what such a document can accomplish with only the power of moral force.

"Back in the late 1990s, NATO membership was a driving motivation for countries in eastern Europe, who were told by the U.S. government that how they treated their Jews will be a key factor in their admission," Rabbi Baker said.

This was in stark contrast to the European Union, which did not make any demands for restitution. In fact, the European Union lifted a requirement for restitution that would have blocked Poland's 2004 admission to the 27-country union.

Pressured by the United States and Jewish groups since the fall of the Iron Curtain two decades ago, most countries previously under the sway of the Soviet Union have made some attempts at communal and private restitution or compensation.

There are two major sore spots within the European Union: Poland and Lithuania. Poland, where three million Jews lived before World War II – the largest Jewish prewar population in any country – has no private restitution law for Jews or non-Jews.

In the area of looted art, progress has been much slower than for compensating the rightful owners of confiscated properties.

The U.S. government estimates that 600,000 paintings were looted by the Nazis, with 100,000 still not accounted for.

Forty-four countries agreed to another set of non-binding principles on the return of looted art at a 1998 conference in Washington, but only four countries have made "major progress" in implementing the principles, according to the Claims Conference, and 23 have made no significant progress.

The Washington principles were supposed to ease the claims process and called for greater research into collections, the opening of archives and the removal of barriers for claimants, such as statutes of limitations and export laws.

Hungary, a signatory to the Washington agreement, is one of several countries in the no-progress category.

"The Hungarian experience may be described as a total and concerted effort by successive governments to keep the looted art in their museums, even if it requires that the museums conceal or destroy archival evidence or deliberately lengthen negotiations – effectively delaying legal actions that would be filed against the state," Agnes Peresztegi, a lawyer with the Commission for Art Recovery, told attendees of the Prague conference.

In the Czech Republic, only direct heirs of deceased owners, not nieces or nephews, can make art claims, even though this contravenes Czech inheritance law.

In the United States, claimants often must wage lengthy legal battles against museums because there is no national arbitration commission.

In most countries, museums do not even know if their art was looted because they cannot afford to document the history of their holdings.

To address these obstacles, the declaration in Prague calls for the establishment of a Holocaust institute in Terezin, where the concentration camp was located. The institute would study "best practices" in compensation, restitution, looted art research, Holocaust education, care for Holocaust survivors and combating anti-Semitism.

Claimants face obstacles

JTA

PRAGUE — Claimants of looted art, communal property or private property face serious obstacles in 10 European Union countries.

• Poland: Has not enacted any form of private restitution or compensation for an estimated $30.5 billion worth of property confiscated by Nazis or Communists. The Jewish share of claims on those properties is estimated at 20 to 27 per cent. Poland has a slow and burdensome process for restitution of Jewish communal property. Since 1997, 5,500 claims were filed, but only 1,625 were adjudicated.

• Lithuania: Has not enacted communal property restitution. The government had offered to pay $46 million over 10 years to a Jewish fund – about one-third of the value of the claimed properties – starting in 2011, before shifting recently and suggesting that such a fund might contravene Lithuanian law. A number of cultural institutions in Lithuania hold looted Jewish artifacts, and little to no provenance research has been done on holdings. Lithuania's claims process for private property bars non-citizens from making claims.

• Germany: Has supported the return of looted art, but in May it acknowledged that museums and galleries still have thousands of looted works. Provenance research, documentation of ownership and sales history are underfunded. The government commission that handles art claims is viewed as ineffective because it requires the permission of the current art owners to mediate cases. Researchers claim museums and archives are frequently unco-operative. On property restitution, Germany is the leading European Union member to return Jewish properties.

• Ireland: Never signed the 1998 Washington Principles on Looted Art, which would require provenance research and facilitation of the claims process. The Simon Wiesenthal Center has accused the Hunt Museum, one of Ireland's greatest private collections, of housing looted art, but an Irish investigatory commission cleared the museum of wrongdoing.

• Greece: Little to no provenance research has been conducted at its numerous state museums.

• Hungary: Blocks nearly all attempts to retrieve looted art. The National Gallery and Museum of Fine Arts hold looted art.

• Romania: Has excessively slow and burdensome Jewish communal property restitution. Three hundred of 1,980 claims have been adjudicated since 1997.

• Slovenia: Private property is returned only to current citizens, and only if it was confiscated in 1945 or after.

• Bulgaria: Does not conduct provenance research at its museums.

• Spain: Has looted art in its cultural institutions, but Spain does not conduct provenance research on art.

In related developments, the Jewish Holocaust Survivors of Canada (JHSC) welcomed the signing of the Terezin Declaration that emerged from the Holocaust-Era Assets Conference in Prague, Czech Republic last month. The conference examined restitution progress made in the decade since the 1999 Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets and included a component on the welfare of survivors of the Holocaust and other victims of Nazi oppression. **–D.S.**

Israel & the Jewish World

Einstein lives on — at Hebrew U

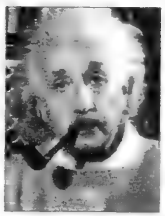
By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

When one hears the name Albert Einstein, most often the image of a brilliant physicist with white, wild hair wearing a white lab coat comes to mind.

Fewer think of Einstein as a dedicated Zionist, a pacifist, the co-founder of an Israeli university and a compassionate promoter of human rights.

In June, during a six-day trip to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, sponsored by the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University – a non-profit organization that promotes and raises funds for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with chapters from coast to coast – six Canadian journalists visited the Albert Einstein Archives located at the Edmond Safra campus.

Since 1982, when the executors of Einstein's estate transferred all literary rights to Einstein's works to Hebrew U – as stipulated in his will that he drafted in 1950, five years before his death – the archives staff have promised to keep Einstein accessible.



Albert Einstein

"As we say, we own Einstein, but we share him with the entire world," said Hanoch Gutfreund, the president emeritus of Hebrew U and the co-ordinator of Einstein-related events that involve the university.

Roni Grosz, curator of the archives, said that since the early '80s, the archives has almost doubled, with more than 75,000 items to date – including books, letters and photographs.

He said that while they have the biggest collection of original Einstein material, much of the material is not original because in some cases, letters he wrote are held by heirs of a recipient, or by collectors, in which case, the archives may have acquired a carbon copy of the letter.

"We have manuscripts, we have drafts, we have material that is in his original hand, but we don't have very many outgoing letters. Sometimes we get them back, sometimes we buy them back, sometimes we get donations," Grosz said.

"Nowadays, a lot of this goes to auction and the simplest Einstein letter, a two-liner with no content, that says, 'Thank you very much for your birthday wishes for my 60th birthday,' [would fetch] $3,000," he said, adding that letters with much more substance can sell for more than $15,000.

He said the goal is to collect every communication that was written by him.

Of course, the collection will never be complete because when Einstein died in 1955, his secretary of about 27 years who was also a close friend and a co-trustee of his estate, destroyed some of his writings that she considered too private or would put him in an unfavourable light. Sitting in a room surrounded by Einstein's personal library, Gutfreund and Grosz shared some of his letters, photographs and other archival items to help paint a picture of the kind of man Einstein was beyond his scientific achievements.

Gutfreund said that Einstein wrote in his own words that there was nothing that evoked his "Jewish sentiments" until 1914, when he was 35 years old.

"This was the first time he encountered anti-Semitism in Germany, which really gained momentum and became very significant immediately after World War I when the Jews became the scapegoat of everything that happened to the Germans," Gutfreund said.

"It is then that Einstein – being that he was a very compassionate human being – used every public arena to speak out against anti-Semitism. He wrote a lot about anti-Semitism and he spoke about anti-Semitism not emotionally, but as a physicist – that this is a phenomenon of nature that we have to understand."

Gutfreund explained that in 1919, Einstein joined the Zionist movement, but his interpretation was different from mainstream Zionism.

"For many years he did not accept the goal of Zionism as a country with borders and with an army. He was thinking more in terms of a cultural and spiritual home for the Jews wherever they lived. Very gradually he shifted and supported the State of Israel when it was already independent," he said.

"He considered Zionism as a set of values, cultural values, not necessarily religious rituals… He very emotionally and intellectually adopted what he perceived as the nature of Judaism – the pursuit of knowledge and learning for its own sake, human dignity, human rights, the values of the Jewish prophets – and for that he thanked the stars that he belonged to this group, to this tribe, to this race."

Gutfreund said that Einstein's most prominent association with the Zionist movement was his commitment to Hebrew U, which he co-founded 23 years before the State of Israel was established in 1925.

In 1923, he travelled to what was then Palestine, for his first and only visit to the country, to deliver a lecture on Mount Scopus, which is now part of the Hebrew U campus.

"The lecture is a story in itself. The lecture was delivered two years before the official opening of the university. He started with a few words in Hebrew, which he memorized, and he apologized for not being able to speak in the language of his forefathers. Then he spoke for 1-1/2 hours in French about the general theory of relativity," Gutfreund said.

Although Einstein would eventually decline an invitation to become Israel's second president in 1952, he worked to promote dialogue with Arab leaders who were unhappy about the acquisition of land by Zionists in the Middle East.

"Einstein wrote letters to Palestinian newspaper editors in hopes of convincing them that the Zionist ideology would benefit the entire region," Gutfreund said.

"He suggested to form a secret council where Jews and Arabs would each send four representatives who would be completely independent of any political body… These eight people would meet once a week.

"This is anecdotal, but it was very serious. This is how the man thought, this is how he operated. He did have impact."

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Mr. & Mrs. Ben Israel
Carol, Judith and Nachum
Wish their relatives, friends & neighbours a happy and healthy New Year

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Odet's play a tale of hardship and disappointment

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

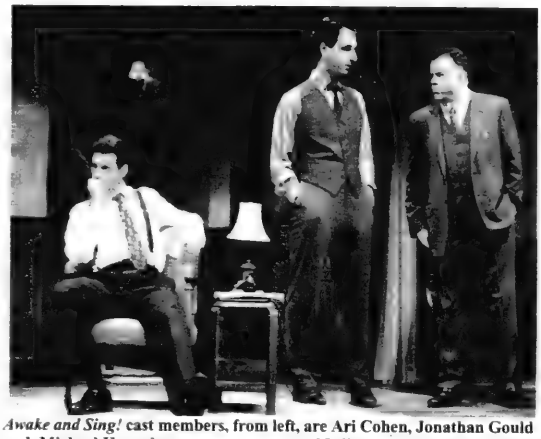
Although writer Clifford Odets' play *Awake and Sing!* was written more than 70 years ago, his characters' struggles are timeless.

In the early 1930s, when Odets was an aspiring actor, he was denied the lead role in a play called *Success Story* and forced to be the understudy of fellow actor Luther Adler. Fuelled by frustration and resentment, Odets wrote his first play, *Awake and Sing!*, a somewhat autobiographical tale about three generations of a New York Jewish family named Berger, during the Depression. As the family struggles to hold onto their dreams, conflicts arise, as grown children are living with their parents during tough economic times.

Playing at Toronto's Young Centre for the Performing Arts until July 31, *Awake and Sing!* is produced by Soulpepper Theatre Company and directed by Miles Potter. Staged in the Bergers' modest fifth-floor Bronx apartment, the set is designed by Peter Hartwell with scenes taking place in the family's meagre living room and dining areas.

Soulpepper's Nancy Palk is convincing as Bessie, the matriarch, a cruel, domineering Jewish mother who forsakes her dreams to raise a family. Disappointed that her daughter, Hennie (Sarah Wilson), is 26 years old, unmarried and dreams of marrying a millionaire, she provokes her: "When I was your age, it was already a big family with responsibilities."

Bessie suggests Hennie marry Sam Feinschreiber (Matthew Edison), who is fond of her, but Hennie protests.



Awake and Sing! cast members, from left, are Ari Cohen, Jonathan Gould and Michael Hanrahan. [Cylla von Tiedemann photo]

"I'm not marrying a poor foreigner like him. Can't even speak an English word. Not me! I'll go to my grave without a husband."

But when Hennie gets pregnant, her plans for the future are crushed. Bessie talks her into marrying Sam, devising a plan to invite him over for dinner, hoping he'll propose by the weekend and believe it's his baby.

Palk is believable as the martyr who feels she is both mother and father to her children and rants and raves in her high-pitched voice about her family's lack of appreciation for her. But she later reveals that she also wanted to escape her destiny. "My whole life, I wanted to go away, too, but with children, a woman stays home. A fire burned my heart too, but now it's too late."

Jonathan Gould aptly plays the role of Bessie's naive son, Ralph, 22, who struggles to maintain a relationship with his non-Jewish girlfriend, Blanche, without the approval of his mother.

"Only just remember I pay some of the bills around here, just a few," he announces, "and if my girl calls me on the phone, I'll talk to her any time I please."

Bessie's father, Jacob (William Webster), escapes his daughter's sharp criticism by reading Karl Marx and listening to recordings of Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. Too old to achieve his dream, Jacob encourages his grandson, Ralph, to stand up for what's right in society and "make history."

But the one to watch is Ari Cohen, cleverly cast as the family friend Moe Axelrod, who skilfully delivers his biting yet humorous remarks. Bitter about the loss of his leg in World War I and his inability to live out his dream, he tries to win back Hennie, his true love.

The play moves slowly at first, but the pace picks up in the second act, which proves to be emotional and gripping.

Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 55 Mill St., Building 49, Distillery District. Tickets from $28-$68 available at Young Centre box office 416.866.8666 or visit www.soulpepper.ca

$20 tickets for 21-30 year olds at www.stageplay.ca.

Michael Jackson and the Jewish nose

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

VIENNA — Amid all the noisy outpouring over Michael Jackson's sudden death, the last place I expected to find him was in a Jewish museum. But there he was, his pale, mask-like, surgically engineered image featured as part of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum here.

Called *Typical! – Cliches of Jews and Others*, the exhibition deals with the use (and abuse) of ethnic stereotypes in popular culture. The exhibition, which runs until October, has been shown at the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Spertus Museum in Chicago.

In a life-size photograph from 2002, he is shown with lank black hair framing a long, square stubbly chin, pinched red mouth, huge made-up eyes and a tiny nose with distorted pointy tip.

The photo is used to illustrate how, for better or worse, the King of Pop attempted to destroy stereotypes and, literally, to cut himself away from the confines of physical definition.

The exhibition deals with stereotypes commonly used to categorize African Americans, Muslims, women, Native Americans and others.

But given that it is mounted at a Jewish museum, much of its focus is on stereotypes about Jews. The exhibition poster employs a few sketched strokes to conjure up some: corkscrew curls, a hat and a huge hooked nose.

Indeed, the multitude of variations on the (alleged) size and shape of the Jewish nose form a major theme.

A section called "the schnoz," for example, shows a collection of 19th century walking sticks whose handles are formed by exaggerated noses. The contemporary artist Dennis Kardon's installation "Jewish Noses" features dozens of larger-than-life-sized casts made from the noses of actual Jews to demonstrate the silliness of such nasal cliches.

The inclusion of Jackson's picture in the mix highlighted the transformations his own nose infamously went through.

It also reminded me of a book I read some years ago, a vicious anti-Semitic satire called *The Operated Jew*, that was written in 1893 by a German doctor named Oskar Panizza.

An attack on efforts by Jews to assimilate into mainstream society, the book is a creepy and extremely disturbing tale about how a Jew named Itzig Faitel Stern tries to rid himself physically of the stereotypical signs of his Jewishness and become a "modern" European.

Foreshadowing Jackson's experiences under the knife, Stern submits to radical procedures, including the straightening and bleaching of his hair, *Extreme Makeover*-style cosmetic surgery, and a series of horrendous operations to straighten his bones. He even gets a full transfusion of "Christian" blood.

Panizza, an early exponent of Nazi-style racial anti-Semitism, set out to "prove" that Jews could never become part of the mainstream modern world, even if they physically attempted to change their skins.

It's not exactly clear what world Jackson was trying to become part of – or leave – with his surgeries and other transformations.

Artistically he was the ultimate crossover, winning fans of all colours, ages, religions, nationalities and sexual orientations all around the world. Over the years, though, he alienated some African Americans by his physical manipulation of identity and apparent ambivalence about his own blackness.

Death, though, appears to have brought Jackson back to his roots – or in any case to a warm embrace by the African-American community.

"We want to celebrate this black man," the actor and singer Jamie Foxx said to cheers at the Black Entertainment Television Music Awards. "He belongs to us, and we shared him with everybody else.

"It didn't matter what he looked like, it was all about what he sounded like. It didn't matter what his nose looked like – I loved the old nose and the new nose."

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Arts & Travel

Manuela Hoffmann in her restaurant.

Bleibergs specializes in vegetarian kosher food. [Sheldon Kirshner photos]

Bleibergs is a unique Berlin kosher restaurant

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

BERLIN — This cosmopolitan city of 3.4 million inhabitants prides itself on its dazzling array of restaurants and cafes, but there is no other restaurant in Berlin quite like Bleibergs.

A small, cozy, casual place found at 45A Nurnbergerstrasse, Bleibergs is Berlin's one and only certifiably kosher vegetarian restaurant, according to its co-proprietor, Manuela Hoffmann.

Centrally located, and within easy walking or subway distance of some of Berlin's major tourist attractions, Bleibergs – which is under the supervision of the Berlin rabbinate's Rabbi Yitzhak Ehrenberg – definitely fills a need when hunger pangs strike.

The menu features an eclectic selection of European and Israeli-style food: mixed salads, sandwiches, hummus, gefilte fish, latkes, pizzas, spaghetti, soups, tofu and vegetarian burgers and sausages, as well as sweets and pastries.

During the summer season, Bleibergs is open for business from Sunday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

On Fridays, it is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is closed on Saturdays and Jewish holidays.

I dropped in for lunch and ordered a vegetable soup and cheese blintzes, both of which were satisfying.

For dessert, I chose a delicious poppy seed cake, washed down with an aromatic cappuccino.

Hoffmann, whose partner is her retired husband Michael, opened Bleibergs five years ago.

"I filled a niche," she said. "There was not a kosher vegetarian, dairy, fish restaurant in the city."

Although foreign visitors comprise much of its clientele, Bleibergs is also frequented by local Germans with a yen for Jewish food.

She depends on her non-Jewish customers. "There are simply not enough Jewish people in Berlin who insist on eating kosher," she explained.

Surprisingly, Hoffmann's chef is Mongolian. "We told her what we have to look for, and today she's almost perfect."

Hoffmann's first chef was an Israeli, but he didn't last long.

Bleibergs offers kabbalat Shabbat evenings every two weeks.

Hoffmann, a travel agent on the side, runs a bed-and-breakfast operation on the premises. The three non-smoking guest rooms are accessible by elevator.

Bleibergs – which is adjacent to a Turkish restaurant and practically next door to the Augsburgerstrasse subway station – is close to Kufurstendamm, a major boulevard dotted with upscale shops and cafes, and the Jewish community centre at 79-80 Fasanenstrasse.

It is also near KaDeWe, a large, elegant department store whose sixth floor food department is easily one of the finest in Europe.

By subway, Bleibergs is a short subway ride away from the Jewish Museum, which traces German-Jewish history from Roman times to the present, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which commemorates the Holocaust.

Hoffmann, 55, was born and raised in Berlin. She is the daughter of Holocaust survivors from Breslau, which was part of Germany before World War II.

With the 1945 Potsdam agreement, Breslau, in Lower Silesia, was ceded to Poland, and today is known as Wroclaw.

As might be expected, Bleibergs is not the only kosher restaurant in Berlin, whose registered Jewish population is estimated to be 15,000.

Beth Cafe, under the supervision of the Orthodox Adass Jisroel Synagogue, is on 40 Tucholskystrasse, while Plaetzl Imbiss, which like Bleibergs is under the supervision of Rabbi Ehrenberg, is at 4 Passauerstrasse.

Gabriel's, inside the Jewish community centre, the site of a synagogue destroyed on Kristallnacht in November 1938, is also under the supervision of Rabbi Ehrenberg.

Fairly close by is the refurbished golden-domed New Synagogue on Oranienburgerstrasse.

Now a museum devoted to Jewish history, the shul was inaugurated in 1866. With a seating capacity of 3,200, it was Germany's largest shul.

Desecrated on Kristallnacht and accidentally bombed by Allied aircraft during the war, it was a brooding ruin until it was rescued from oblivion.

***

Bleibergs e-mail address is coffeeandtour@bleibergs.de.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel, at 65 Nurnburgerstrasse, is about five minutes by foot from Belibergs.

For more information about Berlin, contact the German National Tourist Office in Toronto at 416-968-1685. www.cometogermany.com.

The Berlin Tourism Marketing office in North America can be reached by calling 818-385-0631.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

DEAD SEA SCROLLS ON VIEW AT THE ROM

Last week's media opening of the Royal Ontario Museum's new exhibition, *Dead Sea Scrolls. Words That Changed the World*, brought out a crowd of more than 100 print, television and radio journalists. The exhibition was officially opened by Ontario **Premier Dalton McGuinty**, while guest curator **Risa Levitt Kohn** – an alumna of both York University and the University of Toronto, and director of the Jewish studies program at San Diego State University – offered some cogent commentary about the scrolls and their vast historical significance.

The displays leading up to and incorporating the scrolls provide full interpretation, translation and background information about the scrolls and the tumultuous period in which they were written and hidden. The Israel Antiquities Authority has loaned the ROM more than 200 artifacts, including lamps, ossuaries, amphorae, jugs, stone table ware and, most notably, architectural fragments of the Second Temple.

The ROM's fairly new display space has received its share of criticism for its jagged corners and angular and intrusive pillars, and when you add the sizable crowds that this exhibition is expected to attract, it may be hard to get close enough to any of the scrolls for a thorough inspection. In any case, for reasons of preservation, the light is so dim that reading any of the original early Hebrew texts may be somewhat difficult. It's probably best to rely on the handy enlarged reproductions posted above each scroll.

Fragments from The Book of War, on view at the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit.

This is an exciting coup for the ROM and a proud moment for the Jews of Toronto as a rich sampling of our historic legacy, preserved in these 2,000-year-old scraps of parchment, goes on view for the whole city to appreciate. While the exhibition continues to early January 2010, there will be two showings of scrolls. The first group remains on view through Oct. 9, after which a new group is to be installed.

Numerous lectures and two art installations are being offered in conjunction with the exhibit. One of the installations, *Margins*, by New York artist **Johua Neustein**, offers a poetic reflection on writing, religion and archeology. It is presented by the ROM's Institute for Contemporary Culture, in conjunction with the Koffler Gallery of the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

* * *

Names in the News: Kudos to **Bunny Iskov**, recipient of Vaughan's first RAVE (Recognizing Arts Excellence in Vaughan) award. Iskov is a judge of an annual literary contest sponsored by the Vaughan Public Library and often visits schools to talk poetry with students. She is also the founder of the Ontario Poetry Society (www.ontariopoetrysociety.com), which is nearly 10 years old and has more than 200 members. "I was really excited and honoured to be nominated for this award, and I never expected to be chosen," she said.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Canadian Stage TD Dream in High Park presents **William Shakespeare**'s *The Tempest* with Dora award-winning actor **Karen Robinson** as Prospera. Pay what you can; suggested donation $20, children free. Runs Tuesday through Sunday, 8 p.m. in the open-air theatre in High Park until Sept. 6. 416-367-1652, canstage.com

• Groovy Mondays at the Gladstone features a weekly open stage and concert with a variety of performers, an event organized by Toronto musician **Brian Gladstone**. Gladstone is not related to the operators of the Gladstone Hotel, which derives its name from the avenue of the same name, but he is a brother to this columnist. Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St. W. Monday evenings, talent sign-up 8 p.m., featured musician 10 to 10:40 p.m. 416-531-4635. www.groovymondays.com

Jonno Katz

• *The Accident* by **Jonno Katz**, a play being presented by Katz at the Toronto Fringe Festival, won a prize for "outstanding solo performance" at the Ottawa Fringe. Mixing dance, theatre and comedy, it's being performed here at the George Ignatieff Theatre.

• Playwright **A. David Levine** received an honourable mention for best original production last month for his play *Reflections on Giving Birth to a Squid*, which was performed at the Fringe Festival in Montreal. The piece, which highlights the rather unkosher subject of a woman becoming mother to a cephalopod, received the praise from the Centaur Theatre; it was also part of the Fringe in Toronto and other cities.

Fringe Hotline is 416-966-1062 or 1-866-515-7799. www.fringetoronto.com.

* * *

At the Galleries

• An exhibition of some 40 portraits of artists, media personalities, politicians and community leaders by Toronto photographer **Al Gilbert** recently went on view. Subjects includes **John Diefenbaker**, **John Turner**, **Mel Lastman**, **Robertson Davies**, **Frank Sinatra**, **Johnny Wayne** and **Frank Shuster**, **Moe Koffman**, **Oscar Peterson**, **Liona Boyd**, **Dizzy Gillespie**, **Eugene Levy**, **Howie Mandel**, **Ed Mirvish**, **Larry King**, **David Ben-Gurion**, **Paul Reichmann**, **Murray Koffler** and others. Sponsored by the Ontario Jewish Archives, *A Glimpse of Greatness; The Portraiture of Al Gilbert* is at the Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst St., until Nov. 27.

• Works by artist **Judy Singer**, RCA, are on view in the Philpott Room, Toronto Lawn Tennis Club, 44 Price St., until July 27.

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True story of sisters sheltered by nuns

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Guardian Angel House by Kathy Clark is based on the true story of two young Hungarian Jewish sisters, Susan and Vera, who were sheltered by nuns during the Holocaust.

Susan and Vera are the author's real-life mother and aunt. The book, published by Second Story Press, is part of the award-winning Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers series.

Clark, who lives outside Ottawa, wrote *Guardian Angel House* after watching a Hungarian documentary about the nuns at the Sisters of Charity in Budapest.

She begins the book with a useful introduction that explains the setting of the book. A young reader, unfamiliar with the history of the World War II and the Holocaust, will learn about Hitler's Aryan policies and how Hungary's Jews were able to avoid the transports until Germany invaded Hungary in 1944.

After their father was arrested by Hungarian police, the girls' mother was talked into sending the girls to the convent by Isi, a Catholic who is a close family friend. Isi later helped their mother survive in the ghetto by throwing her bags of food.

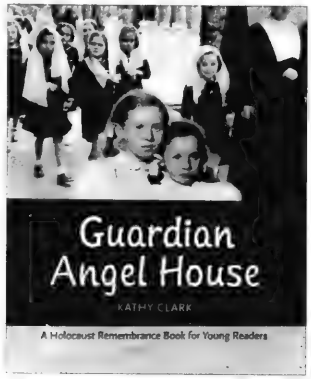
There were many other Jewish girls hiding in the convent. Although they attended daily church services in Latin, took catechism classes and said the rosary, the nuns made no attempt to convert them and even allowed them to pray in Hebrew on Fridays and celebrate Passover.

Things got tough for them as the Soviets advanced, since the convent was situated high on a hill beside a German-occupied citadel. Bombs fell on the convent grounds, and the girls had to hide in a dank crypt beneath the convent.

Overall the book is well told and fast paced. Young readers, especially girls, will admire the characters and find the book suspenseful and easy to understand, yet also very educational.

Through the makeshift seder with the nuns, Clark is able to explain the similarities between Catholicism and Judaism. And through Lena, the Gypsy girl who takes refuge in the convent, the reader will learn that Jews weren't the only people persecuted by the Nazis.

Guardian Angel House is a welcome addition to this series of award-winning books that includes Kathy Kacer's *Hiding Edith*, Karen Levine's *Hana's Suitcase* and several other renowned books.



Poet makes the transition to singer

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Jeff Bien is an acclaimed poet whose writings have allowed him to explore untapped wells of inspiration.

His works have been praised by critics and other writers. Now, he has expanded his repertoire to include songs.

The Montreal resident recently launched his first album, *Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer*, at Hugh's Room in Toronto. This was the first time he sang the songs live, and Bien said the reaction of the audience – mostly other authors and musicians – was positive.

"There seemed a deep sense of communion, and that's what you're hoping for – that the work you've done can enter the sanctuary of another heart," he said in an interview.

Jeff Bien

As a poet first and foremost, Bien needed to adjust to the transition of composing lyrics as opposed to poetic verse.

Bien was once asked by author Emile Martel – father of *Life of Pi* author Yann Martel – to explain the difference between writing poetry and composing songs. At the time, he didn't know what to say.

"They're completely different forms," he says now.

He added that when you compose music "you pick up an instrument and lyrics come mysteriously, or you're given a line and then you pick up your instrument and the process begins," but a poet is faced with "the apocalyptic white page and it's a very, very solitary activity, while music is very collaborative."

On the CD, Bien incorporates a number of musical styles from various ethnic cultures and traditions, including Mideast and Far East influences.

Bien's Jewish connection shines through prominently on the album. Bien recently heard someone singing Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's *Kol Ha'olam* at the studio where he was recording, which inspired him to write a reworked version of the classic.

Having once met Rabbi Carlebach, Bien said that hearing the song again "struck a deep, deep chord" and he decided to include it on the album.

Another song on the album, *Kaddish*, is a reflection of his close relationship with his late mother. His musical influences for this piece are Graeme Revell, a film composer of ambient music, and Leonard Bernstein.

The additional lyrics he wrote for *Adon Olam*, another Jewish prayer included on the album, "seemed to follow their own journey into the piece that it became," Bien said.

While he's not an observant Jew, as a theology student, Bien said that he embraces the spiritual principles of Judaism, as well as those of other religions including Christianity, Buddhism, Sufism and Hinduism.

The oneness and unity of the natural world and its relationship to its creator is a core belief of Bien's and is a message that can be clearly heard throughout the album.

"There really is in all the mystical traditions, in the esoteric being, the nature of sameness, of oneness, just in different forms," he said.

Bien worked on *Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer* for several years, as the writing process was sporadically interrupted by a serious illness that he continues to struggle with.

He said that he sees his struggle as a necessary obstacle in the path toward self-fulfilment and understanding.

"From that very journey was born a work of transcendence," he said.

Bien released two CDs of spoken word poetry set to music last year and is currently working on a followup album, which he said is going to be "quite a departure" from *Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer*.

What he appreciates most about performing music is its communal nature,.

"It's wonderful to hear lyrics that you've written and music that you've written honoured by people who have perfected their craft," he said.

For more information on Bien visit his website www.jeffbien.com

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Books & Authors

A concise history of Israel from 1948 to '67

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was born, and in less than 20 years, it emerged as a confident nation, secure both economically and militarily.

The intervening years were full of hardships for this new nation. There were three wars, terrorism, skyrocketing immigration, political rivalries and an isolation that at times mirrored that of Britain in the early years of World War II.

How Israel got from 1948 to 1967 has been the subject of many books. At less than 400 pages, though, Leslie Stein's *The Making of Modern Israel* (Polity Press) is a refreshing, informative and concise telling of these tumultuous years, the effects of which can still be seen in the Middle East today.

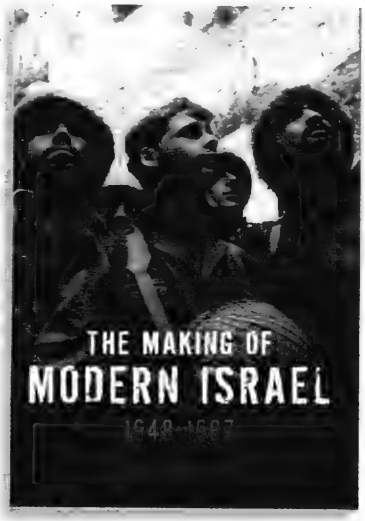
Jews from Yemen fly to Israel during Operation Magic Carpet. Almost 50,000 were rescued in this operation.

There are myriads of books written solely about the subjects of each of the nine chapters. Stein's strength is in compiling all the information in this succinct and easy-to-read book.

It begins slowly, though. The chapter on the War of Independence describes all the battles for long-forgotten villages and kibbutzim, illustrated with poorly drawn maps.

But he does tell a few amusing anecdotes from the war in this first chapter. One of the problems the Israel Defence Forces had in their early days was that many of the volunteers did not speak Hebrew. One American Jewish pilot, whose Messerschmitt plane was hit, parachuted over the Mediterranean and swam ashore. There the pilot, who had a swarthy complexion and could easily have been mistaken for an Arab, was confronted by a group from a Jewish settlement. Not knowing Hebrew, the pilot shouted "gefilte fish" over and over again. They left him alone.

The reader who makes it past the first chapter will be well rewarded with some well-researched information on Israel's social, economic and political development, refugees, immigration, terrorism, wars and politics.



Stein's use of certain adjectives and phrases betrays a hint of his Israeli bias, but, on the other hand, in a book intended to celebrate Israel's achievements, Stein does not shy away from illustrating several of Israel's misdeeds.

During the 1948 war, for example, Stein cites incidents of Israeli atrocities on Arab civilians, including rape and murder. The minister of agriculture at the time, Stein writes, likened Jewish behaviour to that of Nazis.

But these incidents were nothing compared to the Arab atrocities on Jewish settlements and even on their own villages, creating a situation so intolerable that "the [Arab] population became more afraid of their defenders than of the Jews."

Stein writes at length about Israel's miraculous achievements. Immigration to Israel doubled during the four years after the War of Independence. Operation Magic Carpet brought in almost 50,000 Jews from Yemen, and many others immigrated from Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Iran.

The huge influx was problematic at first. The rate of immigration far exceeded the burgeoning nation's ability to absorb them, and poverty was rife in the camps they were housed in.

Also, these Mizrachi Jews tended to be poor, illiterate farmers and were the subject of much derision from Israelis of European origin.

Stein writes that the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* said at the time, "You will find among them [Mizrachim] dirt, card games for money, drunkenness and fornication."

One Iraqi said: "We left Iraq as Jews and arrived in Israel as Iraqis."

Stein goes on to write about the Israeli political system, which, from the outset, it seems, was marred by accusations of corruption. The contentious issue of "Who is a Jew" also reared its ugly head early on, causing much inter-party conflict.

The author also discusses the "scourge of Arab infiltration" and the rise of Palestinian guerrilla terrorist attacks. Once again, Stein doesn't shy away from describing questionable Israeli deeds, such as the deliberate shooting down of a Syrian Airways airline in 1954.

Earlier that year, five Israeli soldiers on an intelligence-gathering mission had been captured in Syria. One of them committed suicide. The IDF forced the Syrian airliner to land in Israel and used the hostages as bargaining pawns to secure the release of the other captives in Syria. This was a public-relations disaster for Israel, who released the plane and passengers two days later.

Other chapters talk about the Sinai Campaign, the Cold War's effect on the Middle East and Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion's controversial decision to buy arms from West Germany.

Israel's nuclear project, and American objection to it, reminds the reader of the current situation in Iran and North Korea and how, at times, Israel felt so isolated and treated not much differently than the "axis of evil" is today.

The last chapter of the book is dedicated to the events leading up to the Six Day War and the bold decision by Israel to launch a pre-emptive strike.

There is little left uncovered in this up-to-date and meticulously researched book. Anybody wanting a quick and easily understandable account of Israel's formative years will do well to read *The Making of Modern Israel*.

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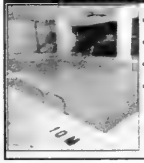

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Peyton Manning wows 'Y' sports dinner

By HARVEY ROSEN
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — When the Rady JCC "Y" sports dinner committee took the elastic off the bankroll and decided to bring in Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning as their featured speaker, there were more than a few naysayers who were concerned about the bottom line.

After all, the primary goal of the function is to raise funds for programs and services that enrich peoples' lives.

Well, advance sales of a record 1,600-plus tickets must have relieved the stress of some and also guaranteed that the evening would be a financial success.

How successful was the keynote speaker? Well, if the dinner was a football game, with Manning the signal caller, you could say he completed 31 of 35 passes for more than 400 yards and no interceptions.

Manning was greeted with a loud standing ovation when he was introduced and once again at the end of the evening when queries from the adoring audience had to be halted so the Winnipeg Convention Centre could be closed for the night.

The Yiddish term mensch would best describe Manning: very generous, good and down-to-earth.

Jeff Pash, executive vice-president of the NFL, who was guest of honour at the dinner, perhaps said it best: "Peyton symbolizes everything that is good about sports."

One reporter at a press conference 90 minutes prior to the dinner asked why Manning would come to Winnipeg except for the handsome fee he would earn.

The articulate Manning, with the cool demeanour he uses to handle charging tacklers, didn't bat an eyelash when he responded: "Growing up, my dad was my hero and my role model." (QB Archie Manning was a two-time NFL Pro Bowler who played from 1971 to 1984 with New Orleans, Houston, and Minnesota.)

"He always told me to have your priorities in order," Manning continued. "He encouraged us in sports but never pushed us. He didn't yell during our games at coaches and had a healthy passion for the game. As a person and a player, I haven't changed since I won the Super Bowl. And he also taught us that you have to give something back to the game.

"I was a communications major in college and my dad did a lot of public speaking and I enjoyed listening to him over the years. It served me well and I, too, have a charity [the PeyBack Foundation] that like the people here in Winnipeg also has a mission statement."

The audience participation later in the evening was impressive and well-schooled in the game south of the border.

When asked about Michael Vick, the Atlanta Falcons' QB jailed for promoting dog fighting, Manning handled the question sensitively. "I wish him the best and hope that he continues [to pursue] his dream. I do pull for quarterbacks. It's a unique fraternity."

Any QB, whether it be his father Archie, brother Eli of the Super Bowl-winning New York Giants, or himself, are all targets in the mayhem that is pro football. Is there anyone who is the most feared by Peyton?

Ray Lewis, linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens, fits the bill.

"He's one of the best," Manning said. "He likes to use you while you're down on the ground to help himself get up."

Peyton pondered a question about the Blue Bombers' outlook, since more than 25 changes have been made to the team's lineup in the off-season.

"You can't just rush team chemistry," he explained. "There will definitely be a transition there. Teams that win have a close-knit relationship and it takes time. It's the same as in any business."

Manning also shared life lessons and leadership principles that apply to both sports and non-sports businesses. "You have to erase the bad plays and get back to zero. Don't dwell on the past. I set a rookie record for interceptions," he laughed.

"As a leader I put myself in a state of readiness. Do your part and encourage others to do the same," he added. "If you're leading the same way for five years it's not good. Change your style of leadership as things evolve. As tough as it is to get to the top, it's tougher to stay there."

Perhaps the last principle applies to the 'Y" dinner committee, in spades, since topping this year's fundraiser will take some doing.

Manning ended by lauding audience members for their support and the Rady Centre for the good work it does for the Winnipeg community.

The award for Jewish athlete of the year, presented at the dinner, went to Elizabeth Sera, who is attending the University of Western Ontario on an athletic scholarship. She participates in two of the roughest varsity sports, rugby and wrestling.

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Rangers take Werek in NHL entry draft

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Ethan Werek was getting a little antsy sitting in the Bell Centre, waiting to hear his name called during the recent 2009 NHL entry draft.

Then it happened. In the middle of the second round, the New York Rangers chose him 47th overall. NHL Central Scouting ranked him 32nd among North American skaters, so if you take into consideration Europeans and goalies, his placement was just about right.

"It was good," Werek said of finally being selected. "It was like a weight off my shoulders."

Speaking from New York, where he spent a week getting oriented and attending the Rangers' rookie development camp, he said "it's a great city. The organization itself has such great resources."

A 6-2, 195-pound forward with the Kingston Frontenacs of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Werek is known for his work ethic, his use of his body to fight for the puck and his ability to score goals. As an OHL rookie, he scored 32 goals and added 32 assists.

His coach at Kingston, Darren Keily, considers him a good pro prospect and Werek said he plans to "train hard" in preparation for the Rangers' camp at the end of the summer. Still, as an 18-year-old whose name is not Sydney Crosby, he realizes he'll probably be sent back to junior for more seasoning. "It's tough for an 18-year-old to crack the team," he said.

Still, he does have some of the professional player's off-ice characteristics already. Polite and considerate to a fault, he thanked his parents, Diane and Zeev, "for being there for me over the years."

He may not yet be ready for the Rangers, but he could probably go one on one with the CBC's Ron MacLean right now.

* * *

Werek is good friends with Daniel Erlich, a nifty skater with the London Knights. Both have Israeli heritage – Erlich's parents are Israeli, as is Werek's dad – and they've known each other for years.

Although he went undrafted, Erlich will attend the San Jose Sharks training camp this fall, Werek said.

Only 5-6 and 150 pounds, Erlich scored 18 goals and added 35 assists with the Knights in 2008-09. The right winger, who skated on a line with the Leafs' first-round pick, Nazem Kadri, during the playoffs, had 13 points in 14 post-season games.

Baycrest seeks volunteers for study on volunteering

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Healthy adults age 55 and over who aren't currently working or volunteering are being sought for a new study about volunteering being launched at Baycrest.

The Baycrest Research About Volunteering in Older Adults (BRAVO) pilot study, made possible with a grant from the government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors program, is setting out to prove what many volunteers already know – that volunteering is an effective prescription for healthy aging.

Those who enrol in the study will receive mentoring and training in a volunteer position at Baycrest that best fits their values, experience and skill set.

Dr. Nicole Anderson, a scientist at Baycrest's Kunin-Lunenfeld Applied Research Unit and lead investigator for the study, said her team will study participants before they begin volunteering and six months after they have volunteered.

"We're looking at the physical, cognitive and psychosocial benefits. Little has been done on the benefits of volunteering, and we believe that active seniors are less likely to develop dementia. Research has shown that people who volunteer are less depressed and more satisfied with life than others," Anderson said.

"The question, however, is whether the seniors who volunteer are healthier than others in the first place. It's a chicken-and-egg problem."

The study is exciting on its own, she said, but what really makes it "cool" is that it was developed and is being run by volunteers.

"It all came about when I spoke at volunteer appreciation week, and we decided we should conduct a study. We got together a group of volunteers who helped design the study, and we trained them to be research assistants," Anderson said.

Fauna Lidsky, 66, a retired physiotherapist, called the study phenomenal.

"I wanted to keep busy when I stopped working, and because I had always worked with older people, I wanted to continue," Lidsky said.

> *'We believe that active seniors are less likely to develop dementia'*

"My mother had been at Baycrest, and I was always impressed with the volunteers, so I started working in its creative arts department. It's an upbeat job, and the people I work with are lovely. It certainly adds to my week."

The study is important, she said, because it will show potential volunteers that it's a good way to maintain their emotional, intellectual and physical well-being. "It will give them something to think about."

Syrelle Bernstein, director of volunteer services at Baycrest is very excited about the study. "It is a wonderful opportunity to target potential volunteers and bring them into Baycrest. Not only would they be volunteers, they would be involved in research that benefits other seniors," she said.

"This project is what Baycrest is all about. People will learn about the exact thing I have been saying for years."

Bernstein said she welcomes the opportunity of speaking to groups about the project. For information, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2577.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE MAJESTIC GOEL TZEDEC

The Goel Tzedec, or University Avenue Synagogue, sits majestically on one of Toronto's major thoroughfares in this 1928 view. Situated on the east side of University Avenue between Dundas and Queen streets, the shul had a distinctive Romanesque exterior and could seat about 1,200. It was filled to overflowing on the High Holidays. Eventually the congregation merged with the McCaul Street Synagogue and became the present Beth Tzedec Congregation. Too fine to last, the synagogue served a large downtown congregation for nearly half a century and was torn down in 1955. (Courtesy Beth Tzedec Archives)

Is day school the answer?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I watch my son on Shabbat as he interacts with his cousins, aunt and uncle and friends. It is uplifting to witness his interest in family and the day of rest, its spirit and soul. Nowadays he will say to me, "Daddy can we sing *Shalom Aleichem*?" – the Friday night song that welcomes in this 25-hour oasis of time and space. Noah is now expressing a true toddler interest in our heritage.

As Noah grows, his mother and I are grappling with what to teach him about Judaism and how to teach it. As a child and young adult, I was exposed to an intense religious life and education, and despite the fact that I rejected that particular brand of Judaism, Torah knowledge and its ways are within me, and my choices were and are relatively informed ones.

If we don't impart to Noah the teachings of the Torah and Judaism, on some meaningful level, he will not have this same opportunity. That would be a shame.

In this context, one of the questions challenging us is where to send him to school. Do we want to invest in a Jewish day school education, which could cost over $100,000 by the time he graduates?

As we investigate the possibilities, we continually hear that a day school environment will ensure that he will have Jewish friends and exposure to Judaism in a wholesome way. We also hear the opposite.

Some students who started out in the day school system and eventually changed to public school told us they did not feel comfortable in their particular environment, were often made fun of for being "different" and regularly marginalized by the "hip" group.

It pains me to know the deep scars the day school system and environment have left on some of our young people who were uninterested in or unable to purchase the trendiest clothing, or quieter or less effusive than others. I wrote a series of articles on this topic last year (found in *The CJN* archives) examining the A and B lists in our day schools, and the effect this schoolyard hierarchy has on our children.

Recently, I met a young man who wended his way through the religious school system. He told me he had no intention of leading a comprehensive Jewish life and saw the day school system as a means to an end in terms of garnering a quality education.

I want Noah to grow up with a great respect for others, and love and appreciation of wisdom, knowledge, Torah and Judaism. With this in mind, we are searching to determine if our day schools impart these things, and together with parents, encourage curiosity and wonderment in the minds of our children, prompting them to consider "what Judaism has to say about…"

So what are we to do in regard to Noah's education? Is it worth it to send our child to Jewish day school so that he is surrounded by other Jews? I'm not sure. Is there any assurance that such an education will encourage a strong development and commitment to his Jewishness? This is unclear.

A Jewish day school education, with its high costs and Jewish thought as a basis for its curriculum, should strive for and achieve greatness and soulfulness. No doubt, many of our students have grown terrifically through their Jewish day school career, but are they the norm?

If day school was the Standard & Poor's, the investment barometer, of education, would you invest in it? Should we do so for Noah? The decision is not simple.

Darfur? See Avrum's Blog at http://avrum.net or e-mail avrum@veahavia.org.

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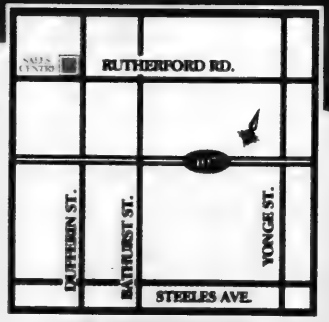

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Heebonics

From Toronto to Hollywood and back: actor Lauren Lipson's journey. *Page 33*

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'Jewish Olympics' open in Israel

Maccabi Canada sends largest contingent ever

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Anybody who's ever been to the opening ceremonies of the Maccabiah Games has raved about the experience – the pageantry, the celebration, the sense of Jewish solidarity.

Word gets around, and to satisfy the requests of athletes' family and friends who travelled to Israel for the Games, Maccabi Canada president Allen Gerskup came up with some 225 tickets. Many more made their own arrangements, and Gerskup, speaking before the team flew to Israel on a chartered El Al aircraft, said this reflects the favourable image of the Games and Israel.

The Games' brand in the Jewish community is much more positive and widespread than it was back in 1985, when Gerskup had his first exposure to the "Jewish Olympics" as manager of the men's softball team.

Continued on page 24

Maccabi athletes posed for pre-departure photos last week at Pearson International Airport in Toronto. Members and coaches of the junior boys baseball team, above, and the junior boys basketball team, left, were accompanied by Rabbi Yossi Saperman, at left, spiritual counsellor to the Canadian Maccabi team. [Carolyn Blackman photos]

Tehran sanctions not a priority: Obama

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

L'AQUILA, Italy – The U.S. President, speaking at the G8 summit in Italy, said more sanctions against Tehran are not a priority.

Barack Obama said last Friday that the international community is "not going to just wait indefinitely" for Iran to renounce an interest in developing nuclear weapons.

Speaking at the G8 summit concluded in Italy, Obama stressed that he and others were not looking for their summit partners to embrace sanctions at this G8 meeting. Instead, he said that "what we wanted was exactly what we got" – a statement of condemnation about Iran's actions in the wake of its disputed presidential election.

Obama said G8 leaders voiced their concern about what he calls the "appalling" events surrounding the recent elections and the violence that followed. The leaders assembled at L'Aquila also addressed the threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran, he said, with a "strong statement" calling on Iran to fulfil its responsibilities without delay.

"This notion that we were trying to get sanctions or that this was a forum where we could get sanctions was not accurate," the president said.

"I think the real story here was consensus in that [G8] statement, including Russia, which doesn't make statements like that lightly," he said. "Now the other story there was the agreement that we will re-evaluate Iran's posture towards negotiating the cessation of a nuclear weapons policy

"We'll evaluate that at the G20 meeting in September," Obama said. "I think that what that does is it provides a time frame. The international community has said, 'Here's a door you can walk though that allows you to lessen tensions and more fully join the international community.'

Continued on page 27

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Attention readers: There will be no issue of The CJN July 23.

The News in Brief

Canada

Dworkin Honoured

TORONTO — The late nurse and community worker Dorothy Dworkin was named a person of national historic significance last week. Jim Prentice, the minister responsible for Parks Canada, designated Dworkin on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada. The Latvian-born Dworkin came to Canada with her family in 1904. She was a co-founder of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, and she ran the city's free Jewish Dispensary and provided social services to immigrant Jews. Dworkin died in 1976 at age 86.

Crowds See Scrolls

TORONTO — More than 18,000 people viewed the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Royal Ontario Museum in their first nine days there, exceeding the museum's attendance projections for the exhibit by 52 per cent. Between June 27 and July 5, 18,324 visitors came to see the scrolls. They're on display until Jan. 3.

World

Researcher Dies

SAN FRANCISCO — Gary Tobin, a prominent Jewish researcher who challenged conventional Jewish wisdom, died at 59 July 6, after a long illness. Tobin, president of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research in San Francisco, was known for urging the community to be more open to converts as a viable way to grow Jewish numbers. As well, he was a fierce critic of the National Jewish Population Survey, claiming its methodology was flawed and that it undercounted U.S. Jews by more than one million. He also examined philanthropy and community diversity.

NYC Campaign Down

NEW YORK — America's largest Jewish federation said its 2008-09 fundraising drive dropped 11.5 per cent from the previous year. UJA-Federation of New York said it raised $136 million, down from $153.7 million. Despite the decrease, the federation said it was buoyed by its numbers. While the general campaign was down, it raised $215.3 million in total, including $60.5 million in planned giving and endowments, for an overall one per cent gain. Meanwhile, the umbrella group for the federation system, United Jewish Communities, said combined federation campaigns for 2008-09 were up 1.3 per cent over 2007-08, but total fundraising for the current year is off by 13 per cent.

Ex-Nazis Fit For Trial

BERLIN — A German court ruled July 7 that another former Nazi SS officer is fit to stand trial for war crimes. The decision by the regional high court in Cologne on Waffen-SS member Heinrich Boere, 88, came shortly after a German Supreme Court decision that Nazi guard John Demjanjuk, 89, is fit to face charges of assisting in the murder of more than 29,000 Jews. His trial is expected to start in the fall.

UJC Names New President

Jerry Silverman

NEW YORK — The umbrella organization of North America's Jewish federation system has hired Jerry Silverman, a key player in raising millions of dollars for Jewish summer camps, as its next president and CEO.

Silverman was tapped to head United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of a federation system that raises and distributes about $3 billion annually from its general campaigns, endowments and special fundraising.

Since 2004, he has served as executive director of the Foundation for Jewish Camp, overseeing the growth of its budget from $1 million per year to more than $22 million.

A former high-level executive at Levi Strauss and Co. and Stride Rite Corp., Silverman succeeds Howard Rieger on Sept. 30, a month after Rieger's term as CEO ends.

At UJC, Silverman faces a series of challenges, starting with a shrinking budget and increasing questions about the need for a national system.

"I am going into this really clearly with my eyes open," he said. "I will be doing an inordinate amount of listening as we really look to put our agenda together."

Federation campaigns have been down or stagnating in recent years, a problem that has been exacerbated by the recession. Earlier this month, UJC officials said they project a 13 per cent decrease in the system-wide campaign this year, and the country's biggest federation, UJA-Federation of New York, said its campaign in 2008-09 was off by more than 11 per cent. The New York Federation typically brings in some $150 million annually.

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JF&CS seeks 'professional' foster parents

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

The nature of foster families is changing to meet the complex needs of children coming into care, says Sheryl Ederman, supervisor of children in care at Jewish Family & Child.

With a new emphasis on placing children who have straightforward needs with their extended families and immediate community whenever possible, she said, JF&CS is faced with the challenge of finding appropriate placements for children whose needs are more complex.

"This is where the notion of 'professional foster care' comes in. We are looking for people who are able to provide good, solid parenting, who understand the complexities of caring for foster children and who see it as a job," Ederman said.

"Foster families need to open their hearts, but they also need more than that. They need to accept a certain amount of change and challenge in their household."

It's not necessarily a full-time job, "but it is a job. There is a daily paid rate, and most expenses are paid."

Ederman said that kids do best in family-based care – there are currently 34 foster families in the Jewish community – and the agency's goal is to find homes in every area so that it can meet clients' social and cultural needs.

"We also support family access whenever it makes sense," she said.

"If we don't have enough homes, we have to place kids out of our system."

She said JF&CS needs homes for children of all ages, and foster parents can be any age and any family configuration. "We just placed a baby with a senior woman. We would love to support grandparenting."

Norm and Jody Roth have been married 25 years and have no children of their own. They've been fostering teenagers since 1996.

Jody, who can't remember exactly how many teens she and her husband have taken in over the years, said their door is open for time periods ranging from short-term "to a little longer.

"We're thrilled to have the kids keep up with us when they leave, but the onus is on them. We cry when they move out, but we're proud that they're moving on. It's almost like a graduation."

She said that they've learned to be friendly, "but not friends. We're there to provide guidance and support. I have training in early childhood education, but a lot of the training applies to the teens. They want attention and love, and they want to be guided."

The sun shines through in every case, she said. "If the kids have been a challenge, they know that we hung in there."

Norm stressed that "practically every kid has been great, and we can rely on the resources at JF&CS if we need support. When we get a child, we often have no information. We don't know who is in the house until we are faced with it.

"We went through [an initial] training period, we take part in ongoing training, and there is a lot of informal socializing between foster families."

Jody said they've built a basement apartment so they can provide some support for older teens, aged 18 or 19, who are getting ready to live independently.

"They need a family to help them through their transitional stage. They need a little 'TLC' and some mentoring."

Ederman wants to spread the word that "there are kids in our community who need care. To some people there is a stigma attached it, but there are problems out there, and [no one should be ashamed].

"There are a lot of invisible problems, and there are a lot of families who need help. We can't keep it a secret."

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Greater Toronto Area

New 'heirloomed ground'

From the editor's desk...

The late, renowned Canadian poet A.M. Klein wrote a remarkably touching elegiac poem called *Heirloom*, in which he reflects upon his inheritance from his father. The reflection is triggered when the poet holds some holy books that had belonged to his father.

It is these holy books, the religion, background, customs, traditions and folkways they embody, the poet realizes, that comprise his true inheritance.

In achingly poignant language, Klein describes both the heartache and the esteem he feels as he examines his father's books.

He sets the mood with the opening stanza of the poem.

"My father bequeathed me no wide estates/ No keys and ledgers were my heritage/ Only some holy books with yahrzeit dates/ Writ mournfully upon a blank front page"

Klein wrote *Heirloom* some 70 years ago. The emotion it conveys is overwhelming. The insight it brings is worthy of the wisdom literature of our ancient sages. I return to the poem from time to time. It is a personal reminder that each one of us arrives at where we are in the arms, so to speak, of the many family members whom we knew and did not know.

I call Klein's poem to readers' attention because the importance of handing on to our children the things that were once precious to our parents seems to be less emphasized in these more atomized, more self-indulgent times. We are less attached to holy things in general, and specifically to our holy books, than our parents and grandparents were. We are less familiar with the long-cherished, long-fought-for particulars of our tradition than they were. That seems especially true, alas, of a large number of us, the children of the Jews who came to North America from Europe after World War II.

In truth, any prayer book or biblical sourcebook that we use is holy to us. My words are not intended to differentiate between or prefer one holy book over another. Indeed, Klein deliberately identifies the books in broad terms only, as "holy books."

But Klein's poem came immediately to mind when I recently received a copy of the newly published *Koren Sacks Siddur* (Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.). It surely is a holy book.

Much has been written of the siddur, including in these pages, about the fact that it will "compete" with the *ArtScroll Siddur* for worshipper loyalty. Not enough, however, has been written of its sheer beauty and elegance as a text.

The siddur is a reissuing and a refining of the original, distinctive, all-Hebrew *Koren Siddur* first published in Israel in 1981. Eliahu Koren, the founder of the publishing house, was noted for the new, strikingly elegant Hebrew font he designed and for the meticulous layout of the prayers, according to the poetry and natural rests and breaks of their meaning.

The new siddur retains the iconic Koren font and inviting layout of the prayers but adds English-language translation, commentary and an overpowering introductory essay – "Understanding Jewish Prayer" – by Sir Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the United Kingdom.

The essay is typical of Rabbi Sacks: lyrically written and deeply inspiring. Some 32 pages and 12 sections long, it informs and teaches the sophisticate and novice reader alike.

"Prayer is the language of the soul in conversation with God," Rabbi Sacks begins. "It is the most intimate gesture of the religious life and the most transformative... In prayer we speak to a presence vaster than the unfathomable universe, yet closer to us than we are to ourselves: the God beyond, who is also the Voice within. Though language must fail when we try to describe a Being beyond all parameters of speech, language is all we have, and it is enough."

If human language is inherently self-limiting, one would not know it by reading Rabbi Sacks' language.

The sweep of his essay is toward Heaven itself. It sets the emotional tone and intellectual content for the spiritual fulfilment that the esthetics and content of the siddur intend for the reader. His translations of the Hebrew liturgy and poetry are both accessible and majestic. His commentary is widely based and infused with the humility of his nature as well as the confidence that derives from his scholarship.

Unlike other bilingual prayer books, the English translation in the *Koren Sacks Siddur* is on the right-hand page. The Hebrew is on the left. The eye starts its course in the centre of the book, not at its edges, and then proceeds along the free, uncluttered course to the end of the page. The prayers run to the horizon, not into each other.

Klein concludes *Heirloom* by reaching toward the images and the memories of his father that the holy book in his hand evokes.

"And my tears, too, have stained this heirloomed ground/ When, reading in these treatises some weird Miracle, I turned a leaf and found/ A white hair fallen from my father's beard."

With the publication of the *Koren Sacks Siddur*, we have possibly new terrain that may one day be the heirloomed ground for generations to come.

– MBD

SeeJN

THREE YEARS AFTER THE SECOND LEBANON WAR

Last week on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, an official memorial ceremony was held for the soldiers who fell in battle in the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006. Defence Minister Ehud Barak, pictured laying a wreath, praised the conduct of combat troops. "The soldiers and commanders in the field showed courage, resourcefulness and camaraderie... Their daring made up for the mistakes of the top ranks more than once," Barak said. "It has only been three years, a mere blink in historical terms, but it seems like it has been ages upon ages. The Second Lebanon War lies in the collective Israeli conscious, an eye-opening jolt. One fact transcends all the polemics and criticism – the IDF's soldiers headed out to this mission knowing what the home front knew as well – that we must respond."

[Israel Sun photo]

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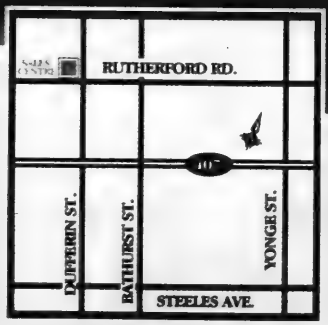

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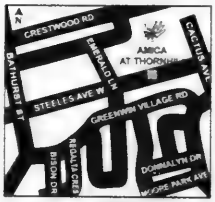

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AMICA at Thornhill

Greater Toronto Area

Scholarship helps newcomers further their education

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Newcomers to Canada can get some help with their post-secondary education, thanks to a scholarship from Jewish Immigrant Aid Services Toronto's (JIAS) Shindman/ShaRna Foundation.

Scholarships are available to JIAS clients of any age – they must be here less than five years – who are enrolled in an Ontario post-secondary educational program.

Romm Gurel, a JIAS community worker, said the agency has been distributing scholarships through the Shindman Foundation, based on merit and financial need, for about 30 years.

In 2006, Sharon Weintraub, head of Sha Rna, a philanthropic foundation, began contributing to the scholarships so that the organization could help out more students.

Janis Roth, JIAS executive director, said in a letter that this year, "when the scholarship endowment did not provide any interest for scholarships, [Weintraub] provided outright the usual annual amount of $10,000, plus $30,000 more to ensure every eligible applicant received a grant."

Twelve scholarships were awarded in 2006, Gurel said, 19 were awarded in 2008, and this year there were 24 recipients.

"This past year the total amount of scholarships given was $40,800, an increase from last year's $36,000 total sum. Although the foundation has been very generous, we are giving less money to more people due to a growing need," he said.

Weintraub said that many immigrants need to upgrade their qualifications or find new professions when they arrive here.

"Any profession [such as pharmacy, medicine, dentistry or law] that is [licensed] requires retraining, and then students have to pass a set of exams. It's a tremendous effort, and if the students have a family to support, it can be difficult."

During these tough economic times, she said, they're trying to help as many people as possible. "Some of the younger students come from families in which both parents are unemployed. Some are exceptional students, but they spent a few years catching up with their English. They need a little help moving forward."

She shared a letter from one recipient who plans to pursue a career in management accounting. "Thanks to the Shindman/ShaRna Foundation I am one step closer to that goal.

"By awarding me the [scholarship] you have lightened my financial burden, which allows me to focus more on [school]. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community."

Another recipient, a lawyer, received a scholarship that helped him get Canadian certification. "I wrote the last of 13 exams, for which I had to pay $2,100. The scholarship was helpful in covering [some of] the cost of the exams."

Weintraub said the application process begins in February each year, and the process is completed by mid-April. "This year we had 30 applications and were able to accept 24."

Gurel said JIAS is considering adding a second window of opportunity for scholarships in the fall.

Weintraub is glad that she has been able to help expand the program. "JIAS needs more supporters, especially during this economic downturn. I'd like to see even more people become employable.

"These newcomers all want jobs. They just need a little assistance to get them where they want to be."

Correction

The story "Cdn. astronaut visits Ramon's Family" (*CJN*, June 2) gave an incorrect date for the Columbia space shuttle disaster. The Columbia exploded during its re-entry to Earth on Feb. 1, 2003. We apologize for the error.

SOMALI COMMUNITY VISITS BAYCREST

Canadian International Peace Project joined with Baycrest to host an event on June 28 that saw Jewish seniors from the Terraces and members of the Somali-Canadian community mingle to learn about each other's culture and history. The seniors and their families enjoyed an afternoon of food, crafts, traditional costume and song with their Somali neighbours, many of them mothers with children. Here, former ballet dancer and Terraces of Baycrest resident Frieda Bloomberg, left, dances with Zahra Ali. [Stephanie Lake photo]

WORLD PREMIERE: Some Scrolls on display for the first time ever!

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Words that Changed the World

Co-Chairs and Patrons: **Mohammad Al Zaibak, Tony Gagliano, Jonas Prince** and Families

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www.rom.on.ca/scrolls

This exhibition was produced by the Royal Ontario Museum in collaboration with the Israel Antiquities Authority. The artifacts are on loan from the National Treasures of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The ROM is an agency of the Government of Ontario. Photo courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Editorials & Letters

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Fun, fellowship and peoplehood

The logo of the 18th Maccabiah Games, inset, contains a reference in Hebrew that is, as *CJN* columnist and educator Rachael Turkienicz has pointed out in other contexts, "both descriptive and prescriptive." Below the English word *Maccabiah* is the same word in Hebrew. Alongside of it, however, also in Hebrew, is the tiny, yet always evocative, two-letter word *chai*.

The placement of *chai* beside *Maccabiah* is more than a felicitous design statement. It is a purposeful, proclamatory double entendre.

As every Jew on earth knows, the word *chai* is also the numerological equivalent of the number 18. Hence, the descriptive use of the word in the logo to capture the fact that the upcoming Games are the 18th in the series of Games that began in 1932.

But as every Jew on earth also knows, *chai* means life.

It is in reference to this meaning of the word that its placement in the logo is prescriptive: These are the 18th Maccabiah Games. The Maccabiah Games live!

The designer of the logo and the organizers of the games clearly intended to pack this double punch. In this context, the Games are a symbol for the Jewish state itself and for its relationship to the Jewish people throughout the world.

Athletes from more than 60 countries have been in Israel since before July 13, when the games officially began. The competitions last until July 23.

In speaking of the 18th Maccabiah Games, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said they're an instrument for uniting the Jewish people. "Jews come here from all over the world for athletic competitions which both embody the idea of 'a healthy soul in a healthy body' and strongly link the Diaspora communities with the State of Israel in the Land of Israel."

Using history and occasion as a jumping off point to the central themes of athletics, fellowship and peoplehood, Oded Grofman, the consul for tourism and director of the Israel Government Tourist Office – Canada, added, quite neatly, the very pragmatic observation that the Games will be fun, too. The culminating ceremony will be a massive beach party, with the Tel Aviv-Yafo beach strip decorated according to the different nationalities of the athletes.

"This year's competition will add some extra excitement to Tel Aviv's summer-long centennial festivities," Grofman said.

The outcome of the athletic competitions are quite secondary to the overarching significance of the Games, which is to act as a potent reminder of the double-sided, life-affirming, hope-sustaining fact: The State of Israel lives. The Jewish people lives!

25 years ago in The CJN

After speaking to an unnamed Refusenik, B'nai Brith representatives reported that the Soviet Union had virtually shut down Jewish emigration, even ending its family reunification policy. Emigration declined from 4,358 in June 1979 to 72 in June 1984.

Dry Bones
FRIENDS 'TIL THE END
BIBI SAYS THAT THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP IS UNBREAKABLE!
WOW!
LET'S HOPE THAT OBAMA DOES NOT TAKE THAT
TO BE A CHALLENGE!

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Urges community to unite for Israel

The recent academic conference at York University – "Israel Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" – was just another ploy to delegitimize the Jewish state ("Ottawa reviews funding for York U conference," *CJN* Toronto, June 18; also see "York conference on Israel met by protests," *CJN* website, July 9).

In response to the conference, protests were organized by Hasbara@York, Hasbara Fellowships and the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism and the Jewish Defence League. I am not aware of any other Jewish organizations that were involved in protests. Where was the Jewish community? Our enemies are relentless in their effort to demonize and delegitimize Israel by broadcasting half-truths, telling outright lies and presenting a revisionist historical narrative. They advocate boycotts, send letters to the editors, stage plays, show films, hold seminars and conduct "educational" weeks and rallies, the result of all of which is to slowly brainwash the public and the university students who will become the future leaders of Canada.

In some cases, it has become unsafe for speakers who are pro-Israel to speak out on university campuses. The true story of Israel is rarely told to the public at large. We generally tell the story only at synagogues.

Why is it that we have funds to build great buildings but not enough to protect our survival? Why is it that we keep concentrating on the minor differences in viewpoints between our different organizations instead of concentrating on the major objectives that we have in common? The organizations that care about Israel and focus on fighting anti-Semitism should be able to find a common ground to work together. We are too few in number to allow ourselves the luxury of splintering over minor ideological differences. We who love Israel have to wake up and unite along our common purpose: the survival of the State of Israel.

Alisa Schwartz
Toronto

* * *

York U situation in need of repair

The headline of Eric Lawee's article urges us to "curb the hyperbole" about the institution where he teaches, and to try to retain our sense of balance about what's been happening there ("Let's curb the hyperbole about York," *CJN*, July 2).

Will do! On one side of the balance sheet, there is all the really positive stuff he mentions: the Holocaust and anti-racism program; the annual invitation extended to an Israeli academic who takes "students beyond the screaming headlines" and who serves as a human "antidote" to all types of propaganda, and not only of the anti-Israel variety (although one has to wonder if that's rather a heavy burden to place on the shoulders of one little Israeli); the "vibrancy" of York University's Hillel, and the "complex" and "dynamic" campus.

Which brings us, alas, to the other side of the balance sheet: hosting an absurd conference that lent an academic gloss to the "one-state solution," that is, Israel's extinction; participating in Israeli Apartheid Week, an annual global event of shadowy origin that purveys lies, smears and blood libels about the Jewish state with the aim of making Israel's demise a moral necessity; a long list of professors who push the Marxist/Islamist line about Israel being an alien colonialist, imperialist "occupier"; a university administration that seems at a loss at how to deal with "the screaming demonstrators who too often populate York's Vari Hall"; a campus awash in splenetic Jew-hate/anti-Zionism such that Jewish students (some of whom I have spoken to personally) are afraid to identify themselves as Zionists. Some of these students were recently forced to barricade themselves in a classroom and await police rescue, because some of their more "complex" and "dynamic" campus-mates seemed intent on throttling them.

Dry Bones
WE CAN'T JUST BAN ISRAEL! PROFESSORS FROM OUR UNIVERSITY
NO?
NO!
BUT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THEM!
YOU MEAN?
HOW 'BOUT WE MAKE THEM WEAR YELLOW STARS OF DAVID?

So by all means, let's tally up the balance sheet. And after we do, let's be honest enough to admit that something at York is seriously out of whack and in desperate need of repair.

Mindy Alter
Toronto

Editor's note: the headline "Let's curb the hyperbole about York" was written by CJN staff.

* * *

Expects zero tolerance of hate at York U

The article by Eric Lawee outlines some of the many accomplishments of Jews at York University, ranging from its strong Jewish presence and excellence in Jewish studies to its excellent relationship with Israeli academics and its well-supported Hillel ("Let's curb the hyperbole about York," *CJN*, July 2). But he totally misses the point. His argument is that because of the many positives involving Jews at York University, the Jewish community should not be so quick or angry in its condemnation of anti-Jewish activities at York. The point is: we expect all of those positives from a leading academic institution, and we expect that there will be zero tolerance for the promotion of hate, intolerance and anti-Semitic behaviour at York. It is not one or the other, it is both. And if the Jewish community does not believe that both are mandatory, why should we expect the greater community to do so?

Ruth Ekstein
Thornhill, Ont.

LET THEM GO...
Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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'We should think big about our goals'

(Excerpted from Natan Sharansky's acceptance speech as chairman of the executive of the Jewish Agency for Israel, on June 25 in Jerusalem)

Being elected the chairman of the executive of the Jewish Agency is not only a great honour and challenge, it is also the closing of a very large circle, a circle which started many years ago in Moscow, when we were ordinary loyal Soviet Jews – which meant we were deprived of our freedom and our identity and were powerless and helpless.

We discovered there is the State of Israel, which fights for its right to exist and also for our dignity, a state which is waiting for us. Then we discovered that there is a great history, which started with the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt and continues – and we are part of this exodus. Then we discovered that we are a part of great people whose solidarity, whose struggle will be always with us. That is when we began to fight for our freedom.

That is why, when the judge, some minutes before sentencing me, asked me, "What are the last words which you want to say to the court?" I told him: "I have nothing to say to the court, but to my people and to my wife I am saying *"L'shanah ha'bah b'Yerushalayim*, next year in Jerusalem." I said it because I knew that this is what connects me with the generations of Jews before, and with those Jews who had been fighting for me all these years.

Let me take you for a second to the prison thousands of miles from Jerusalem and from Moscow, to Ural, on the border of Siberia. There I was in the solitary confinement and near me in the other cell was another Jew, another Prisoner of Zion, Yosef Mendelevitz, also in solitary confinement. We couldn't talk to one another, but we could signal in Morse code.

We could not see one another on what we believed was Independence Day in Israel, at the time which we believed was 11 o'clock in Jerusalem, the time the siren goes off. We looked, we stood still together and looked in the direction of Jerusalem. We heard the siren and we saw the people of Jerusalem standing in the streets. We heard the voice of [then-Israeli prime minister] Menachem Begin promising that they will never stop fighting until we will be released. We knew that the whole Jewish world was united in the struggle. And we knew that the day will come and the airplane will come and will take us from that prison to Israel.

That day came for me five years later. Then, one after the other, all the other Prisoners of Zion were released, and then, as the result of 25 years of the struggle of all Jewish people, millions of Jews were able to leave the Soviet Union. That was the power of this connection with Israel, with Jerusalem and with the Jewish people.

Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky and Immigrant Absorption Minister Sofa Landver celebrate with a group of 75 new immigrants from Ethiopia at a recent ceremony at the Western Wall, where the olim received Israeli identity cards.
[Sasson Tiram/Jewish Agency for Israel photo]

Today we live in a much better world, a world where there are no walls or prisons standing between us. We can talk to our friends all over the world in real time and even see them.

Yet, why are we so lonely? Why are we so weak in facing external threats? We are not in solitary confinement. We live in big communities, the great community of the State of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora. But these communities look like they are running in different directions. Is there a way to change the world? Is there an organization that can do it?

Great ideas change the course of history. Ideas inspire people, mobilize their commitment, their energy, their talents. Then an organization unites these people and their talents and this energy and so history can be changed. That is what happened more than 100 years ago when Theodor Herzl came up with a simple idea. He said the time has come to translate our great prayers and dreams and desires into a political act to build the State of Israel.

But his was not only an idea. He created an organization – the Zionist Organization. It became clear that it was not enough to have a small group of people who want to come to Palestine to build the State of Israel. You have to unite the forces of the whole Jewish world, and so the Jewish Agency was created.

'The college campus is one of the most challenging places today for us as a people'

Israel was built long before the state was declared. Before and after the declaration, the Jewish Agency brought millions of Jews in many different waves, and the state was developed.

Today we are in a different world with different challenges. We are in what I call the world of post-identity. Today, for many people in the free world, any connection to their religion, to their people, their roots or their history seems like something which goes against the principles of freedom. In this world of post-identity, we Jews are especially in danger because of assimilation and the weakening of the connection to our roots and to our tradition.

One of the principle aims of the Jewish Agency was and will be aliyah to Israel. But how do you bring an oleh from America or from France or England if you are not strengthening their identification with the Jewish people. This is our greatest challenge.

We see, for example with Birthright [Israel trips for young people], that if you want to strengthen Jewish identity of Jews of the Diaspora, you need Israel. But we also see that if you want to strengthen the Jewish identity of Israelis, you need the Diaspora.

Where is the organization uniting this effort? Where is the organization in which Israel and the Diaspora meet and build projects together? There is only one organization in all the big world of Jewish organizations where the State of Israel and Jews of the Diaspora are in constant dialogue and are constantly working together. That is our organization, the Jewish Agency…

We should speak big and think big about our goals. Our aim should be no less than to make sure that Jewish Zionist education is available to every Jew in the world. It is a difficult task, but it is possible. Not only should Jewish Zionist education be available, it should be desirable, in demand, it should be cool, as my daughters say.

The Jewish Agency can do it. It should be done through the strength of our bond with the State of Israel. Important decisions should be made together. Important questions, which are discussed here, should also be discussed at the government meetings and in the hearings in the committees of the Knesset.

Now let's go back to that moment in Soviet prison. I stood silent in honour of Israel's Independence Day. I felt such a close connection with all the Jews of the world. I have to say that I remember that moment, often nowadays, especially when I travel to campuses. (In the last six years, I visited 70 universities all over the world, 50 of them in the United States of America and 20 mainly in Europe.)

The college campus is one of the most challenging places today for us as a people. It is a place where our youth are under constant pressure to be ashamed of and distanced from their people and their country.

The first question I was asked by a young, talented Jewish student on the very first campus I visited – a question repeated again and again – was: "Explain to me why we need Israel. Tikkun olam means justice for everybody. So let us work for justice for everybody."

I told him: "Ask your parents how the world looked when there was no Israel." I could have explained about Jews who left their heritage and went on to make a revolution. But we in the Soviet Union did the opposite. We went back to our roots, back to our identity to fight for our freedom. And in this way we helped fight for freedom all over the world.

The most important challenge for all of us is to make sure that this student at Columbia University, or that student at Berkley, or a young couple in Sderot or Jews of Venezuela or Kiev – that they all feel themselves empowered by this connection to the Land of Israel, to the State of Israel, by the connection to Jerusalem, by their pride for our history and for our tradition.

In this post-identity world, if there are strong, vibrant Jewish families united around Jerusalem and the State of Israel, then our lives will be meaningful and we will be able to fulfil the mission for which we are chosen as a people: to do tikkun olam, to make our world a better place.

Opinions

Where are the Jewish Susan Boyles?

On April 11, a frumpy looking 47-year-old woman named Susan Boyle auditioned for the TV show *Britain's Got Talent*. She took the stage to condescending glances. However, by the time she finished singing, she got a standing ovation, and within hours, she was an international sensation. Boyle was an exceptional singer whose talent had been overlooked for decades.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

Boyle's story reminds us of how often talent gets wasted. And the question the Jewish community must ask itself is this: where are the Jewish Susan Boyles?

The culture of Torah scholarship was once anti-elitist. The Talmud is filled with tales of outsiders who became rabbis. For example, Reish Lakish was a common criminal who was invited into the world of Torah by the leading rabbi of his time, Rabbi Yochanan. The rabbis of the Talmud saw enormous potential in every human being and insisted on opening the door to "non-traditional students."

Another talmudic passage tells a cautionary tale about elitism. The great rabbi, Hillel, was a poor woodchopper who would scrounge his pennies to pay admission for the study hall. One winter day, Hillel didn't have any money and was turned away by the guard. Hillel tried to listen to the lecture though a window and nearly froze to death. Luckily, the rabbis saw him through the window and saved his life.

This passage has a simple message: if you barricade the doors to the study hall, you'll leave great rabbis such as Hillel out in the cold.

Today, unknown Jews without status are also left out in the cold. Some are excluded because of money, finding it difficult to pay day school tuitions and synagogue memberships. Others feel excluded by Jewish institutions that are so insular and unwelcoming that when an outsider wanders in, they are made to feel like an intruder.

And I hear all too often about Jews who are alienated from the Jewish community because they are treated with coldness and condescension.

Our community has been exploring many expensive and exotic ways to ensure Jewish continuity. But a critical element in solving the problem of Jewish continuity is free: we simply need to make our institutions more welcoming. We need to say hello to visitors and include them in our community. We need to invite in the Susan Boyles and make them feel at home. Who knows? Maybe we'll be welcoming in the next generation's Hillel.

If we are searching for the Jewish Susan Boyles, finding them is simple: they are at the entrance of every Jewish institution, waiting for someone to smile and open the door.

Yes we can Zionism

I recently attended a plenary session at a major Zionist organization. The plenary was off the record, so I won't identify the organization. Some speakers invoked "Obama's way" as a model, marvelling at the extraordinary fundraising and community-building network that U.S. President Barack Obama and his people developed during the 2008 campaign.

Gil Troy in Montreal

Yes, we can learn a lot from Obama and company's networking skills. But we must remember that much of the magic of the moment came from Obama's message. Without a clear vision, without a compelling and positive message, all the networking skills in the work won't revitalize Zionism – or modern Judaism.

Obama's "Yes, We Can" slogan captured the sense of hope, renewal, youth that Obama's network then spread so effectively. Embedded in his positive "Yes, we can" messaging was a "No, we are not" message too. The dynamics of the Democrats' successful 2008 campaign began as a reaction against then-president George W. Bush and the Republicans. But Obama's marketing genius was to transform that negative into a positive.

Especially in our apathetic, distracted society, people often react more to negative stimuli than to positive stimuli. Usually, terrifying headlines about disasters or failures grab our attention. But in our happy-dappy, entertainment-addicted society, we don't want to dwell in that negative space.

A great leader – and shrewd marketer – builds momentum off fear to fulfil longings and achieve something positive. I would say that one of the weakest and most worrying aspects of Obama's initial approach to foreign policy is that he is too stuck in his "No, we are not" George W. Bush counter-reaction phase and has not yet shaped a positive foreign policy vision that fits the world's ugly realities while moving forward.

The struggle between the negative and the positive looms as a central challenge for the modern Zionist movement, too. During the "good old days" of the 1990s, when Israel flourished economically and seemed headed for peace, most Diaspora Jews ignored Israel. When the Palestinians rejected the Oslo peace process and turned to terror, all of the sudden, many Jews began rallying around Israel. Too many "Israel advocates" are caught in the cat-and-mouse game against the ugly alliance of amoral moralizers linking the left with pro-Palestinian forces, especially on campus. The fight galvanizes, but ultimately it distracts and demoralizes.

We must evolve away from our sorry situation, which makes the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his fellow Palestinian terrorists – of Hamas, Hezbollah and Fatah – the most effective tools for raising Jewish and Zionist consciousness. Like Obama during his campaign, we should build momentum from the "No, we are not." We should say, "No, we are not deluded by the politically correct cant that demonizes Israel, that singles out Israel. No, we are not swayed by the distorted reasoning that rationalizes Palestinian terrorism and excuses Palestinian – and Islamist – authoritarianism, sexism, racism, homophobia and anti-Semitism."

But as we build our networks we must master our messaging. We should say "Yes, we can" to Zionism, not just as a movement of national self-preservation to protect us against the Israel bashers' one-sidedness, disproportionality, anti-Semitism and irrationality. We should say "Yes, we can" to a Zionism of hope and of vision, of individual and collective fulfilment. We should say "Yes, we can" to a Zionism that uses Jewish history, Jewish nationalism, and the extraordinary opportunity of building a modern democratic Jewish state to answer our deepest existential needs.

"Yes, we can" have a Zionist revolution about inspiration. "Yes, we can" look at Israel and the Jewish national project as vehicles for finding meaning, values, a sense of mission in the world today. "Yes, we can" have a Zionist movement that invites us in, saying we are so lucky to be living in this historical moment, when by spending time in Israel, learning about Israel, viewing the world through a Zionist lens, we can grow as individuals, but remember that humans flourish best and accomplish the most when they're rooted in enduring values, and when they're working, building, and dreaming together in larger frameworks that pull us beyond ourselves without sacrificing our selves.

Lessons from my mother, Part 2

It seems that I hit a chord when I wrote in my May column about how I'm trying to spiritually deal with my mother's growing dementia. I received many e-mails and phone calls thanking me for discussing the spiritual side of caring for aging parents.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Toronto

One person wrote: "I've gotten plenty of medical and cognitive suggestions, and even information about 'caring for the caregiver' groups. But no one so far has helped me see that through it all, both I and my mother remain full human beings, body and soul, still linked spiritually and still relating as *neshamas* one to the other."

With that in mind, allow me to share five additional spiritual lessons I'm learning that help me keep my dignity – and hers, too – as the mother I once had slips away.

• Don't talk down. She isn't a baby, even though sometimes it feels as if she is. Yes, keep it simple, but you aren't talking to a five-year-old, so don't use that "mommy modulation" that makes your voice squeaky and cutesy. You're still an adult, and somewhere inside her there is still an adult, too.

• Get to know the other people in the nursing home and their families. Sometimes it's just too much to sit alone with my mom, so it's a relief to bring others into the conversation. It helps me stay positive when I offer a smile to the other folks sitting around waiting for visitors. Their happiness at being acknowledged rubs off on me, and then onto my mother.

• Some of the folks in the home may seem downright nasty at times (or maybe your parent does.) I'd be nasty, too, if I was ill, frail, fed mashed up food, washed and changed by a person I didn't know, confined, not able to express myself, and not able to go where I wanted when I wanted. I try to figure out why someone scowls. Maybe she doesn't speak English. Maybe he thinks I'm his daughter who never visits. Maybe she had a bad dream last night. Or maybe he's hungry and the nurse hasn't fed him yet. I smile at them anyway.

• Don't romanticize. Your parent wasn't perfect before they got dementia. You fought, you disagreed, you got frustrated, and so did they. There will be bad days, just like before they got ill. There will be good memories, but also bad ones. Memories are all we get, so put the sad ones together with the joyous ones, and hopefully it will balance out.

• If you need to cry, cry. You can admit that you feel sorrow. You don't always need to be brave. But remember that your life isn't over, and neither is theirs. There is still a divine spark in them, and you're the one who helps to keep it shining. Your loved one doesn't want you to descend into the depths where they go, into the darkness they sometimes feel, or into the unnamed places in their minds to which they sometimes wander. But they definitely want you there when they come back.

Oscar Wilde wrote, "Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us." Sometimes I think my mother is writing new pages, and sometimes I think she's re-living old ones. Many times the diary is closed shut, and even locked. But it helps me to know that I, and the rest of my family – as well as the tremendous accomplishments of her life, the little triumphs and setbacks, and daily loving and living – are all in there, held in her heart, even if she can't retrieve them now.

The Kirshner File

The 2006 war as seen by an Israeli filmmaker

Yariv Mozer was walking to the Cinematheque – a landmark in central Tel Aviv – to watch an Israeli film when his cellphone rang

It was July 2006 and the Second War in Lebanon was approaching its climax. "I won't forget this moment," said Mozer, who was then a captain in the reserves and is now a major. "It was not the kind of a call you get every day."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The caller was his commanding officer, the proprietor of a carpet store in Ramat Gan – a Tel Aviv suburb – in peacetime.

"He said, 'I need an officer now.'" Mozer was asked to replace a man who had left his unit prematurely due to anxiety attacks.

Mozer was rattled by the sudden turn of events, not quite able to reconcile the business-as-usual mood in Tel Aviv with the war in Lebanon, which seemed unreal, like a mirage.

Compared to the hustle and bustle of Tel Aviv, life in northern Israel had ground to a complete standstill as deadly barrages of Hezbollah rockets forced tens of thousands of Israeli civilians into bomb shelters.

Amid a swirl of emotions, Mozer asked his commanding officer whether he could return his call in five minutes.

He needed time to think and call his parents, Giora and Chana.

As he departed for the trip north, Mozer – a documentary filmmaker – slung a rifle around his shoulder and took his video camera along.

He had no intention of making a film about the war. "It never crossed my mind," he said.

He regarded the camera as a psychological instrument to calm himself down and separate himself from the reality of war.

The raging conflict in Lebanon would be his first war as a soldier. During the late 1990s, he had served in southern Lebanon, but his unit had not come under fire.

But now, in the summer of 2006, it appeared quite likely that Mozer would be thrown into the thick of battle.

A munitions officer, he spent several weeks on the front, and, with the permission of the army, he filmed what interested him.

He shot 10 hours of footage, all inside Israel, and only realized that he had material for a film once the war had ended.

He was free to film whatever he liked on the understanding that he would submit footage to censors for final approval.

"For the army, this was a difficult film. We had long negotiations," said Mozer.

He agreed to blur maps, alter vital numbers and delete a few inflammatory words from soldiers' critiques of the army's handling of the war.

Mozer's film, *My First War*, had its Canadian premiere at the recent Toronto Jewish Film Festival. Channel 1 in Israel broadcast it on July 12, the third anniversary of the outbreak of the war. The 82-minute film has already been screened on Israel's documentary television channel and by TV stations throughout Europe. The French-language service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation aired it recently.

My First War, Mozer's debut as a director, opens in an Israeli army encampment near a plum orchard close to the Lebanese border, and resounds to the sound of strife and fury.

Keeping his camera snugly tied around his neck with a shoelace, Mozer filmed tanks firing shells and launchers firing missiles, tracing smoky arcs in the clear blue sky.

Shifting away from this scene of desolation, he panned on neatly piled artillery shells waiting to be used by gunners.

Mozer, 31, supported the war, which broke out after Hezbollah ambushed an Israeli patrol inside Israeli territory, killing several soldiers and kidnapping two others.

"I believed that if a government takes a decision to go to war, it knows what it is doing," explained Mozer, who was raised in a Labor Zionist milieu by parents who both served in the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence agency. "I trusted the government."

But as the war dragged on, with the Israeli armed forces unable to suppress the rain of Hezbollah rockets on northern communities, Mozer had second thoughts.

"Day after day, we were stuck in the same position, as if there was no meaning to this war," he said.

To convey the inconclusive character of the conflict, Mozer talked to disillusioned soldiers, who expressed disappointment and anger. "They reflected my fears and anxieties," he explained.

Much of *My First War* is composed of such revealing snippets.

Yariv Mozer during the thick of the war in Lebanon

A lieutenant colonel finds the war frustrating because Israel's high command is stymied by Hezbollah's ability to launch rockets at Israel with impunity. Another officer claims that soldiers died in vain.

Mozer, in the film, bitterly describes the war as "useless," and adds, "I have an undeniable feeling of defeat."

In an interview in Toronto, he said, "I knew that something was completely wrong with this war. It was as if I was waking up from an illusion."

My First War, in this pointed spirit, questions the competence of Israel's vaunted army.

"I assumed that the army would be organized, though I knew from experience that it is not so organized," said Mozer. "I thought everything would fall into place once the war began, but I was wrong."

In line with his view, the generals in charge of the war are mercilessly skewered and compared unfavourably with heroic foot soldiers.

The troops that he interviewed received conflicting orders. As one soldier vocally complains, "The orders are crazy."

Still other soldiers refer to a lack of clarity on the part of political and military leaders to formulate strategy.

Mozer is particularly critical of the order that sent 33 soldiers to their deaths in the final 48 hours of the 34-day war.

The film also conveys the impression that troops were inadequately protected from incoming fire.

Soldiers who camp out on cots in an exposed orchard are depicted as "sitting ducks." In Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, the corpses of a dozen soldiers who were struck down by missiles in an open field are covered with blankets.

Mozer has no qualms in acknowledging that Hezbollah fighters acquitted themselves well.

"The fighting is tough," says a weary soldier. And in a grudgingly admiring reference to Hezbollah's talent for stealth, he observes, "They're like ghosts. We're like mice." A captain adds that Hezbollah fighters are disciplined.

"From all I heard, we fought a very well-trained army with strong motivations and values," said Mozer.

Although he considers Israel the pre-eminent power in the Middle East, he believes that Israel lost the war due to its failure to achieve its overarching objective – silencing Hezbollah's missile batteries.

In retrospect, he feels that Israel should not have rushed into war and should have called a truce sooner. "We need to be wiser, not stronger, than Hezbollah. And we need to talk to them. We should consider diplomacy before war."

Fleshing out this theme, he mused, "To promote peace and dialogue, you should talk to your enemy. And if this is not possible, deal with your enemy wisely and don't give him the satisfaction of dragging you into a war."

Since *My First War*, Mozer has worked on 10 documentaries as a producer. Currently, he is directing his second film, a profile of Israel's Jewish-Arab duet at this year's Eurovision Song Contest, Achinoam Nini and Mira Awad.

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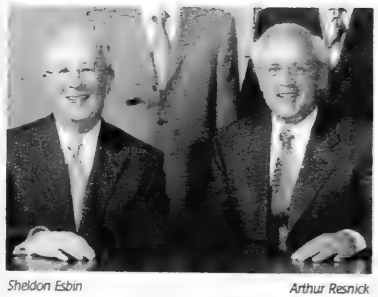

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Couple opens non-religious Jewish private school

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

In September, Robyn Hochglaube and her husband Kevin Gandy are opening the type of school they couldn't find for their own young children.

Wentworth Preparatory School is the city's "first private school with a Jewish perspective," say the couple, who are also directors of Camp Green Acres, a Toronto-area day camp.

As of September, it will be housed at Temple Sinai, according to the school's website.

Wentworth Prep – as in its website name wentworthprep.com – is not a parochial school, said Hochglaube, a native of Montreal who attended Jewish People's Schools & Peretz Schools there.

"We want the culture of Jewishness, but we want the focus to be academic," Hochglaube told *The CJN*.

She will serve as school administrator for the foreseeable future, while Gandy, an accountant, will take more of a behind-the-scenes role, dealing with financing, fundraising and outdoor education.

The new school, which will charge tuition of $11,000 for full-day junior kindergarten, will not offer instruction in religion, but it will provide a Hebrew-language component.

Children will also celebrate Shabbat and learn about Jewish holidays, while non-religious Jewish content will be embedded in the general curriculum, Hochglaube said.

"It's not the focus of the school [that will be Jewish]. It's more the environment of the school… The concept is that the Jewish community should have a private school to compete with the Upper Canada Colleges, the Havergals and the Bishop Strachans."

Daily physical education classes and outdoor education will be a major component of the curriculum, Hochglaube and Gandy said. Among other possible excursions, they plan to bus students to Green Acres once a month for "experiential learning," said Gandy.

French language instruction will begin in Grade 2, but Spanish will start earlier, in junior kindergarten, and will feature more prominently, because Canadians do more business with Spanish-speaking countries, according to Hochglaube.

She said that her son would have gone to a Jewish day school, but that a bad experience dealing with the administration before classes even started changed their plans.

Wentworth Prep is open to both Jewish and non-Jewish students, who will learn the same Jewish content as their peers, she said. "We want them to be global citizens."

Hochglaube, who studied economics and has an MBA, began meeting with representatives of established private schools two years ago to understand how they started. She said she was heartened to learn that it wasn't uncommon to start in rented spaces with as few as half a dozen students.

As of last week, she had five students enrolled for the fall, and two teachers on staff.

Hochglaube also met with Bryan Keshen of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, who shared demographic and statistical data about Toronto's Jewish community with her when the school was in the early planning stages.

Keshen – then the federation's vice-president of strategic planning, and now executive director of the Prosserman Jewish Community Centre and the Schwartz-Reisman Community Centre – told *The CJN* recently that Toronto's Jewish community has "a great number of people interested in identifying Jewishly, but not necessarily religiously."

Hochglaube said the school hasn't looked into being affiliated with the federation's Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education ("the Mercaz"), which is currently regrouping after a major reorganization that saw its staff cut by about two-thirds.

The school – whose name, Hochglaube said, is a "strong, English old-school type of name" and also the name of a street in a Jewish area of her native Montreal – is starting with junior kindergarten through Grade 2, but the goal is to eventually provide education through high school.

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Yehezkel Shabtai may be your Air Canada pilot to Israel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Few Canadians travel to Israel as often as Yehezkel Shabtai.

On average, he flies to Israel 20 times a year. Since 1994, he has flown to Israel numerous times.

Duty calls him to Israel, where he was born and raised.

Shabtai, 55, an Air Canada captain based in Toronto, has been flying the Tel Aviv route about twice a month since 2005.

He may be your pilot the next time you fly to Israel.

Shabtai, who joined Air Canada in 1979, began flying to Israel in 1994.

With 20,000 flying hours behind him and a captain since 1999, he is one of Air Canada's most experienced pilots.

In addition to Israel, he flies to destinations in Europe, including London, Paris, Frankfurt and Rome. He used to fly to Asia as well.

Depending on weather conditions, he takes the northern or southern route to Israel. On the northerly route, he flies past Gander, over Ireland, Norway or Poland and then on to Greece and Cyprus before landing at Ben-Gurion Airport.

On the southerly route, he passes St. John's or New York City, heads past the Azores islands and southern Europe before landing in Israel.

"It doesn't matter which route we take," he said. "Everything is computerized."

On taking off from Pearson International Airport, Shabtai uses manual controls. In 90 per cent of cases, he also lands manually. Once airborne, he depends on a cruise control system to guide the aircraft, a Boeing 767, which holds about 211 passengers and a crew of 11, including three pilots.

"We monitor the weather, flying conditions, airplane systems and talk to control agencies along the way."

As for jet lag, he said, "We all suffer from it, but we deal with it."

On the 10-1/2-hour flight to Israel, he has time to rest, sleeping three hours and 15 minutes in a cabin behind the cockpit and taking a 15-minute cat nap.

Pilots and passengers get different meals. "They're supposed to be cooked separately, in case of contamination."

Layovers in Tel Aviv, at the Sheraton Hotel, can last from 24 to 72 hours, depending on the season.

He usually visits family and friends in the city. "I have aunts and cousins and old school friends," he said.

Shabtai was born in a hospital in Jaffa and lived in Pardes Katz with his parents, Yona and Ruth, and his sister, Judith (who resides in Vancouver today).

Yehezkel Shabtai

Yona and Ruth were Iraqi Jews from Basra and Baghdad, respectively. They left Iraq at the end of 1949, via Iran, fearing that the Jewish community in Iraq no longer had a future after Israel's birth in 1948. They were also Zionists.

Shabtai's father was a train conductor in Israel, the same job he had in Iraq.

The family emigrated from Israel in 1966, believing that opportunities were greater in Canada. They settled in the Bathurst and Finch area, where Shabtai, the father of four grown children, still lives.

"I wanted to go back to Israel, but it was not to be," he said. "I felt an attachment to Israel. I had friends and relatives there."

A graduate of Newtonbrook High School, he got his pilot's licence at 17. "Flying fascinated me, and the more I got into it, the more I was hooked. After logging 10 hours in the air, I knew I wanted to be a pilot."

After getting his private pilot's licence in 1969,and his commercial licence in 1972, he worked in Sault Ste. Marie and in Kingston as an instructor and pilot before being hired by Air Canada as a second officer.

He flew routes in North America and the Caribbean before becoming a co-pilot in 1989.

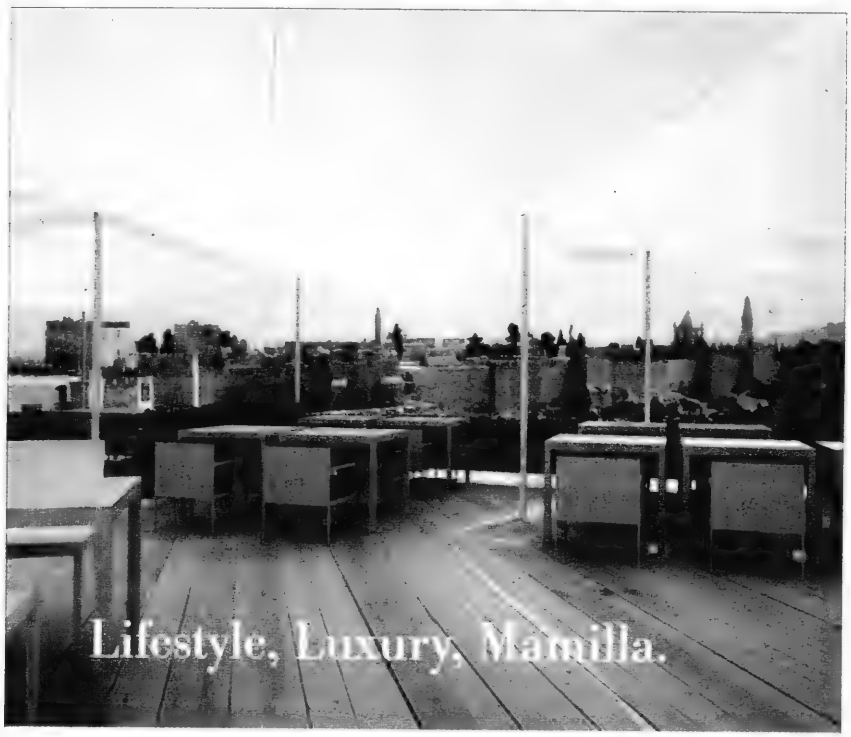
"A pilot has to be able to manage a situation and make decisions based on that," he explained.

"You can't let down your guard and you have to be cool and alert," he added.

Every six months, like every other pilot, he submits to a simulator test.

Air Canada's mandatory retirement age for pilots is currently 60, but Shabtai hopes the rule will change so that he can fly for 10 more years.

As he said, "At most airlines, the retirement age is 65."



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Through his perseverance and boldness, a generation of proud immigrant Jews found a leader and mentor. Together they helped to build a warm and vibrant Jewish Community for their children and grandchildren.

Rabbi "Joe" epitomized the best in what Jewish leadership could and should be. His legacy will live on in the thriving community and organizations he helped create and in the multi-generation of lives he touched through a half a century of dedication.

May his memory provide us with the strength and inspiration so that we may rededicate ourselves to the Jewish values and the caring and unified community Rabbi Kelman strove to build throughout his life.

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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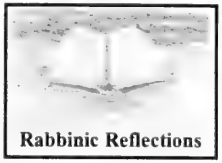
Jewish Life

When we all come together

By RABBI SEAN GORMAN

I had the wonderful pleasure of taking my children on the family ride on behalf of the Zareinu Educational Centre on June 14.

Part of the annual Zareinu Moveathon, it was a wonderful day, full of food and fun, to help a cause that is critical to the community.


Rabbinic Reflections

I explained to one of the riders who came with me that this ride is one of the most important activities of my rabbinate.

Why? Anyone who knows me will tell you that I am always on my bicycle. And I especially love to be able to use my bicycle, not just for fun or for transportation, but for a mitzvah.

But more than that, I look around when I am at the Zareinu carnival, and it is crystal clear to me that all of our synagogues and organizations are present. When we are out at Downsview Park, there is no attention paid to denominational divide. For one thoroughly enjoyable and necessary day, our numerous disagreements have no place. The community has realized a need to support and educate children with developmental challenges and has risen as one to respond to that need.

Many other issues are out there today – the spiralling cost of kosher food, the difficulties and challenges that come with supporting our day schools, the plight of agunot and of abused women in our community. It defies logic that we cannot find a communal voice for these other concerns.

I will pump up my tires, grease the chain and make sure that I am out there for Zareinu every year. But it is my hope that we can all look at what can happen when we respond as a community, and come to understand – not that we are all different, but rather the potential that we can achieve when we put our differences aside.

Rav Sean Gorman, who has been at the Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto, assumes the pulpit at the Pride of Israel Synagogue this month.

Some of the riders who took part in Zareinu's Bike Ride for Children with Special Needs

A biblical yahrzeit to remember

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

Rosh Chodesh Av is fast approaching, and unlike other days of Rosh Chodesh, the new month, the month of Av does not usher in a joyous time. In fact, the sages say that as Av enters, we diminish our joy.

Nine short days after the onset of the month of Av is Tisha b'Av, the ninth of Av, the fasting day on which the Jewish people remember calamities of Jewish history that changed Jewish destiny forever.

Tisha b'Av commemorates the destructions of the ancient Temples in Jerusalem and the resulting exile that cast all Jews into the tumult of history for 2,000 years. It is certainly a day to fast and reflect – but is an ancient event completely responsible for the sages' somewhat extreme statement of joy diminished?

A foundational Jewish philosophy is to worship God with joy and to bring simchah to every opportunity. Clearly, a statement referring to diminishing our joy must be accessing information beyond history.

There is another event that occurred on Rosh Chodesh Av itself, not nine days later. In the Torah, we read of the death of Aaron, Moses' brother and Israel's first high priest. Aaron's death occurs on the first day of the month of Av, on Rosh Chodesh.

The loss of Aaron is hugely significant to the Jewish People beyond the specific loss to the generation of the Bible. Aaron is unanimously viewed by the sages as the person who mastered the art of achieving peace between people.

Pirkei Avot states that Aaron was a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace and someone who loved his fellow human beings. He greeted all those he met with a smile and eye contact, so that if they were later tempted to hurt anyone, they would think twice, questioning whether they would be able to greet Aaron and make eye contact tomorrow if they had hurt someone today. By treating everyone with dignity, Aaron raised the dignity within each person, and the resulting behaviour was one of peace.

Although it is clear throughout the Torah and rabbinic literature that peace is foundational to the world, everyone knows that it remains one of humanity's greatest challenges. To have a person in Jewish text who had mastered this great achievement is indeed something to be held dear. To have lost such a person is indeed a diminishing of our joy.

Rosh Chodesh Av is Aaron's yahrzeit, and we diminish our joy as we remember how great is the loss to the world when a person of peace is silenced. It is impossible to master Aaron's techniques or strategies since so many details of his life remain unknown. Yet, one subtle point should resound with an informing voice, and that is the introduction God gives Aaron when speaking to Moses.

When God is giving Moses instructions at the burning bush, Moses argues with God, insisting that He choose another. God reassures Moses by telling him that his brother, Aaron, is coming to greet him and will serve as his spokesperson.

One phrase stands out in this exchange. God states that Aaron will see Moses and "rejoice in his heart." The phrase seems innocent enough – the idea that one brother would rejoice at the sight of another – and yet we must not forget the narrative that immediately precedes this one. The book of Genesis consistently portrays sibling rivalries that fuel events and calamities. Beginning with Cain and ending with Joseph, the challenge of siblings fills the pages of Genesis.

God acknowledges the uniqueness of Aaron as a man of peace by stating that when seeing his brother, Aaron will rejoice in his heart. Aaron's most powerful legacy is the lesson we hear from God about him, and his yahrzeit is truly a day of diminished joy and reflection.

Jewish Life

Lachish: gateway to Jerusalem

By ALEX GROPPER

Tel Lachish is one of the most strategic sites in Israel. On the border between the coastal plain and the hill country, it played a crucial role as the major fortress blocking the route to Jerusalem in ancient times. Its important location would lead to its violent destruction on a number of occasions.

Past Forward

As with many of the major archeological sites in Israel, Lachish's history goes back at least to the dawn of civilization at the start of the Bronze Age, circa 3000 BCE and probably earlier. The surrounding area has revealed signs of human habitation going as far back as the Neolithic period, which began almost 10,000 years ago.

The mound of Lachish was known to the Arabs as Tell ed-Duweir, and its identification with the biblical site was made by the legendary American archeologist W.F. Albright in 1929. The first excavations of Lachish were undertaken by a British team in the 1930s. Sadly, they came to a tragic end when Arab bandits murdered the leader, James Starkey, in 1938, while he was on his way to a party in Jerusalem.

Starkey's excavations, the results of which have generally withstood the test of time, revealed a site whose most important phases were in the Middle (circa 2000 to 1500 BCE) and Late Bronze (circa 1500 to 1200 BCE) ages, as well as the Israelite Monarchy period, circa 1050 to 586 BCE. Remains of a palace from the latter part of the Middle Bronze Age, as well as a number of temples from the Late Bronze Age, were discovered. The city was even mentioned in Egyptian documents dating to the late 15th and early 14th centuries BCE, including the famous Amarna tablets found at the abandoned capital of the heretic pharaoh, Akhenaten.

Among the most fascinating finds discovered by Starkey and his team were a number of inscriptions incised on broken pieces of pottery that came to be known as the Lachish Ostraca. Most of these were letters written in Hebrew dating from the last days of the Hebrew monarchy in the early sixth century BCE, just before the Babylonian destruction of the first Temple. Some of the letters were forlorn cries from the defenders for help from Jerusalem, which never came as the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar bore down on the doomed outpost. Other letters refer to a prophet whom some believe to be Jeremiah.

These letters have proven to be invaluable for scholars of biblical Hebrew in showing both the development of the script, as well as the language of the Tanach, in the days before the fall of the first Temple.

Full-scale excavations did not resume again until 1973. They were led by David Ussishkin of Tel Aviv University. Ussishkin found ample evidence of the two major sieges and destructions that Lachish underwent during the period of the Israelite monarchy. The first siege occurred circa 701 BCE, when the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, was on his way to besiege Jerusalem. The Assyrians knew that in order to march on Jerusalem they had to eliminate Lachish, which acted as a fortress blocking the route to the Judean capital.

Their siege was a model of brutal efficiency. The Assyrian army was feared throughout the Near East for its ruthlessness. The Assyrian monarch thought the conquest of Lachish important enough to depict it on the walls of his palace at Nineveh, now located in modern Iraq.

The site of Lachish was too important to lie abandoned, and it was rebuilt during the reign of the righteous King Josiah at the end of the seventh century BCE, just in time to withstand another siege and destruction, this time by the Babylonians under the leadership of the legendary Nebuchadnezzar.

As with other strategic sites in Israel, numerous battles were fought in its vicinity, the last being the siege of Latrun during the War of Independence in 1948, but this time it was we who did the besieging in the attempt to open up the road to Jerusalem. Fortunately, we succeeded.

Is Tisha b'Av relevant?

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Is Tisha b'Av relevant to Jews today? What importance does the 17th of Tammuz have or the three weeks that bridge these two fast days? Those questions are central to a debate you will see on many websites as we find ourselves in what is traditionally the most mournful period in the Jewish calendar.

The Jewish Highway

Starting with the 17th of Tammuz and culminating on the ninth of Av, these three weeks recall the destruction of the First and Second Temples, and many other persecutions of the Jewish people. **[tinyurl.com/9av01]** But what importance do they really have now that we have a vibrant State of Israel and the rebuilt capital of Jerusalem?

A couple of years ago, members of Israel's Reform and Progressive movements held a Tisha b'Av commemoration ceremony in Jerusalem, intended to make the day more relevant to the secular public. In order to highlight the personal loss of Jerusalem's downfall, organizer Dov Kalmanovitz used the writings of Jewish historian Josephus, who witnessed the destruction of the Second Temple and its effect on the residents of the city. "The individual victims are unknown to us," Kalmanovitz told Ha'aretz. "Texts such as this help us commemorate and remember, even though we don't know the victims' faces or names. Tisha b'Av is for them. It's not meant for grieving only over the stones, but also remembering the people." **[tinyurl.com/9av10]**

A blogger named Margot heard about the outreach event but wasn't sold on it. "To me, this ceremony, although clearly well intended, is missing the boat. Tisha b'Av is not relevant to secular Israelis because it does not speak to their experience of being a Jew… Israelis who are willing to live and die for their country understand suffering and loss better than most. They see, in a sense, both a refutation of Tisha b'Av in that Israel exists and an affirmation of Tisha b'Av in the ongoing war and terrorism in the region every day. When one lives in a continual cycle of mourning and rebirth, how connected can you be to Tisha b'Av?" **[tinyurl.com/9av18]**

Historian Yisrael Ne'eman takes a different stand. "As one who is secular and can state categorically that he pretends not to know the nature of God, or even of His existence, let it be stated here that should we forget, ignore or downplay Tisha b'Av, we not only endanger our collective Jewish being, but undermine any Zionist identity or endeavours we may call our own." Ne'eman argues that Zionists have done themselves a disservice by rejecting 3,500 years of Jewish history. "The collective Jewish spiritual being must designate Tisha b'Av as a form of a national Yom Kippur, where we scrutinize our behaviour towards ourselves and others." **[tinyurl.com/9av23]**

Ismar Schorsch, former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, supports the observance of Tisha b'Av but has concerns about the three weeks. One day "of remembrance, enacted wholeheartedly is sufficient. Three weeks of escalating mournfulness, beginning with the fast day on the 17th of Tammuz, threatens to turn martyrology and victimhood into a worldview." **[tinyurl.com/9av104]**

Responding to Schorsch, Jonathan Rosenblum wrote in the Jerusalem Post that the three weeks play a crucial role as a time of preparation for Tisha b'Av. He asks whether a soccer team would consider skipping training to better concentrate on the World Cup itself? As for Schorsch's concerns about "victimhood," Rosenblum says the purpose of this period is not to dwell on our oppression by others but to focus on our own "collective failings for which the Temple was destroyed and has yet to be rebuilt." **[tinyurl.com/9av102]**

Rabbi Michael Gold caught my attention when he admitted, "I am not a very good faster. In fact, I confess that I allow most of the minor fast days of the Jewish calendar to pass without notice." But for Rabbi Gold, Tisha b'Av is important. "Tisha b'Av is a difficult fast. Some Jews fast only part of the day, maintaining that with the rebirth of Israel the sadness is mitigated. I still fast a full day. We Jews need one day of mourning. My hope is that the day becomes an opportunity to create rituals and memories, and also a time of soul searching and resolve. On Tisha b'Av, we can learn to improve ourselves and to improve the world." **[tinyurl.com/9av103]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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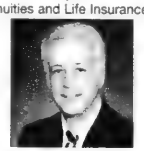

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Revisiting Obama's Qur'an: one text, two truths

By JAMES A. DIAMOND

Guest Voice

As a scholar of religion, I spend much of my time both in the classroom and in research questioning and, more often than not, debunking widely held beliefs that don't stand the test of critical study. Usually these beliefs cater to what we would like reality to be rather than what it actually is, empirically and historically.

And so it was that a mythic tone was set almost immediately in U.S. President Barack Obama's recent speech at Cairo University with the sweeping generalization that "throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality," an assertion that does not conform to any history I am aware of, but rather rewrites it to pander to his immediate audience.

One need only mention the 12th century Almohads, who virtually destroyed Jewish and other religious communities across Morocco and Spain, to dispose of such a historical caricature. Even the more moderate Islamic regimes "throughout history" tolerated Jews and Christians, but only as *dhimmi*, or second-class citizens subject to numerous restrictions and legal disabilities. Islam – throughout its entire history up until the present day in those countries governed by *sharia* – does not abide by the principle of equality before the law, neither in gender nor in religion.

The most troubling aspect of Obama's speech, however, was his dissimulating citation of the Qur'an. Here I will deal with two of the three that informed his entire presentation. In order to lay the groundwork for a frank speech, he cited a verse that apparently promotes such straight talk: "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth."

However, the Qur'an is a religious document that purports to be divinely revealed and reflects no interest whatsoever in the empirical or cogently reasoned universal truth that western secular ears heard when this phrase was cited. The "truth" it espouses is decidedly not an objective one on which everyone can agree, but rather the truth of Islam and its doctrines. In this sense it is no different than Jewish or Christian scriptures, whose particular teachings profess to be divine truths.

As for the "truth" that the Qur'an is concerned with, this is clearly borne out in its original context in Surah 33, where it is preceded by admonishing and cursing "unbelievers," commencing with 33:64: "Surely Allah has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a burning fire." It continues in 33:65: "To abide therein for a long time; they shall not find a protector or a helper," and it ends with the selected quote from 33:70: "O you who believe! be conscious of Allah and always speak the truth."

The truth the Qu'ran speaks about is the truth of what the Qur'an dictates, as opposed to the falsity of those who are "unbelievers" or profess anything other than the tenets of Islam. Surely the president, renowned for his carefully chosen and precise words, must have known what this quote would mean to the millions who live and breathe the Qur'an daily and have it committed to memory.

The truth for that audience is the truth of Islam, and what they heard was a U.S. president publicly proclaiming its truth. That quote would resonate for them with the truth of other verses, such as 49:15: "The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Apostle then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the truthful ones." The equation it draws is between the truth and the beliefs of the "believers." Rather than create a common ground in which different religions and peoples can intersect, this "truth" erects a barrier that cannot be overcome, short of the universal adoption of Islam.

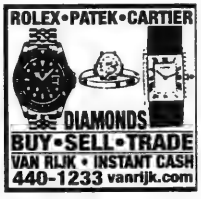
The president's second Qur'anic reference was ostensibly to highlight Islam's reverence for all life, loosely based on Sura 5:32, which he rendered as follows: "Whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind." It's a noble enough sentiment. However, what is most disturbing about this quote is that it is a companion piece with the very next verse, which mandates the most violent retribution imaginable against the exception to its noble sentiment that Obama strategically omitted – "those who spread mischief in the land."

For the millions of Muslims listening, that next verse could not be detached from its precursor, which calls for "execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land," against "enemies of Allah and His messenger." Once again, what those millions heard that the overwhelming majority in the West did not was a president of the United States endorsing the dismemberment of any who would undermine and attack Islam's founding father!

A capital crime in my academic occupation is to tailor history, society, religion, and texts to fit some preconceived idyllic notion of what each should be, or worse, to promote a particular agenda or policy. The entire thrust of the president's speech – to cultivate a meeting of minds between the Islamic world and the liberal democratic one – is doomed from the start by a gesture that is itself premised on words that mean entirely different things to two constituencies.

The people most familiar with the texts he quoted – witnessing the most powerful leader of the democratic world endorsing the "truths" they know that the text champions – will be emboldened to persist in the very ideologies that provoke the West's suspicions. The others will remain with an image of some eloquently crafted ideal that doesn't reflect reality, and, therefore, they'll be ill-equipped to deal with it or conduct any kind of meaningful dialogue based on it. One can never determine what the common ground is unless one is fully apprised of the ground on which the other walks.

Prof. James A. Diamond is the Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Waterloo.



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Chef brings bistro-style kosher fare to Toronto

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The shelves in Eran Marron's refrigerator are virtually bare.

"It's very rare to find food in my fridge," he said.

You might think that Marron is oblivious to the joys and pleasures of food, but appearances can be deceiving.

As he put it, "I really like food, and love to eat."

Which is an understatement.

Marron, in fact, is a foodie par excellence, though he is not given to eating at home.

He's the owner of and chief chef at Marron Bistro Moderne (948 Eglinton Ave. W.), a strictly kosher restaurant that he has operated since 2006 and is frequented primarily by Orthodox diners.

Eran Marron

Although he was raised in a secular Jewish household, Marron, a 28-year-old Israeli, has become observant since settling in Toronto several years ago.

And now that he has found his religious bearings, he is tightly focused. "I'm on a mission to bring kosher food to the wider community," explained Marron, who specializes in simple French bistro fare.

To Marron, kosher cuisine transcends bagels and brisket, as a glance at one of his recent menus reveals.

Appetizers included a beet and endive salad garnished with caramelized walnuts and poached pears and drizzled with balsamic dressing.

Main courses ran the gamut from duck, accompanied by cabbage in red wine, sweet potato purée and orange sauce, to the house burger, a ground beef patty served with tomatoes, onions and french fries.

Marron changes his menu quite often, but his specialties remain constant, including cured chicken slathered with Portobello mushrooms and smoked salmon and trout pâté with a charcuterie salad.

Marron's culinary wizardry is not cheap. A three-course meal for two, with wine, is about $120.

"Our meat costs are very high," explained Marron, who uses only home-made products that he and his two assistants confect in his kitchen. "I pay top dollar for the best products."

Since he is a great believer in local produce, 90 per cent of his ingredients are Canadian. But in a nod to his Middle Eastern origins, he buys a date spread made in Israel.

Business has been good so far. On average, he and his staff serve 40 to 60 meals a day.

Marron's bistro, with a bright Parisian-style exterior and a muted interior graced by mirrors, stands out in a busy neighbourhood brimming with forgettably bland façades.

He employs two cooks, two waiters, a manager and a dishwasher. "I couldn't do it without them."

The restaurant is open Sunday to Thursday from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Ordinarily, Marron arrives at around 8 a.m. and doesn't leave until at least midnight.

A bachelor, he arrived in Canada by way of New York City, where he worked for celebrity chef Daniel Boulud at his restaurant's soup, canape and appetizer stations.

On a trip to Vancouver, he met fellow Israeli Igal Abergel, who convinced him to move to Toronto to work at his restaurant, Shemen Zait. Marron remained there for about a year.

Prior to New York, Marron studied culinary arts at the Harvard of cooking schools, the Paul Bocuse Institute, near Lyon, France. "It made me what I am today," he said.

Marron was born and raised in Haifa, the son of Romanian immigrants. His father, Micah, is a contractor who once owned a pizzeria. His mother, Varda, is a cosmetician.

Since she was invariably too busy to cook for the family, Marron and his brother had to fend for themselves.

"I was a big fan of chicken wings and red peppers stuffed with cottage cheese," he said, savouring the memory of these disparate dishes.

In part, Marron's career path was paved by his grandparents. Grandpa made sausages to die for, while grandma whipped up amazing verenikas, borscht and Romanian-flavoured kebabs.

During his army service from 1997 to 2000, Marron was designated to be a cook.

"Making schnitzels for 900 soldiers taught me the value of discipline, structure and hard work," he said.

As a French-trained chef, Marron is accustomed to cooking with butter and cream, but since these ingredients are taboo in meat-based kosher cuisine, he has had to adapt and learn to be more creative than the chef who does not have to worry about such considerations.

Although he has amassed considerable experience in the kitchen, Marron realizes that he still has a lot to learn.

He has taken a cake design course and recently finished an apprenticeship with a butcher. He now plans to apprentice himself out to a bread baker.

In addition, he reads cookbooks as if they were novels.

Although his passion is French food, Marron still admires the popular fare of Israel – hummus, shawarma, falafel, burekas and the like.

As well, he enjoys chicken, veal and turkey schnitzel, not to mention pizza.

Far from his home in Israel, he has blended astonishingly well into the Toronto restaurant scene, and there is no better indication of that than the success of the Marron Bistro Moderne.

"The best clientele I've ever had is in Toronto," he said. "The people are kind and they appreciate good food."

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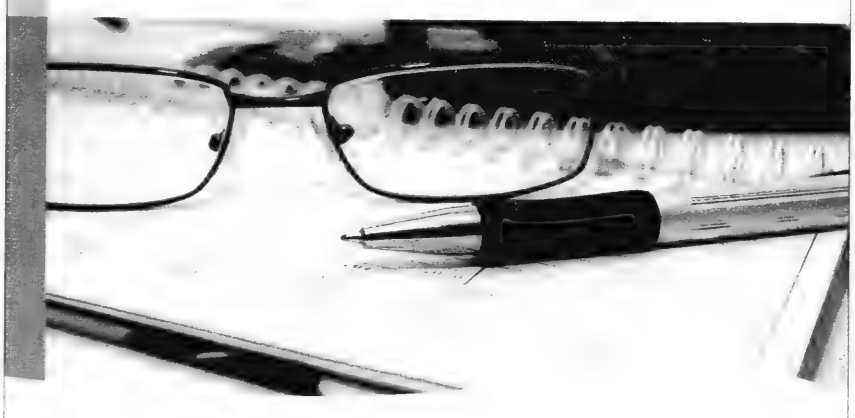

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On Campus

HU scientist seeks to starve cancerous tumours

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Driven by the ambition to discover an alternative to risky bypass surgery and a way to starve cancerous tumours, Hebrew University of Jerusalem professor Eli Keshet has spent the last two decades studying the vascular system and the mechanisms of blood vessel formation.

In June, during a six-day trip to Israel sponsored by the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University – a non-profit organization that promotes and raises funds for Hebrew U, with chapters from coast to coast – six Canadian journalists spent an afternoon with some of Israel's brightest scientific minds.

One of the meetings was with Keshet, who spoke of his discovery that revealed a protein called VEGF, which initiates the formation of new blood vessels when older ones need to be bypassed because of an occlusion, or a blockage.

With this knowledge, Keshet is also working to understand how to inhibit the formation of blood vessels so as to starve cancerous tumours that rely on blood vessels for nourishment.

Keshet's work has contributed to clinical trials of cancer-fighting drugs that neutralize a tumour's ability to attract blood vessels from which it thrives.

"Our work concerns trying to gain more insight into how new blood vessels are made in the body. The notion is that once sufficient insights are made, maybe we can harness this knowledge in order to manipulate the vascular system at will," Keshet said.

He said every organ and tissue in the body is no further away than one-tenth of a millimetre from a blood capillary so that it can secure an efficient exchange of blood cells.

When an artery becomes clogged, all the tissues that are serviced by these vessels are now suffering from an insufficient supply of oxygenated blood cells.

"In our vascular system, in a remarkable way, it can always sense that if there are not enough blood vessels in the area… it has a remarkable ability of self-rectifying itself to make more blood vessels in the area where you need to enforce the vascular supply," Keshet said.

"The question is, how does the tissue know that it needs to make new blood vessels? The tissue knows because it's experiencing hypoxia. The lack of oxygen is the signal for the trigger. Somehow, this factor, VEGF, is responsive to the lack of oxygen."

He said that when tissue experiences hypoxia, it secretes VEGF and reacts on specific receptors that are found on the surface of blood vessels.

Although the body has a way of producing blood vessels to bypass blockages naturally, Keshet said, it often becomes a race against time.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem professor Eli Keshet has spent the last two decades studying the vascular system and the mechanisms of blood vessel formation.

"What would happen first? Would you lose a limb or suffer some major consequences, or would you [produce the vessels] in time [to avoid any damage]?"

When a blockage is detected, Keshet said, the common practice is for surgeons to use an existing artery or vein from another part of the body and connect it to the heart so that the blood can bypass the occlusion.

But the hope, he said, is that his research will lead to a way to trigger the body to create new blood vessels more efficiently where and when they are needed so as to avoid surgery.

"If we can implant, pharmacologically, some protein or a factor that induces the formation of new blood vessels – we are thinking about making our own bypasses instead of resorting to surgical bypasses," Keshet said.

"This would be great, wouldn't it? But the question, of course, is how you do it… How can we make it fast enough or efficient enough before [a patient] suffers an amputation or heart disease?"

Keshet said the protein responsible for triggering the formation of new blood vessels, VEGF, can be made artificially.

"We isolated the gene that makes the factor and we can implant it and we can produce tons of it. Producing the factor is not a problem. But the question is, how are we going to apply it?"

He said the factor is currently the subject of clinical trials to see the most effective way of administering it, whether by injection or by slow-release implants that release VEGF in a controlled way.

"Now people are trying to address the question of how to use it, to make sure it won't be too much, how to secure it, make sure it works locally."

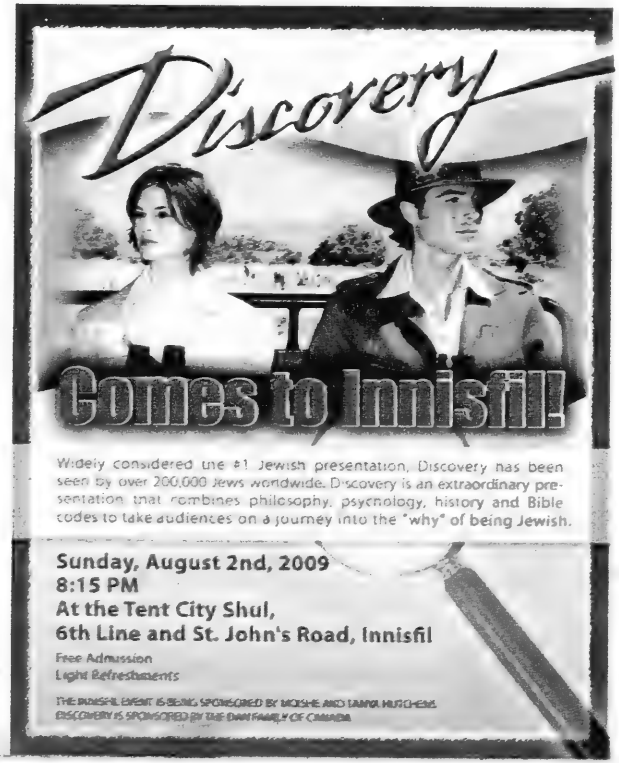
Keshet said learning how to control the production of blood vessels could also help treat cancer. If medical specialists learn how to inhibit blood vessels from developing around cancerous tumours, the tumours could be starved of a blood supply and be kept from developing.

"The whole idea is, can we inhibit the angiogenic process so we can starve the tumour to death?… What you do is you inject something that would neutralize the VEGF activity… This is really straightforward thinking, and the nice thing is that it is working and it's already in the clinic," Keshet said.

He said the clinical trials are meant to discover how to improve the efficacy of this procedure, to reduce any side effects and try to anticipate whether a tumour could develop a resistance to the treatment.

"We want to see the mechanism of how tumours can escape this treatment by finding alternative ways of producing blood vessels because tumours always outsmart us… We want to outsmart the outsmarters."

For more information about groundbreaking research taking place at Hebrew U, visit the campus section of www.cjnews.com to view a promotional video.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Bernard Najman & Edith Robins walk down the aisle. They will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on July 19, 2009.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Keren Shilling & Alex Green.

Mazel tov to Hilete Stein & Matthew Fisher on their engagement and call to the bar. Love and best wishes from your parents, grandparents and siblings.

Aliza Faye Nadler, born June 15th. Michael, Janna, Maya and Jordan are all very excited. Aliza's four grandparents and three great-grandparents are also thrilled.

Happy first birthday, Kelly Chasidah Fox. We love you very much and feel blessed to have you in our world. Love Bubbie, Zaide and Auntie Amy.

Congratulations to Jordan Pines on graduating from elementary school and receiving the very special "Character Award." With love from your parents, brother and grandparents.

Happy first birthday, Brody! Love, your big brother, Jayden. xoxo

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What's New deadlines: Reminder – there is no issue on July 23. Monday, July 20, is the deadline for the July 30 issue and Monday, July 27, is the deadline for Aug. 6. I receive calls on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 235, fax 416-391-0829, or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Friday, July 17

ARGENTINA BOMBING

B'nai Brith Canada marks 15 years since the still unsolved bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. 12:30 p.m., 15 Hove St. Memorials will also be held in Montreal and Winnipeg.

Saturday, July 18

HALTON-PEEL SHUL

B'Nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel holds a Shabbat service at a hotel in Oakville, starting at 10 a.m. Kiddush following. The Conservative egalitarian congregation, serving Mississauga, Oakville, Burlington and area welcomes new members. For more information, call 905-901-9889, www.bnaishalom.ca or e-mail info@bnaishalom.ca.

TORAH STUDY

Shabbat Torah study class, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 10-11 a.m. **Henry Alkin** on Parshat Matot-Masei. For more information, call Alkin at 416-491-4746.

Tuesday, July 21

YARCHEI KALLAH

Mekorot Institute of Torah Study for Women is sponsoring the 15th annual Nishmat Yarchei Kallah, featuring **Rabbanit Chana Henkin**, founder and dean of Nishmat, The Jeanie Schottenstein Centre for Advanced Torah Study for Women. July 21-23, 9:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Yeshivat Or Chaim, 159 Almore Ave. Topic is "Out of the Whirlwind: The Book of Job." Choose between independent study or study in pairs or small groups, or in a group guided by **Ilana Sober Elzufon**. For more information and to register, call 416-880-7417, or e-mail denise.cfn@gmail.com.

HENKIN SHIUR

Rabbanit Chana Henkin will deliver a shiur for women, on "Fertility, Birth and Motherhood in Tanach." Presented by Canadian Friends of Nishmat. 38 Maimonides Ct., Thornhill, 8 p.m. No charge. 416-880-7417.

Thursday, July 23

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Rabbi Wayne Allen asks "How Did the Qumran Community Understand the Torah?" Last lecture in the Dead Sea Scrolls Series at Beth Tikvah. Rabbi Allen will discuss how the Qumran passages of the scrolls illuminate the laws of kashrut, personal injury and the ceremony of first fruits. 8 p.m. Open to the community. No charge.

Other News

SUPPORT GROUP

Chai Tikvah and Circle of Care-Family Caregiver Connections Program sponsor an educational support group for seniors who are caregivers of family members with a mental health illness. Topics will include community resources, future planning and estate planning and care for the caregiver. Six Tuesday evenings, Aug. 18-Sept. 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre Music Room. Parking, transportation and respite services available. For more information or to register 416-373-4093. Participants must be over 55. Caregiver and family members do not need to live together.

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What's New

Continued from page 22

rotation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. ROM, Sunday Aug. 16, 10:30 a.m. Limited number of tickets, first come first served, at ROM group admission rates. Must RSVP and pay by July 21. For more information, call 416-633-5500.

JACS GARAGE SALE

JACS, Jewish Alcoholics Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others holds a garage sale, July 26, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., 696 Sheppard Ave.W.

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT

Barry Zukerman Amphitheatre in Earl Bales Park, Tuesday, July 21, Hannaford Street Silver Band, July 28, Magnus Brass, Thursday, July 23, The Ben Show; Family Fun Theatre, 7p.m.

Please note: If the current civic workers strike is still on, these programs will be cancelled. You can try to call 416-392-2846 for further information.

JEWISH ROOTS

Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) Library presents an exhibit of selections from its collection. Barbara Frum District Library, 20 Covington Rd., until July 31. Highlights include photographs of life in the European shtetl, descriptions of the building of Jewish settlement across Canada, Jewish immigrant culture in early Toronto and Holocaust records.

PROSTATE CANCER

Man to Man & Side By Side prostate cancer support groups hold a prostate cancer awareness night meeting at the Toronto Botanical Garden (Floral Hall), 777 Lawrence Ave. E. Wednesday, July 29, 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Dr. Kenneth Pace**, assistant professor, division of urology, and co-director, fellowship in endourology and laparoscopic urology, St. Michael's Hospital, on "Robotic-Assisted Radical Prostatectomy: Fact vs. Fiction." Free parking. For more information, call 416-932-8820.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Jewish Women's International Canada (JWIC) offers trained speakers on domestic abuse in the Jewish community. The issues around domestic abuse, sometimes known as woman abuse or relationship abuse, are very complex. No charge. To book a speaker for your group, call JWIC at 416-630-9313 or e-mail info@jwicanada.com.

COMMUNITY EXHIBITS

The first series of the provincial government's Community Exhibits Program 2009-2010 showcases displays created by museums and archives in Ontario. In the East Wing of the Legislative Assembly, see the Ontario Jewish Archives (Toronto) exhibit telling the story of Toronto's Jews and the Garment Industry. No charge. Until September.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Pre-register for trips to Casino Rama, Wednesday, July 22, and Casino Niagara, Tuesday, Aug. 18. Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, Aug. 13, noon. New activity – 14-Card Rummy, Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesday and Thursday, 9-10 a.m. Mah Jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Bingo, Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Social Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Non-members welcome. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group. Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell. For more information, 416-630-9444.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

July 21, Lecture by **Irwin Patterson** on India travelogue, including Taj Mahal. 10 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

July 22, Bingo Bonanza. 1-3 p.m. 2 cards for $1.

July 28, Lecture – "Jewish Pirates. Payback for the Spanish Inquisition" with **Diana Mingail**, 10 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

July 29, Toronto Senior Council: Do You Know How to Access Services in Toronto? 1-2 p.m. Free.

July 30. Wellness Lecture – "Shed Unwanted Pounds with Homeopathic Medicine." **Nisha Thadani**, ND. 1:30 p.m. Free.

WAGMAN CENTRE, 55 Ameer Ave., 416-785-2500, ext. 2267.

Glass painting, Creative Arts Studio, Mondays, 1-3 p.m.

Billiards Club. Join fellow pool players for a friendly game. Every Tuesday and Thursday, Music Room, 2-4 p.m.

Dear Abby discussion group, Thursdays, 2-3 p.m. Fireside Lounge. Stimulate your creative thinking and problem-solving skills

Summer youth volunteers will serve chocolate and vanilla pareve ice cream Wednesdays during July and August. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Wagman Lobby.

Early Riser Summer Breakfast Program: begin the day with a healthy and nutritious breakfast. Sign up at the service desk. Choice of dairy menu options. Fridays, July 17 and 31, 11a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Cost $5 per day.

Torah Study Group, Sundays, classrooms A and B, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Flower pressing, July 28, 1-2:30 p.m., Creative Arts Room.

Soul Food Poetry Discussion Group. Share your passion for poetry. Wednesdays, 3-4 p.m., Fireside Lounge.

Tea and Talk. July 29, Assembly Room, 3-4p.m. **Emily Fern** discusses her work with burned children during a visit to Peru. $3 members, $5 non-members. Reserve in person at Wagman Service Desk.

Visit Farmer's Market at Nathan Phillips Square, July 22. 10:45 a.m.-2 p.m. $2.

Woodbine Casino, July 27, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $2.

Active Seniors, July 23, 1:30 p.m., invitation to planning afternoon. What are your interests? Suggestions, ideas. Refreshments.

New program, Computer Courses for Beginners, starts in August. Ext.155.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Summer Hebrew courses start July 20. Modern Hebrew for Beginners, levels A and B. Intensive Grammar Course. Hebrew Through Song. Hebrew Grammar Essentials. ext. 0.

Cooking Classes with **Elise Burton**. July 21 and Aug. 26, 6:30-9 p.m. Easy Summer Soups and Salads. $25 per class. Register, ext. 0.

Kits4Kids. July 26, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Looking for pens, pencils, paper and other school supplies for a Ve'ahavta school supply drive. Supplies will help a family in Africa overcome the financial obstacles of providing their children with an education. Complimentary rooftop brunch with a donation. Ext. 277 or marinas@mnjcc.org.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 25

NEW NATIONAL PRESIDENT: **Gary Fine was recently elected national president of Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University. Since 2000, he has served as a national officer, national vice-president and president of the Toronto chapter. Fine has also served on the Mount Sinai Hospital board of governors, and is on the community advisory committee of the Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care.**

BAYCREST BOARDWALK: Baycrest president and CEO Bill Reichman, left, is seen with Boardwalk fundraiser co-chairs George Cohon, founder of McDonald's Canada and McDonald's Russia, his wife, Susan, and their Delta Society-trained golden retriever therapy dog, Tilly, after they completed the 2-km Baycrest Boardwalk. Some 400 friends, staff, volunteers and families participated, raising more than $200,000.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Erwin Dresner	Jun 26/09	23 Westgrove Cr
William (Bill) Dicker	Jun 28/09	22 Regent St
Marvin L. Arbuck	Jun 28/09	7825 Bayview Av
Fran Panet	Jun 27/09	147 Elder St
Mitchell Bussin	Jun 29/09	8 Creekside Rd
Martin Lubotta	Jun 30/09	1 Post Road
Leon Bard	Jul 1/09	339 York Hill Bl
Herschel Solomon	Jul 1/09	4001 Bayview Ave
Haya Marcovitz	Jul 1/09	9 Brockington Cr
Ruth Borts	Jul 3/09	91 Townsgate Dr
Ethel Shiman	Jul 4/09	80 Antibes Dr

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Kelman, Rabbi Joseph	June 27/09	1 Aristan Dr
Day, Lily	June 29/09	3560 Bathurst St
Black, Anne	June 29/09	350 Lonsdale Rd
Gilbert, Sarah Margaret	June 28/09	Private
Grinberg, Wolf	June 30/09	4266 Bathurst St
Sprackman, Ethel	June 29/09	
Barna, Martha	June 29/09	333 Clark Ave.
Gilbert, William	June 30/09	
Goft, Zinaida	July 1/09	Private
Greenspoon, Helene	July 1/09	17 Beachhaven Rd
Alony, Zeev	July 2/09	
Woznica, Dworja (Dora)	July 2/09	147 Shaftesbury St
Fastovskaia, Raissa	July 2/09	Private

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SHIRLEY FEIGENBAUM ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19 at 10:30 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Tikvah Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HARRY LEWKOWICZ ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 26 at 11:00 a.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
Workmen's Circle Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
PAULA MALET ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19th at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Dufferin St. North of Major Mackenzie
Lodzer Centre Congregation Section J
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The family of the late
BRIAN PAUL DRUTZ ז"ל
would like to send heartfelt thanks to all who cared so much and sent condolence cards and made donations to many charities in his name.
Helen, Anne, Valerie, Robin
Tommy, Tara, Julian and Jamie

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ESTELLE SNITMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19, 2009 at 11:15 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst South of Steeles
Adath Sholom Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
LUBA ROZENZON ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 26th at 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst S. of Steeles
Ostrovtzer Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
SALOMON DADOUN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, July 19, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Emeth Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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Coast to Coast

Maccabiah reputation so positive in Canada

Continued from page 1

Only 240 Canadians were on that Maccabiah team, while the current edition of Team Canada topped out at about 410 athletes and another 80 or more coaching, medical, training and administrative staff. That's about 100 more than at the last Games four years ago.

The Maccabiah reputation is so positive in Canada that more that 2,000 athletes registered for a chance to make the team, Gerskup said.

Only the host Israelis, with more than 2,000 athletes, and the Americans, with 900, will have larger delegations than Canada, he continued. Altogether, 7,500 athletes from more than 60 countries, plus Israel, are expected for the celebration of sport and Jewish identity.

"I think word is out that this is a great trip," Gerskup said from his north Toronto office. "I want the athletes to have the most amazing experience, something they will remember for a long time."

Many from his 1985 silver medal-winning softball team will be coming back this summer for the masters softball tournament, hoping to relive their glory days.

One area that Gerskup has been keen to cultivate is the increased participation of women athletes. That meshed nicely with a policy decision in Israel, which "also wants female athletes," he said.

Team Canada features a number of women's teams: soccer, softball, volleyball (a first), cycling, fencing, tennis, triathlon and junior soccer. There will also be women's participation in karate, gymnastics, squash, swimming and golf.

While Israel has been pushing for more women's participation, finding quality athletes in some regions has proven problematic. Cultural attitudes in South America and Europe limit the scope of the women's teams. The greatest response has been from Canada, the United States, Britain, Australia, South Africa and Israel.

The Canadian contingent is heavy on team sports. In addition to the female squads mentioned above, Maccabi Canada is sending men's open softball and a junior baseball team, as well as masters' softball, open volleyball, open water polo and basketball teams. Altogether, there will be six Canadian soccer teams and six basketball teams divided between the various open, women's, junior (boys and girls) and masters categories.

In addition, Maccabi Canada is fielding a track team and sending athletes in swimming, fencing, karate, judo, rugby, golf and 10-pin bowling, among others.

While the Maccabiah Games are often referred to as the Jewish Olympics, only a smattering of actual Olympians have competed in them. Some of the more notable past participants include swimmer Mark Spitz, gymnast Mitch Gaylord, golfer Corey Pavin, basketball players Ernie Grunfeld and Danny Schayes, tennis player Dick Savitt and swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg.

The most notable world-class athlete at the 18th Chai Games will likely be American Olympian Jason Lezak, who has chosen to be in Israel rather than at the World Swimming Championships in Rome.

The three-time Olympic gold medalist told Associated Press his Jewish heritage inspired him to compete in the Games.

While in Israel, Canadian athletes will get a broader cultural exposure to their Jewish heritage. All junior athletes will be taken to the Western Wall, Yad Vashem and other must-see locations such as the Dead Sea, and other cultural events have been arranged.

Gerskup has also recruited Rabbi Yossi Sapirman of Toronto's Beth Torah Congregation to serve as spiritual counsellor for the Canadian delegation. "I wanted to put some Jewishness into this, and he's a pretty cool guy. He relates to young people and old people. He's a good speaker and he's been to Israel many times.," Gerskup said.

The Canadian athletes gathered in Toronto last week for pre-Games training and a farewell party. The group departed for Israel on July 9. The Games run from July 12 to 23 at venues in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Caesarea and Netanya.

QJC questions union's endorsement of Israel boycott

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Quebec Jewish Congress (QJC) has expressed its disappointment that one of the province's largest labour groups is supporting an economic boycott of Israel.

The Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) has adopted a resolution calling for divestment from and sanctions against Israel to protest the state's allegedly illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and violation of the Palestinian people's rights.

The resolution came up at the annual convention of the CSQ held in Quebec City at the end of June. It was proposed by Monique Pauzé, president of the Syndicat de l'enseignement de Champlain, a teachers' union local encompassing schools south and southwest of Montreal.

According to information provided by the CSQ, the union represents nearly 170,000 members, of whom about 100,000 are employed in the education sector, from daycares to cégeps. Members also work in the health and social services fields and in recreation and culture, among other areas.

QJC president Adam Atlas said Congress has written to CSQ president Réjean Parent voicing its disappointment.

"It appears that indignation for Israel exceeds empathy for other more troubled people around the world, for instance, human rights activists in Iran, or the threat to world peace posed by North Korea, the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe and the Muslim community in China," Atlas said in an interview.

Adam Atlas

"It's regrettable that the labour movement has singled out one trouble spot in the world."

Atlas hopes that this anti-Israel policy does not make its way into Quebec's classrooms. The resolution states that the CSQ is committed to promoting the boycott campaign among its membership.

Atlas noted that the CSQ was among the groups that endorsed the Jan. 9 downtown demonstration against Israel's military action in Gaza, which was publicized with a press release denouncing Israel's "murderous aggression."

"At that demonstration, 'death to Jews' [was uttered], but neither M. Parent nor the CSQ distanced themselves from those remarks. So with that, and now this resolution, it is very disappointing," Atlas said.

"We would much prefer that the CSQ engage in productive dialogue and relations with its brothers and sisters in Israel's labour federation, Histadrut, which is actively trying to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

"Boycotting Israel is damaging to Israeli and Palestinian workers who are trying to make peace… Taking sides is blatantly harmful to the peace process."

Also worrisome to QJC is that the CSQ's endorsement of the internationally promoted boycott "gives comfort to those who are anti-Semitic.

"I'm not saying the CSQ is anti-Semitic, but those who are will take comfort."

He noted that an organization like Montreal-based Tadamon (Arabic for solidarity), which is openly working to have Hezbollah removed from Canada's terrorist list, has applauded the resolution.

Tadamon and Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights issued a statement congratulating the CSQ for "this courageous and historic stance in solidarity with the Palestinian people suffering under the Israeli policies of apartheid, occupation and siege."

MONTREALERS RECEIVE TEDDY KOLLEK AWARDS

At a recent ceremony in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Foundation honoured a number of individuals with the Teddy Kollek Award for their work and philanthropy on behalf of the city of Jerusalem. Evelyn Bloomfield Schachter and Harry Bloomfield of Montreal were among the recipients of the coveted prize. In the top picture, Evelyn Bloomfield-Schachter is congratulated by Israeli President Shimon Peres. Below, Harry Bloomfield receives the award, on behalf of the Bloomfield Family-Eldee Foundation, from Jerusalem Foundation president Ruth Cheshin as, from left, Jerusalem mayor and honorary chair of the Jerusalem Foundation, Nir Barkat, and Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin look on. [T. Sasson photos]

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Kosher stampede breakfast attracts nearly 1,000 people

By RACHEL BARSKY
Special to The CJN

CALGARY — This year marked the 97th annual Calgary Stampede, and the city's Jewish community knew how to celebrate it.

The stampede, which ran from July 3 to 12, is the world's largest outdoor rodeo, and usually attracts 1.2 million visitors each year. Although, at about 8,000 members, Calgary's Jewish population seems miniscule next to that number, its stampede spirit is strong.

The Calgary Jewish Community Centre teamed up with Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel to host the world's only kosher stampede breakfast on July 5.

Close to 1,000 people attended the breakfast, mostly from the Jewish community but quite a few non-Jewish friends came as well.

The modern Orthodox synagogue began hosting the breakfast in 1998, said volunteer and House of Jacob member Sheila Martin.

"The whole community is invited. It's nice to have a kosher breakfast – otherwise observant people wouldn't have anywhere else to go," she said.

This year's breakfast is especially notable, as not only is it the stampede's 97th anniversary, but it's also the 100th anniversary of the House of Jacob and the 120th anniversary of Jewish life in Calgary.

At the breakfast, people danced to the music of the Calgary Fiddlers and kids enjoyed pony rides.

The kosher stampede breakfast included pony rides for children.

The Calgary Jewish Community Centre (CJCC) and House of Jacob's centennial float made its debut in the stampede parade on July 3.

It might be surprising to some, but Jews have had a presence at the stampede throughout its history.

"Jews have been part of the tradition the stampede started from," said Agnes Romer-Segal of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta.

There were many Jewish cattle sellers and ranchers, fur and hide dealers, and Jews working in the Calgary stockyards. Some Jews were homesteaders in Alberta, while others were farmers. There were even a few Jewish cowboys, such as Curly Gurevitch, who in one 1930 photograph wears flared leather chaps and a shirt with a Magen David and the letters "AZA" (Aleph Zadik Aleph, the B'nai Brith Youth Organization's boys' section) on it.

The most prominent Jewish connection to the Calgary Stampede is probably the Smithbilt Hat Company, the makers of Calgary's famous "White Hats." Smithbilt was started by Russian-Jewish immigrant Morris Shumiatcher in 1919 and was later owned by Isaac Aptowitzer. Inside the Smithbilt hats are the initials "CK," for "Calgary Kosher."

Even those without much knowledge of Calgary's Jewish history had a great time at the stampede.

"It's very funny watching a bunch of Jewish people pretending to be cowboys," said Josh Lamm with a laugh.

Lamm and his wife, Rivki, were visiting Alberta and Montana from Long Island, N.Y. When they told their friends they were travelling to the Rockies, the Lamms were advised to stop in Calgary for the stampede. House of Jacob members Debbie and Nelson Halpern hosted the couple during Shabbat. "We are so impressed by the hospitality of the shul and the people," Rivki said.

To many people at the breakfast, Calgary's Jewish community exemplifies the stampede's message of western hospitality. "Calgary's community is a wonderful, welcoming community," said Nava Wainer, a native Israeli who moved to Calgary 12 years ago from Toronto.

"A lot of people have moved here from other places. When you don't have family, your friends become your family – we have that here," she said.

The Stampede was a bit of a culture shock, Wainer added. "When we first moved to Calgary, my son, who was younger then, said: 'What is this, another Purim?'"

Helen Walker said that she came to the breakfast because she knew she "wouldn't have to say no to people bothering me to eat sausages, bacon and pork products."

Shelley Cohen's favourite stampede event took place on July 12, when her 23-year-old son, David, the pianist for Nashville-based singer Johnny Reid's band, performed.

Shula Banchik, the CJCC's youth and adult program coordinator, helped House of Jacob congregant Larry Katz organize the breakfast.

"It's so gratifying to see so many people in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities come to help celebrate the 120th anniversary of Jewish life in Calgary and the 100th anniversary of the House of Jacob," said Katz.

"I hope we can continue to have great events – this is the beginning of many more celebrations."

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OSCE resolution addressing growing anti-Semitism

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has passed a resolution condemning increasing manifestations of anti-Semitism in which Jews are being blamed for the international economic crisis.

Legislators meeting in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vilnius, Lithuania, passed the resolution with only one dissenting vote, said Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein, vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly.

"The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly remains greatly concerned at the increase in xenophobia and other forms of intolerance directed towards vulnerable groups during the economic crisis, including an increase in anti-Semitism characterized by claims that Jews were responsible for the economic crisis," the resolution states.

The resolution endorses a declaration from the recent London Conference on Combatting Anti-Semitism and calls on governments "to develop strategies to address television broadcasts and other uses of media and Internet that promote anti-Semitism, while ensuring that such strategies and any related legislation fully respect the freedoms of expression, assembly and association and are not used to repress peaceful activities of civil society, or political or religious groups or of individuals."

Among the measures recommended by the parliamentary group are:

- combating anti-Semitism through the promotion of democratic and "human values" as well as law enforcement;
- developing public reporting mechanisms;
- devising education and training programs "throughout the judicial and school systems;"
- encouraging Holocaust education;
- co-ordinating "the response of participating states to combat the use of the Internet to promote incitement to hatred."

The Vilnius meeting followed earlier OSCE gatherings, dating back to 2003, in Vienna, Berlin, Brussels and Cordoba to address anti-Semitism.

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'We're not going to just wait indefinitely'

Continued from page 1

"If Iran chooses not to walk through that door, then you have on record the G8 to begin with and, I think, potentially a lot of other countries," he said.

"We're not going to just wait indefinitely and allow for the development of a nuclear weapon... and wake up one day and find ourselves in a much worse situation and unable to act."

Obama said his hope is that the Iranian leadership "will recognize that world opinion is clear."

U.S. President Barack Obama

At the summit, French President Nicolas Sarkozy warned that a unilateral attack by Israel against Iran to thwart the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions would be an "absolute catastrophe."

The French president said that major powers in the G8 would give negotiations with Iran a chance until September.

After Sarkozy's statement last Wednesday, a senior adviser to Iran's top authority said in remarks published the next day that the Islamic Republic would not back down "even one step" over its nuclear work, making clear Tehran's continued defiance toward the West.

Ali Akbar Velayati, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's top adviser on international affairs, said western countries don't want the Islamic state to have peaceful nuclear activities, state broadcaster IRIB said on its website.

Speaking after talks with fellow G8 leaders, Sarkozy said they would review the situation at the G20 meeting of developed and developing countries in Pittsburgh on Sept. 24 and 25.

"If there is no progress by then, we will have to take decisions," said Sarkozy, indicating that tougher sanctions might be imposed if Tehran continued to resist negotiations.

Western countries believe Iran is trying to build an atomic bomb. Tehran insists it wants to master nuclear technology to generate electricity and has rejected all overtures for talks.

U.S. and Canadian officials, meanwhile, said the world's main industrialized nations were growing increasingly impatient.

"All G8 nations are united. There is a strong consensus at the table that unless things change soon, there will be further action," said Canadian spokesperson Dimitri Soudas.

A White House deputy national security adviser, Mike Froman, told reporters that the G8 discussions had reflected "a collective impatience with Iran."

French President Nicolas Sarkozy

However, Sarkozy made it clear that Russia was still dragging its feet over the issue and had pushed for more time before considering a fresh round of sanctions.

"We made an effort to agree not to strengthen sanctions straightaway in order to bring everyone on board. The more reserved among us agreed that Pittsburgh was the time for decisions," Sarkozy said.

In a separate statement, the G8 said it was committed to finding a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program.

"We sincerely hope that Iran will seize this opportunity to give diplomacy a chance," the statement said.

The G8 statement came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top national security adviser said last Wednesday that the United States was distancing itself from Israel's position on Iran.

The statement also deplored the violence in Iran following last month's disputed presidential election and said arrests of journalists and foreigners there were "unacceptable."

As well, the statement repeated criticism of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for denying the Holocaust.

JACS

JACS would like to thank GARY GOLDMAN, outgoing Chair for all of his hard work over the past 3 years and takes great pleasure in welcoming ART SILBER as the new Chair of the Board.

Gary Goldman

Art Silber

For more information on JACS,
please call 416-638-0350 or go to our website www.jacstoronto.org

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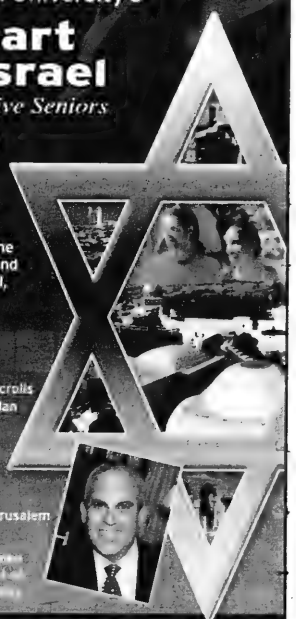

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Israel Briefs

Mubarak says Schalit 'fine'

Kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit is "fine," Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said. "I believe there were contacts [with Schalit] and that soldier Schalit is fine, and I hope that in the upcoming period, maybe, not in the long term, the issue of soldier Schalit will end," Mubarak told journalists after a meeting last week with Israeli President Shimon Peres.

Damages for reinterment

Israel must compensate two families whose sons' graves were relocated after the withdrawal from Gaza. The Jerusalem District Court ordered the state to pay about $1.28 million (US) to Moshe and Linda Stein and Rachel and Eli Loutati, whose sons' graves were relocated from Gush Katif to Nitzan following the 2005 disengagement. The families weren't permitted to attend the disinterment. Photos distributed at the time showed soldiers exhuming the bodies laughing as they worked. The renewed grief in one of the families reached pathological levels, according to a psychiatric assessment.

Gas site larger than thought

A natural gas reserve off the coast of Haifa is larger than first thought. The Tamar 2 drilling site is nearly 30 per cent larger than previously estimated and could reach 180 billion cubic metres, according to prospect partner Nobel Energy Inc., the Israeli business newspaper *Globes* reported. The value of the field could reach $30 billion (US). The new estimate means the reserve could fill Israel's natural gas needs for about 20 years, according to *Globes*.

Rights head: remove fence

A United Nations official called on Israel to tear down the West Bank security fence.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay made the declaration July 8 in Jerusalem on the fifth anniversary of the International Court of Justice decision that the barrier, comprising fencing with barbed wire, concrete blocks and electronic sensors, is illegal and a violation of Palestinian rights. The court's opinion is not enforceable. Pillay urged Israel to take down the barrier and make reparations.

A world wonder?

The Dead Sea has made the list of candidates for the new Seven Natural Wonders of the World after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas agreed to support the initiative. The lake will be one of the 77 sites nominated for the prestigious honour, along with such contenders as the Grand Canyon, Germany's Black Forest, and the Great Barrier Reef.

No change on settlements

The United States denied a report that it would allow the completion of 2,500 housing units in the West Bank as part of a compromise on settlements. "No, that report, and that Israeli media outlet, is inaccurate," State Department spokesperson Ian Kelly said, referring to a story in *Ma'ariv*. "Our position has not changed." U.S. President Barack Obama has come out for a complete freeze on settlement building. Kelly added: "This activity has to stop. This is laid out in the 'road map' [peace plan]. So the reports aren't accurate." Israeli government spokesperson Mark Regev said the two countries are trying to find common ground on the settlement issue, but he wouldn't comment directly on the *Ma'ariv* story, according to media reports. Israel says the building of the 2,500 units is already under way and can't be lawfully stopped.

—with files from JTA

Is Lieberman being shunted aside?

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

If Avigdor Lieberman's appointment as foreign minister seemed odd when it was made, recent developments cast more doubt over his capacity to function as Israel's top diplomat.

Israel's most acute foreign policy challenge – the showdown with the United States over building in West Bank settlements – is being handled largely by Defence Minister Ehud Barak following discreet signals from Obama administration officials that they prefer dealing with Barak rather than Lieberman.

This week, Israeli President Shimon Peres was chosen to represent Israel on a sensitive diplomatic mission to Cairo. Lieberman, who said last November that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak could "go to hell" if he didn't want to visit Israel, is *persona non grata* in Cairo.

And behind the scenes, it's Silvan Shalom, the minister for regional co-operation, who is working to develop ties with the Arab world, not Lieberman.

Perhaps the most dramatic rejection of Lieberman as foreign minister has come from Europe. In a private conversation in late June, French President Nicolas Sarkozy reportedly urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to dump Lieberman for the sake of Middle East peacemaking.

"You must get rid of that man," Sarkozy was quoted as saying. "Get him out and bring [Kadima leader Tzipi] Livni in. With her and with Barak, you can make history."

Kept at arm's length by the Americans, ostracized by the Arabs and spurned by some leading Europeans, Lieberman, who is reviled for what many see as his anti-Arab, racist views, soon may find himself foreign minister in name only.

As media criticism in Israel of Lieberman's inability to advance Israel's foreign policy interests mounted, Lieberman called a news conference in the Knesset last week to downplay the allegations. He argued that it was only natural that Barak was handling the settlement issue, since as defence minister he was formally responsible for the occupied West Bank and everything that goes on there.

Although that is the case – the West Bank is under the Israel Defence Forces' Central Command and the civilian coordinator of government activities in the territories, both of which fall under the defence minister's purview – it's unlikely that any other foreign minister would have been sidelined to the extent that Lieberman has been.

Reflecting just how much he's feeling the heat, Lieberman offered another, more dubious explanation for Barak's role: he claimed that as a settler – Lieberman lives in the West Bank settlement of Nokdim – it would be a conflict of interest if he were to deal with the settlement issue.

"I would not want to be blamed for deliberately undermining negotiations with the Americans," Lieberman said.

He also made light of Sarkozy's call for his ouster.

"People sometimes say unnecessary things," Lieberman said. "I see it as an unfortunate slip of the tongue."

Israeli commentators don't seem convinced, expressing increasing skepticism over Lieberman's ability to make a significant contribution to Israeli foreign policy.

There are even signs of an incipient campaign for Lieberman's ouster. The left-leaning *Ha'aretz* daily has taken the lead with a string of anti-Lieberman cartoons and commentaries, including an online editorial headlined "Sarkozy is right – Lieberman must go."

"On the eve of the renewal of negotiations with the Palestinians and perhaps with Syria, too, Israel needs all the support it can muster from the international community," the editorialists wrote. "It is imperative to replace Lieberman with another foreign minister, who will benefit from an open door in the world's capitals."

During the campaign, Lieberman stirred controversy by calling for mandatory loyalty oaths to the Jewish state in a bid to curtail Israeli Arabs' political rights. After the campaign, he declared the Annapolis peace process null and void.

So why did Netanyahu appoint so controversial a figure to the Foreign Ministry?

Lieberman's party, Yisrael Beiteinu, is the third largest in the Knesset. During coalition negotiations in the spring, Netanyahu was afraid that Lieberman might form a government with Livni's Kadima, thereby denying Netanyahu the premiership. His fears were compounded when Lieberman, in the middle of coalition negotiations, suddenly took off for Moldova, leaving everyone, including Netanyahu, guessing.

The tactics helped prompt Netanyahu to offer Lieberman the coveted post of foreign minister to lure him into the coalition.

While Lieberman has been sidelined overseas, both Netanyahu and Barak have been trying to keep Lieberman happy and in the loop. For example, immediately after his most recent meeting with special U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell on the settlements, Barak phoned Lieberman from London to update him.

The last thing Netanyahu and Barak want is for Lieberman to bolt the coalition. As long as Livni remains uninterested in joining the government, Lieberman's departure could topple the government. In that context, covering for Lieberman as foreign minister is a small price to pay for keeping the government intact.

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CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP

The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI) recently held its annual Independence Day/Canada Day celebration at the Cinematheque in Jerusalem.

Celebrants enjoyed a festive meal and mingles with friends and family, as well a premiere screening of the Israeli film *Public Enemies*.

Signe Katz, right, the cultural attache at the Canadian Embassy in Israel, spoke to the gathering.

"While this day is special, so is this year 2009. It marks 60 years of diplomatic relations between Canada-Israel," she said. "One of the strongest links between our two countries is you – the Canadians who have made Israel their home. You are the human touch that helps to create such a meaningful connection between Israel and Canada.

"For Canadians, Canada Day is an opportunity to get together to express our national pride. This year, we all have a very good reason to be proud. Recently, Canada was the first country to refuse to participate in the [UN] Durban Review Conference [against racism] in Geneva after Israel was singled out for criticism. Canada consistently supports Israel's right to live in peace.

"Happy Birthday! Bonne fête Canada!"

[Laura Wiseman photos]

Israel & the Jewish World

Jewish museum to open in Warsaw in 2012

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

WARSAW, Poland — The world's first and only museum to focus on Polish Jews is scheduled to open in 2012 in the heart of the former Nazi ghetto.

Expected to become a cultural landmark in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, the multimedia Museum of the History of Polish Jews will face sculptor Natan Rappaport's imposing bronze and granite memorial, which pays homage to the heroic but futile 1943 ghetto uprising.

Ewa Wierzynska

At a groundbreaking ceremony on June 30, attended by museum officials and politicians, including the mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, Poland's cultural minister, Bogdan Zdrojewski, described it as "a magnificent project."

The museum's director, Jerzy Halberstadt, went one step further.

"Prior to the Holocaust, Warsaw was one of the world's main centres of Jewish life, where politics, culture, publishing and Jewish theatre thrived," he noted. "Warsaw was the leading centre, surpassing other cities in the United States and Europe. So we have come full circle, and beginning the construction of the museum is also an element of closing this circle."

Scheduled to cost more than $70 million, it is sponsored and supported by the city of Warsaw, the Polish ministry of culture, Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute and an international roster of donors.

Designed by Finnish architect Rainer Mahlamaki and to be built by Poland's largest construction and engineering company, Polimex-Mostostal, the 46,618-square-foot glass-walled structure is intended to foster respect for and understanding of Jewish tradition and culture, said the museum's deputy director, Ewa Wierzynska, in a recent interview.

Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka

[Sheldon Kirshner photos]

"It's important to understand what was here, in Poland, before the Holocaust," she added in a reference to Poland's prewar Jewish population of 3.3 million Jews. "The Holocaust erased an entire civilization, and it's important to bring back the magnificence of Jewish life."

Wierzynska, who was raised amid the ruins of the ghetto in postwar Warsaw, hopes the museum will usher in a new chapter in Polish-Jewish relations. "This museum, it's hoped, will make the conversation between Jews and Poles easier and bring some reconciliation."

Poland's former prime minister, Leszek Miller, has said that it is part of a national agenda of reconciliation that includes the commemoration of the Holocaust, the restitution of Jewish property and the restoration of some 1,000 Jewish cemeteries throughout Poland.

As he put it, "We want to reach beyond the image of Poland as a place of martyrdom for the Jews."

Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka, the museum's former director of development, the current secretary of state in the chancellery of the Polish president and Poland's next consul general in New York City, voiced confidence that it will improve Poland's fraught relationship with Jews.

"This museum will be a meeting place to impart knowledge and break down stereotypes, which are painful on both sides," she said in an interview.

The museum's brochure address this point: "It will be a portal, a place to begin an exploration of the world of Polish Jews. It will be a forum, a place of dialogue and civic engagement. It will be a catalyst that inspires visitors to reflect on the personal and historical significance of the civilization of Polish Jews."

In addition, the museum is intended to confront hatred and promote moral responsibility and democratic values in post-Communist Poland.

Through the medium of exhibits, public programs, commemorations, conferences and student exchanges, the museum aspires to be an educational and resource centre.

Wierzynska explained that the museum will underscore the fact that Jews were a fundamental component of Polish society for almost 1,000 years.

"The Jewish past is integrally intertwined with Polish history," she observed.

Poland's current president, Lech Kaczynski, has said, "There is no doubt that the history of Polish Jews is part of my country's history. And it calls for remembrance and commemoration."

Museum officials estimate it will attract 450,000 visitors a year, the majority from Poland and the rest from Israel, the United States and Canada and the European continent.

In the meantime, the museum has launched a website, Virtual Shtetl (at www.sztetl.org.pl), which has collected information on 800 of the more than 2,000 towns, cities and villages where Polish Jews lived.

The site was created by Albert Stankowski, a 38-year-old historian of Catholic and Jewish descent.

"This portal may become the greatest source of information about Jewish life in Poland before World War II," he said. "For many people, this will be an encounter with something they thought was forever lost."

The Canadian Jewish news

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Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 28 years

Question. I'm currently involved with a man who has no assets or any prospect of ever having any. I, on the other hand, have money to buy a house outright and am planning on doing so one day. I am wondering how much a prenuptial agreement will protect me from having him take half in the event that a marriage with him one day ends in divorce.

Is the only way to protect my assets to put them in someone else's name like a family member? My cousin told me that the best thing to do would be to put the home in the name of a family business. Does it make a difference?

Answer. Ignore your cousin. Putting the house in a family business' or someone else's name can create big tax problems, since when you sell you may pay substantial capital gains tax on the increase in value. To be tax-free the profit you earn on the sale of your home has to be from your "principal residence", i.e. the home in which you actually reside, not the family business or the "someone else."

Alternatively, some have a trusted third party, such as a parent or a friendly third-party corporation not owned by them, place a non-interest bearing mortgage for the entire equity of the home. The only problem with this method is that it does not protect you if the house goes up in value.

Say, for instance, you purchase the home for $400,000 and your parents place a mortgage for an equivalent amount and you get married. Ten years later the value is now $600,000. Assuming there are no other assets or liabilities and you have married, your husband still shares in one half of the increase in value, i.e. he is entitled to $100,000 of the $200,000 increase.

The best solution is a cohabitation agreement which automatically becomes a marriage contract if you two should ever marry. In this contract he should waive any rights to the home, including any increase in its value.

In addition you both must have full and complete financial disclosure of your income, assets and liabilities as of the date the agreement was signed so that he can't ask a Judge to "set aside" the contract by claiming you failed to inform him of what you had when he signed his rights away.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Sponsored by the Community for Jewish Culture of B'Nai Brith Canada.

Jewish Woodstock promotes pluralism in homogeneous Poland

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

KRAKOW, Poland — On a balmy night late last month, hundreds of people crowded into the Tempel Synagogue on Miodowa Street in Krakow's old Jewish Kazimierz quarter.

They waited patiently until burly ushers allowed them into the ornate, gold-leaf decorated mid-19th-century Moorish Revival Reform shul, which was desecrated by the Nazis during the Holocaust but renovated in the 1990s.

They had come to hear a concert by the Emil Zrihan Ensemble from Israel at the 19th Jewish Cultural Festival, the biggest such event in Europe and probably the world.

Apart from Zrihan, a Moroccan-born cantor living in Ashkelon, the group consisted of Yoram Azulay on the tar, Shimon Eliahu Vanunu on the oud, Haim Ohaion on the darbuka and Elhad Levi on the violin.

The band played sinewy and lilting Judeo-Andalusian music, while Zrihan, clad in a white jacket, black pants and a matching shirt, belted out one intense and captivating song after another, his face growing red as he displayed a vocal prowess of formidable proportions.

The crowd loved Zrihan, popularly known as the Moroccan nightingale, calling him out for no less than three encores as he brought down the house in a cascade of rhythmic clapping and cheering.

What was significant about the concert, aside from its sheer virtuosity, was the fact that the audience was primarily composed of Catholic Poles, reflecting Poland's relatively new-found interest in Jewish culture and history, particularly since the end of the communist era in 1989.

The Jewish Cultural Festival in Krakow, which is far bigger than a similar festival in Warsaw, takes place annually, starting in late June or early July, and lasts for nine days. This year's version ran from June 27 to July 5.

Call it Poland's Jewish Woodstock.

Designed to educate Poles about a huge and venerable Jewish community that was decimated by the Nazis in a six-year orgy of unprecedented violence and brutality, the festival featured concerts, plays, movie screenings, workshops, lectures, exhibitions and tours.

There were concerts by American cantors and Polish bands, and workshops on Yiddish, Hebrew, Jewish dance and Jewish cooking. There were lectures on Jewish life in present-day Poland, Poland's relationship with Israel and the mystical sources of Chassidism. There was a screening of an Israeli documentary film on the 1982 war in Lebanon, and there were exhibitions on Polish synagogues and Judaica, as well as tours of the remnants of shtetls near Krakow and of synagogues in Kazimierz.

Much of the festival unfolded in Kazimierz, a hub of Jewish Orthodoxy before the Holocaust. After World War II, Kazimierz fell into a decrepit state.

Revived after Steven Spielberg filmed *Schindler's List* in its atmospheric byways, Kazimierz today brims with Jewish-style restaurants and cafés and shops selling Judaica and books of Jewish interest.

The festival, observed Lech Kaczynski, Poland's president, in a brief essay in its official handbook, summons up memories of "the shared history of Jews and Poles."

Its founder and director, Janusz Makuch, works out of an office on Jozefa Street, in the heart of Kazimierz. It is near the High Synagogue, one of several shuls in this colourful and gentrified neighbourhood. On his desk was a brass menorah and on a wall were black-and-white framed photographs of chassidic Jews in full traditional garb.

A philo-Semitic Catholic in his late 40s, he was born in Pulawy, a small town in eastern Poland, half of whose population was once Jewish. Yet, until he was 14, he had no idea that Pulawy was so heavily Jewish. "I knew literally nothing about Jews," said Makuch, a flamboyant man whose father was a member of the Communist party.

But then he met Michal Strzemski, a Polish professor who clued him in on Poland's rich Jewish legacy. "He was my rabbi, my melamed. It was the turning point in my life."

Immersing himself in things Jewish, Makuch became a devotee, if not a maven, in Judaica. "Jewish culture is my world," he said in an interview. "It's inside me, though I'm not Jewish. I couldn't be who I am without this culture."

Janusz Makuch is the founder and director of Krakow's Jewish Cultural Festival.

Makuch, who speaks a little Yiddish and Hebrew and visits Israel and New York City regularly, launched the first Jewish Cultural Festival in 1988, just a year before Poland made its peaceful transition from communism to democracy and joined the western alliance.

"It was a dark time in terms of the political situation in Poland," he said. "When I started the festival, I did not think, or dream, that it would evolve into what it is today."

The debut festival, featuring a symposium on Polish-Jewish relations, was a modest affair of short duration and attracted about 1,000 people. Succeeding festivals took place every other year until the annual format was established. By one estimate, some 25,000 tickets have been sold at recent festivals.

In addition to familiarizing Poles with the beauty and range of Jewish culture, Makuch's overarching objective is to foster a sense of pluralism in a nation that is now so ethnically homogeneous.

"Poland was created not only by Poles, but by Jews, Ukrainians, Russians and Germans. This is the key to understanding the real culture of Poland," said Makuch, who conveyed the impression that he mourns the passing of prewar pluralistic Poland. (Due to border changes after 1945, Poland is more than 90 per cent ethnically Polish today).

Although he revels in and promotes Jewish culture as perhaps no other person in contemporary Poland, Makuch knows that the past is problematic and soaked in tragedy.

"I realize I live in the shadow of Auschwitz, in a Jewish graveyard. But at the festival, I don't focus on the Holocaust. Is six years of Jewish trauma during the Holocaust more important than almost 1,000 years of Jewish history in Poland?"

He added, "I'm trying to create a space of remembrance of what we have lost. The murder of so many Jews is a great loss for Poland. We lost almost everything."

A banner promoting Krakow's Jewish Cultural Festival [Sheldon Kirshner photos]

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Comedian known for his politically incorrect videos

By PAUL TELNER & BYRON PASCOE
Special to The CJN

Ari Shaffir got his comedy start in junior high telling Eddie Murphy jokes he passed off as his own.

"I didn't really understand them, but tried to steal them as my own. People would say, 'Yeah, we know its Eddie Murphy.' So I just learned how to make jokes on my own."

Two decades later, he's made a name for himself as one of today's most extreme comedians. He's popular on the standup circuit and online for his politically incorrect, viral series of videos titled *The Amazing Racist*.

In *The Amazing Racist*, Shaffir goes after one or several nationalities at a time. Instead of relying on the safety of the TV screen, which allows people to change the channel, or the stage, where the most you can get is heckled, Shaffir goes, with a videographer, into the communities of those he's comically offending .

He admits to getting scared while shooting the videos and he has received some death threats.

"Some were so stupid, too. Someone said, 'I don't know I'm a Jew.' I'm like 'Dude, yes, I do know I'm a Jew. I clearly look Jewish. No one looks Jewyer than me.' If you can't see the irony of a Jew making fun of Judaism, then clearly the joke is lost on you," Shaffir said.

"There are a lot of Jews who are really funny, but I don't know why there are so many Jews in show business. I wouldn't think a Jewish mother would be like, 'Go to Hollywood, be an actor.'That's not a normal thing. My Jewish mother said, 'No, don't do that, go to law school.'"

When Shaffir decided to pursue comedy, his parents were worried. "I tried to explain to my mother that the big deal here is getting into [the Los Angeles standup comedy club] The Comedy Store. She asked how much money you get to start. I said, 'It's a nominal fee of $15. She's like, 'Shaffir, you can't survive on $15 a night.' I said, 'Yeah, mom, I know that. It's an honour to get in.' Once she saw me on TV commercials, she was calmer."

He describes his standup act as pretty filthy, which is why for his upcoming Just For Laughs debut in Montreal, he's part of *The Nasty Show*.

Ari Shaffir

With respect to Michael Jackson or any person who has passed away, Shaffir doesn't believe there's a certain of amount of time you need to wait to make a joke about that person, "as long as you do it right.

"At memorial services, people will make a light-hearted joke about the person and everyone laughs. It breaks the tension. You can also make a bad joke, which is uncomfortable," he said.

"Once you start putting limits on things, then you get in trouble. All comedy comes from the same place. You reach down and try something you think is funny. It might be. It might not be, but you need to try."

With Sacha Baron Cohen's film *Brüno* starting its run, people are wondering about the future of the reality comedy genre. "Hopefully, it's going to a place where it isn't going to make the people you're pranking happy," Shaffir said. "That's the idea of a prank... messing with someone. Sometimes that's the joke, that it was mean."

Shaffir is looking forward to seeing Bill Cosby and Judy Gold at Just for Laughs. He said he used to have a crush on Gold.

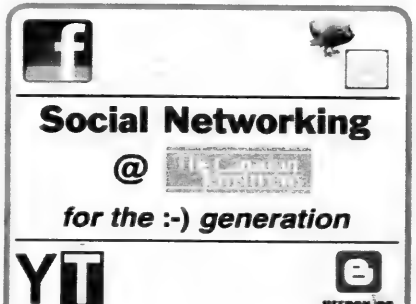
He'll be able to catch her at Montreal's Centaur Theatre from July 21 to 25 in her one-woman show *Judy Gold is Mommy Queerest*, where she'll cover such subjects as Jewish mothers, anti-depressants, nursing homes, parenting, gay marriage, and her two sons.

As for Shaffir, he's performing in *The Nasty Show* at Club Soda from July 14 to 19, and then again on July 23. He's also performing in the same venue at the festival's variety show, *Bubbling with Laughter*, on July 21 in Montreal.

For more info on Just for Laughs festival dates and performers, both in Montreal (now until July 26) and Toronto (July 15-19), check out hahaha.com.

TEL AVIV MUSEUM RECONSTRUCTS 1907 BERLIN EXHIBIT

This 1906 painting by Maurycy Minkowski called *Yom Kippur* is one of several paintings included in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art reconstruction of an original exhibit held in Berlin in 1907. The original show featured more than 200 works of paintings, sculpture and Judaica. Among the noted artists represented were Jozef Israels, Lesser Ury, Camille Pissarro, Maurycy Gottlieb and Samuel Hirszenberg. The Berlin show sought to answer the questions "Do the Jews have an artistic talent?" and "Do their works have something in common?" The current exhibit in Tel Aviv, *Fragmented Mirror*, has about 100 pieces by the same artists and many of the same works featured in the original exhibition. This is a wonderful and rare opportunity to see works otherwise hidden away in storerooms. The show runs until October 2009. For more information, visit www.tamuseum.com.



Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

SUMMER LITERARY COLUMN: REMEMBERING SCREENWRITER ROBERT RISKIN

Certainly you've seen some of the movies that he wrote – the list includes *Lady for a Day* (1933), *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Lost Horizon* (1937), *You Can't Take It With You* (1938) and *Meet John Doe* (1941) – but you may be forgiven if you don't recognize the name of screenwriter **Robert Riskin.**

Although Riskin (1897-1955) was in the public eye for much of his remarkable 10-year collaboration with film director **Frank Capra**, and also had a media spotlight trained on him because of his marriage to actress **Fay Wray**, he was in many ways a sort of invisible man when it came to getting due credit for his cinematic contributions.

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The most important American filmmaker of the '30s, Capra could easily have afforded to share some of the glory with Riskin, his chief screenwriter and creative partner, which would have been the fair and gentlemanly thing to do. Instead, in his later years, Capra did all he could to diminish and obscure the extent of Riskin's contributions to his films.

It was Riskin, for example, who wrote the screenplay for *American Madness* (1932), their much-admired first joint effort, a film that was said to set the Capra style, which combined social commentary and analysis of American values. But Capra later asserted that he came up with the idea for and co-wrote the screenplay, a claim that his biographer, **Joseph McBride**, in concurrence with other film historians, has dismissed as "blatantly false."

Similarly and incredibly, Capra once claimed to have forgotten the name of the screenwriter of *Lady for a Day*. In many such incidents he practised what McBride calls "a carefully cultivated amnesia." Largely as a consequence, cinematic scholars have engaged in a lively debate about the degree of Riskin's contributions to Capra's impressive oeuvre.

A recent biography – *In Capra's Shadow: The Life & Career of Screenwriter Robert Riskin*, by **Ian Scott** (University of Kentucky Press) – attempts to set the record straight by giving Riskin his full and proper due.

Robert Riskin (above) in his days as an aspiring Broadway playwright in the 1920s. In the other picture he is with Frank Capra, left, rehearsing a scene from their classic 1933 film *Lady for a Day* with actors Warren William and May Robson.

"Unfortunately, as the years have passed and histories of Hollywood have been written, Riskin's career has been characterized in a manner that too often gives him a 'bit part' and an ad hoc status," Scott writes. "Yet his towering presence as a screenwriter of great skill and tremendous energy was legendary in film circles.

"In his heyday of the mid-'30s, emerging talents like **Billy Wilder** flocked to Riskin's office at Columbia Pictures, eager for tips and advice that he was only too willing to impart. His writing struck a chord with contemporary scenarists and audiences alike, because he managed to capture the essence of the vernacular, the everyday asides that were part of ordinary people's conversation and that brought his narratives to life."

Scott refers to "a determined propaganda effort on Capra's part to write Riskin out of the story, virtually from day one of their partnership," and suggests that the director's campaign had been largely effective.

Riskin was born in New York's Lower East Side in 1897 to Jewish parents who had escaped tsarist Russia. As a young teenager, he used to sneak into vaudeville playhouses and write down the many jokes and sketches he heard, utilizing his self-taught Pitman shorthand. He took an early job with Heidenheim and Levy, a large shirt-making company whose managers invested in films as a sideline and sent Riskin at age 17 to Florida to run a film production company. The lad was soon churning out one- and two-reel comedies, a pastime that continued until he enlisted in the U.S. army to fight in World War I.

Back in New York after the war, he and a writing partner achieved some success with Broadway plays. He honed his craft for a decade until the stock market crashed and many Broadway stages fell dark; he then relocated to Hollywood. It helped that his "sense of sleek, tight dialogue was a perfect match for the emerging sound era and the need to tell stories with an economy of effort," Scott observes.

Of course, anyone who has seen Capra and Riskin's back-to-back cinematic triumphs, *Lady for a Day* and *It Happened One Night*, already knows that these are two of the most perfectly crafted films ever made. Both artists were nominated for but did not win Academy Awards for *Lady for a Day*. However, *It Happened One Night* became the first film ever to sweep all five major categories of the awards, and Oscars went to Capra for best director, Riskin for best writer, and to actors **Clark Gable** and **Claudette Colbert** and Columbia studio head **Harry Cohn.**

The idea for *Lady for a Day* came from a magazine story by **Damon Runyon**, who publicly thanked Riskin for the huge improvement he made to his sketch-like story. *It Happened One Night* was based on a magazine story by **Samuel Hopkins Adams**, which Riskin vastly expanded upon and improved.

Lady for a Day is one of a small number of films that I can watch repeatedly. Perhaps it is a sappy fairy tale, but there is something comically marvellous in the way that major figures of New York's criminal underworld join in common purpose with the mayor, governor and police chief and their wives to help a pathetic street peddler named Apple Annie (played brilliantly by **May Robson**) masquerade as a high-society matron long enough to insure her daughter's marriage to the son of a visiting Spanish count.

If Lady for a Day is about a person from the lower depths of society being magically elevated into its highest reaches, *It Happened One Night* tells the story of a would-be heiress (**Claudette Colbert**) in society's highest echelons, who, through comic misadventure, descends into the common everyday world of ordinary Americans, where she finds true love (**Clark Gable**). Both tales culminate in marriage, the hallmark of every romantic comedy.

Late in his life, Capra attempted to remake *Lady for a Day*, but with woeful results. The new film, titled *A Pocketful of Miracles*, "ran 50 minutes longer than the taut, perfectly constructed *Lady for a Day*," Scott writes, and "only fleetingly recaptured past glories and paled in comparison with its delightful predecessor." It was on that ignominious note that Capra ended his career.

Riskin's relationship with Capra, a cinematic giant in his own right, served as "the camouflage hiding Riskin's monumental contribution to Hollywood," Scott writes.

Thankfully, more than half a century after the screenwriter's passing, *In Capra's Shadow* deservedly restores some of the lustre to his much-forgotten legend.

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From Toronto to Tinseltown: an actor's story

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The last time she went, actor Lauren Lipson was unable to remain in Hollywood because of work permit limitations. But that wasn't the real reason she couldn't stay.

Lipson, 29, a Jewish Toronto native, first set down in La-La Land five years ago, but admits she didn't have the proper mindset to make it work, even had she stayed.

"The girl that left for Hollywood and the girl that came home were two different people," Lipson told Heebonics in a recent interview.

Though she's not a "big name" actor – Lipson started acting at 16 and has since worked on a number of commercials, had small roles on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and *The Line*, and lent her voice to characters on the animated show *6 Teen, Total Drama Island* and *Stoked* – the self-described "typical York Mills and Bayview kid" has renewed aspirations of acting success in California.

Lauren Lipson

That's not to say she thinks it will be easy, just easier than her last attempt, because she no longer has the same youthful arrogance she had before.

"For so long I wanted to be an actor, to be recognized and loved," she said. "Now, I just want to give back, help people and do my part in this world. And my way to do that is through acting. I know this is where I have to be."

A natural willowy redhead, Lipson's ethereal looks should serve her well upon her re-entry to the Hollywood scene later this year, though she said she knows that in a town crazy for youth, her age may work against her. Still, she remains undaunted.

And she won't work on just any project to get noticed.

"If I feel my integrity and values are being compromised, I won't work on a film," Lipson stated. "You gotta make smart choices [as an actor]."

While she hopes to be cast alongside big-name actors and work with established directors, Lipson said she isn't concerned about achieving instant success. She just wants to carve out a happy niche for herself in her chosen career.

"In 10 years, I see myself still strong. Maybe with kids, married and feeling like I made a difference and contributed to society," she said. "I just want to be happy with friends and family around. I can see myself living on a big ranch, with mountains."

Speaking of which, Lipson said that while she may be moving stateside to advance her career interests, she will always call Toronto home.

"I love Canada, but I'm also a traveller," she confided.

Would she consider playing Jewish roles if they come her way?

"Absolutely!" Lipson exclaimed, adding that while she didn't grow up observant, her heritage is very important to her and she would love to honour it by portraying a Jewish character.

"My favourite movie is [the Woody Allen directed] *Annie Hall*. It blends comedy and drama... to be in something like that would be great," she said.

Beyond acting, Lipson said she's also taken inspiration from her earlier travails and has begun writing her own screenplay, tentatively titled *Swirly Girl*, about her "lost days" of a few years back.

She won't go into details about plot or characters, but said it's "a coming-of-age dramedy." And the experience has made her much more sympathetic to the work of the screenwriter.

"I'll never look at a script the same way again," she said, laughing.

Looking back on her career thus far, Lipson said there's one major piece of advice she can give to aspiring actors: believe in yourself.

"Don't let anyone... make you feel they need to break you down in order to build you back up into this great actress. That is all an illusion. You are a great actress as you are. You just need the confidence to know that, and build upon it," she said.

Lipson said that she learned learned this the hard way, having attended numerous acting classes that sought to deconstruct her acting abilities to try and fit her into a preconceived acting mould.

After graduating with a bachelor of fine arts from York University in 2004, Lipson said she was "burnt out" from acting lessons and pushed herself to be someone she was not, all out of self-applied pressure.

In a letter she wrote about her early-20s malaise, Lipson described a penchant for self-destruction.

"After graduation I had a series of lacklustre auditions, and I fuelled all my creative and artistic instincts into my social life," she wrote. "I did book a few things here and there, but there was no real passion. All the potential was there fired up from school – the anger, the hurt, the sadness. I had a wealth of new emotional range, but I was pouring it into the wrong vessel.

"During my prime years for work, I was either in school getting beaten down or out of school beating myself down. It was a vicious cycle. My confidence was shattered, and my gears were stuck in neutral."

Lipson has come a long way since those self-doubting days, and this summer she'll re-board a plane to Tinseltown, secure in the knowledge that she has all the acting chops she needs to make it, and following her own advice to "follow your heart and go after your dreams."

Books & Authors

Author memorializes his mother in a richly transcendent work

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

Soon after her arrival in Canada in 1940, Masha Roskies sat down to a meal at her sister-in-law's house in Montreal and, seeing that only "Canadian bread" (the white, fluffy stuff called Wonder Bread) was on the table, asked for a piece of real bread instead.

When her aunt curtly replied that "this was what one ate in Canada, and she might as well get used to it," Masha – according to one version of the story – burst out crying, already longing for the thick black breads of her Vilna youth.

David G. Roskies tells the story in *Yiddishlands* (Wayne State University Press), his recent prize-winning memoir that memorializes his late mother, Masha, and lovingly recalls her well-storied life and family's past in a series of interwoven chapters that focus initially on her life and then shift into his own.

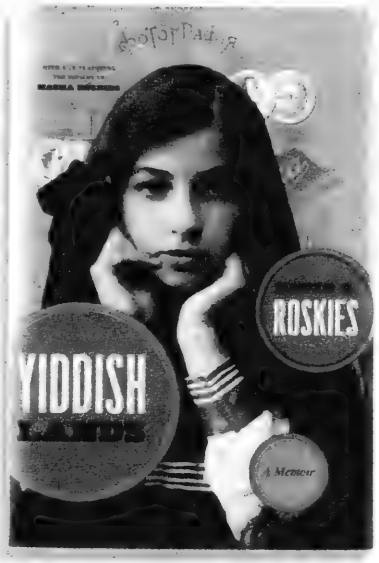
Born in Montreal in 1948, David Roskies seems to have inherited his mother's reverence for Yiddish culture, as well as her sense that all Canadian bread and experience pales in comparison to the vital and richly fulfilling Yiddish life once lived in Europe.

The story goes that the first thing David heard at birth was his mother singing *The Rebbe Elimeylekh*, one of hundreds of Yiddish folk songs that she carried in her head: a trove of musical culture that YIVO researchers would one day be thrilled to record. Thus was "Dovidl's" introduction to the world of Lithuanian Jewish culture that surrounded him as a child, and about which he eventually became so knowledgeable and proficient that at 15 the great Yiddishist Max Weinreich would tell him: "*Fraynd Roskes, di yidishforshung darf aykh hobn*, the field of Yiddish needs you."

From an early age, David understood "that time was riven in two: Time Before Time After. When Mother said, '*dos iz geshen in fertsikstn yor*, such-and-such took place in the 40th year,' I knew she was referring not just to 1940 but to an entire Red Sea of circumstances by which the Old World stood divided from the New… Mother was the only link across the abyss of time. Like Moses on Mount Nebo."

Masha's mother, Fradl Matz, gave birth to some 10 children by her first husband before being widowed, then remarried and gave birth to Masha in 1906. Besides taking care of her large family, Fradl ran the Matz Press, the family publishing house that produced prayer books, Bibles and popular Yiddish literature. In a chapter titled "Prayer for the Tsar," David Roskies describes the great dilemma the Matz Press faced after the Germans occupied Vilna and demanded that the company remove the prayer for the tsar from its prayer books.

Stealth was required, since complying with the order would have been considered an act of disloyalty to the previous Russian regime, therefore punishable should the Russians regain power. Entrusted to the secretive task, nine-year-old Masha excised the pages from each book cleanly and skilfully with a straight razor. As if on a quest for a holy grail, David as a grown man always sought out one of the Matz Press' prayer books with the pages missing whenever he visited a synagogue in eastern Europe or Russia, hoping to bring it home as a memento for his mother. Eventually he found one.



Because Masha Roskies was "a patroness of the Yiddish arts such as Montreal had never seen," David is able to tell numerous stories about such prominent Yiddish writers as Isaac Bashevis Singer, Melekh Ravitch, Itsik Manger, Avrom Sutzkever and Rachel Korn. In a chapter titled "The Soiree," he recaptures the literary-salon atmosphere of his family's living room on the occasions when it was filled with the likes of Ravitch, Chava Rosenfarb, I. J. Segal and other writers, poets and lovers of the Yiddish arts.

One of the visitors to their home was Yiddish novelist Chaim Grade, to whom Masha once said, "Before she died, Fradl, my saintly mother said, '*Ale erevs zenen sheyn*, all the eves in life are beautiful: the eves of the Sabbath, of the festivals, the eve of an engagement. *Nor der erev toyt iz biter*, the eve of one's death – that alone is dreadful."

Upon hearing this, Grade became excited, jumped up and proclaimed, "Masha, if you don't commit this to writing, I will – in my very next novel." But despite such encouragements, Masha never wrote anything. She always claimed she was too busy – promoting Yiddish theatre, helping to send Yiddish typewriters to Holocaust survivors overseas, arranging literary soirées, and immersing her four children in the culture that she loved so deeply.

Yiddishlands is a richly transcendent piece of writing that salvages many episodes of personal, family and social history, not only in old Europe but modern Montreal and numerous other places (hence the plural title). Sometimes reading these pages seems a bit like biting into a thickly buttered piece of black bread: there is so much nourishment here that it must be digested slowly. The somewhat Proustian writing style and layered personal associations may cause the reader to study and puzzle over some paragraphs long after first reading.

David's sister, Ruthie, also figures occasionally in these pages; together, they have done their parents proud by helping to carry forward the Yiddish legacy to another generation. David is an esteemed professor of Yiddish literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Ruthie – Ruth Wisse – is an acclaimed writer and professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature at Harvard University.

"I started writing this book the day I got up from shivah after my mother died," David told *The CJN* after accepting the prize for Yiddish literature at the recent Canadian Jewish Book Awards in Toronto. "It was a way of keeping her alive. As long as I was writing the book, I was still in conversation with her. When that draft was over, I could finally let go."

At the awards ceremony, Roskies concluded his acceptance speech by singing a Yiddish song from his mother's repertoire that was first sung in Vilna in 1919. Similarly, his book also gives his mother the last word: attached to the inside back cover is a CD recording of 10 Yiddish songs as sung "a cappella" by Masha Roskies for the YIVO Institute.

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World Jewish Hockey Tournament scores

By SHEILA SIMMONS
Special to The CJN

METULLA, Israel — It took the words of John Allen, Canadian ambassador to Israel, to put into strange perspective what it is to play high-level hockey in Israel in July.

"I grew up in Winnipeg," Allen said at the opening of the second World Jewish Hockey Tournament on July 3. "And I played hockey outdoors in minus-40 weather. What I never expected to see was hockey being played indoors with plus-40 weather outdoors."

It was foggy at times, with cold ice meeting the hot Israeli air, but players from nine teams and five countries – Canada, the United States, Israel, France and Russia – opened the WJHT at the Canada Centre in the northernmost spot in Israel, just a slapshot away from the hills of Lebanon.

The tournament ran from July 3 to 14.

In fact, whatever expectations there were for the 10-day event were surpassed on its very first day, with two heart-stopping, remarkable overtime games involving both of the Canadian junior teams.

"It was as good a day of hockey as I've ever seen," said Sherry Bassin, the general manager of all the Canadian teams participating here. "The level of play, the emotion in the building, the calibre of the competition was indeed memorable."

In the first junior game, Israel had a 4-2 lead over the Canadian Red team in the third period, but couldn't hold the lead. David Freiman of Toronto, who captained the Toronto Penguins Midget A team to a Toronto city hockey championship, displayed his leadership with a game-tying goal with just 37 seconds to play.

Beau Blanaru of Nanaimo, B.C., then defeated the Israeli team with a goal with just 1:46 left in the five-minute overtime period.

The first Canada game was full of excitement. The second Canada game trumped the opener.

The great Canada-U.S. hockey rivalry played out in front of a large crowd at the Canada Centre, with Canada White coming from behind to defeat the Americans by shootout, a 3-2 victory. Again, a very strong U.S. team led 2-1 in the third period before Matt Silcoff of Thornhill, Ont., tied the game.

After a scoreless overtime, the game went to a shootout. Adam Levine of Toronto scored a shootout goal and the winner was potted by Noah Schwartz, who plays for the Hamilton Junior Red Wings during the winter.

"I've been involved in a lot of overtime games in my day, but this was a memorable game," said Steve Thomas, the Canada White coach, who knows a little about overtime himself, as he once held the National Hockey League record for overtime goals. "The kids really came up big for us."

The opening day of junior play put a huge smile on the face of Sidney Greenberg, the Canadian chairman of the Israel Ice Hockey Federation and the brains behind this year's World Jewish Tournament. Two years ago, Greenberg ran a small four-team, four-country event in Metulla. This year, it has expanded to two divisions and more than twice the number of teams and players. It's Greenberg's vision to build and develop hockey in Israel and grow the sport and its athletes at the very same time.

Two years ago, this tournament began with almost no notice and was played in front of few fans. This year, the media attention alone – famed TSN broadcaster Brian Williams, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Jerusalem Post* all reported on this year's event – made it notable.

Josh Tordjman

"I never knew there were this many good Jewish hockey players," said Bassin. "I used to joke, 'Jews own teams, they don't play for them.' Well now, that's changing. We have a lot of us who can play."

Jewish-born players such as Michael Cammalleri, who recently signed with the Montreal Canadiens, and Eric Nystrom of the Calgary Flames show it's possible for Jews to play big-time hockey.

Here in Metulla, the goaltender on the Canadian senior team was Josh Tordjman, the only player in the tournament who has played in the NHL. He played two games for the Phoenix Coyotes this past season and hopes to play more in the future.

Tordjman had a shutout in his first start here, a 4-0 Canadian win over Israel.

"It's an honour to be in this tournament and it's a privilege to play in Israel," Tordjman said. "When I heard about this event, I didn't give it a second thought. I wanted to be here, and from what I've seen so far, I'm thrilled with the choice I've made. I couldn't be more excited about this event. It's everything I love. Hockey, Canada, Israel. What's not to love about that?"

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F1 boss apologizes for Hitler remark

JTA

BERLIN — The chief of Formula 1 racing has apologized for remarks he made praising Adolf Hitler.

"Those who don't know me think I support Hitler's atrocities. Those who do know me have told me how unwise I was to articulate my points so badly that it should have been so widely misunderstood," Bernie Ecclestone told the *Times of London* and the *Jewish Chronicle* last week.

"I'm just sorry I was an idiot. I sincerely, genuinely apologize," he said.

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) called for Ecclestone's resignation after he praised Hitler for having "gotten things done."

In an interview in the British newspaper the *Times*, Ecclestone said "Hitler got taken away and persuaded to do things that I have no idea whether he wanted to do or not… [but at least] he could command a lot of people able to get things done." He also said Hitler "wasn't a dictator," and reserved a few choice words for democracy, which he felt "hasn't done a lot of good for many countries, including [England]. I like people who make up their minds."

Ecclestone also said Saddam Hussein, the executed former dictator of Iraq, "was the only one who could control that country."

In response, WJC president Ronald Lauder said Ecclestone was "question[ing] the basic principles of modern democracy." Lauder urged racing teams and host countries to "suspend their co-operation with Mr. Ecclestone and call for his resignation."

The British-born Ecclestone, 78, insisted he was misunderstood. He said he had merely said Hitler "had effectively tackled unemployment and the economic crisis before committing his horrendous crimes."

Ecclestone added he had many Jewish friends who would know that he would never deliberately hurt a member of a minority group.

Friends forever?

NEW TO CANADA

By NINA SHENHAV

"Promise you'll call!" Lisa begs while passionately holding my hand.

"I promise!" I respond emotionally. (Hold on, do I have her phone number? Oh, there she goes, saying she'll call me.)

"I'm calling you first thing in the morning," Lisa says. "We'll have lunch!"

Later, in the car with my husband, I am bubbling with excitement. "It's been a great evening," I start enthusiastically. "I liked the party and the people, and Lisa is great, and her friend, Jane, is great too. See? I have two new best friends. And you said Canadians aren't friendly! We're even meeting tomorrow for lunch."

Meir seems pleased for me.

First thing the next morning I reschedule a meeting to make room for my new friend, Lisa. At the end of the day, I kind of gather we won't be meeting for lunch after all. She doesn't call the next day either, or the week after that.

Even Meir admits it's strange. "The way she and Jane were hugging you at the end of the party, I was sure they're yours to keep."

Then I realize that Lisa must have lost my phone number! It's that simple.

"Then call her, by all means," Meir encourages me.

"But I don't have her number."

We don't talk for awhile. "How about calling Jane, her best friend? She said you were a beautiful, creative girl. Ask her for Lisa's number," Meir suggests.

"No. I don't want her to be jealous."

I won't bore you with the tale of my exhausting quest for Lisa's number. What matters is that I finally get to call my long lost friend: "Lisa! Honey!" I can't hold my excitement. "So you've lost my number, but no worries, I'm here!" I exclaim.

In return, I get silence, and then a cold, polite voice: "Who is it, please?"

"Uh… it's Nina."

No response.

I try again, this time less confidently: "Nina. From the party last week? You said I was adorable."

Lisa defrosts a little, thank goodness. "Oh, yes, hello. How are you?"

I'm sort of happy again. "I'm great! So, you said we'd have lunch. Wanna get together today?"

Lisa replies cautiously: "No, I am sorry, but I'm terribly busy. Terribly."

Well, guess what? Lisa's terribly busy all week, all month, and there are even implications about the whole year.

Meir hugs me while I sob. "It's not the first time something like this has happened to us in Canada," he reminds me. "We've met people here who promised us they'd be with us forever, and we've never heard from them since."

He's right. It's just that I really felt Lisa and I had something going. She showed interest in me, in the same way she showed interest in her best friend, the Canadian, Jane.

"Call Jane," Meir advises. "Maybe she'll explain it to you. Maybe you've somehow hurt Lisa. She's her best friend. Call and find out."

I have Jane's number, so I call her. At the end of the creepy phase of identification, Jane finally remembers who I am. Still, she can't recall who Lisa is.

You see, it's not me being me, or even me being an Israeli. Turns out, Lisa and Jane also met at that party, became "best friends" for a moment, and never really considered continuing the bond.

I guess Canadians do want to be friends forever. The problem is it's kind of forgotten the moment they say their goodbyes. Do correct me if I'm wrong!

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

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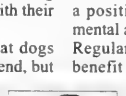

FITNESS CORNER

By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Summer is here, and it's great to see people outside running, walking, biking and rollerblading with their dogs.

We all know that dogs are a man's best friend, but did you know that owning a dog can not only prolong your life but improve the quality of your health as well?

Having a pet – a cat or a dog specifically – helps reduce the amount of stress the body feels every day. The newest research shows that caring for a cat or dog helps reduce blood pressure and lower cholesterol. Just petting a cat can bring down blood pressure levels in stressful situations.

Owning a dog also tends to encourage daily exercise and increase the development of social contacts. Both are known to have a positive effect on your mental and physical health. Regular walks are a huge benefit to your health and overall wellness, and by walking regularly at the intensity and distance of a typical dog walk, you reduce stress and burn extra calories as well as increasing your cardiovascular health.

Recent studies have found that dog owners not only have lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, they also tend to suffer fewer medical problems, a situation that is also linked to regular increased physical activity. Since a dog needs to be walked and played with as part of its daily care, most dog owners don't have a problem getting out with their pet in any type of weather.

Furthermore, studies have found that seniors with pets cope better with stress on a daily basis and tend not to enter the health-care system as often as their non-pet-owner counterparts.

A study out in Hartwick University in New York went so far as to say that having a dog or cat in childhood can boost the immune system, and children with cats or dogs have been found to miss less school than their peers without pets at home.

So if you want to lose weight and feel great, go get a dog!

If you would like to learn more, e-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Hometown girl makes a difference

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Judy Csillag is a homegrown treasure, a breath of Jewish fresh air.

Judy lives in a world – in fact, she creates one – where she sees skepticism about "the other" and determines to find an opportunity to unravel stereotypes and bridge differences.

URBAN WRITER

Since Sept. 11, 2001, Judy, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, has been the director of community outreach and partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity (CCD), an organization whose vision is to create a Canadian society without prejudice or discrimination and instead to celebrate diversity, difference and inclusion.

In this position, Judy has opened many eyes to the injustice of mistruths about religions, nations and ethnicities. She has accomplished this through such efforts as a program called Discovering Diversity, a powerful, full-day, guided outing for students in grades 1 to university, when Jews visit mosques and churches, and Muslims drop by synagogues and churches.

"You watch as the children become more and more relaxed and recognize the similarities between us as the day progresses," Judy says. "They come away comforted that people are not so different."

Judy tells a story about a Jewish day school student who was about to enter a mosque and said, "I'm terrified they will kill me."

She calmed the Grade 8 student and encouraged him to sit with her. When he came out, he said, "I learned that Islam has similarities to Judaism and that I am very excited about my Jewishness."

"I'll never forget that day because he found value in others and his own faith," Judy says.

This year, Judy had Christians, Muslims and Hindus at her multi-faith Pesach seder. One of the guests approached her at the end of the seder, gave her a hug and told her she was a student at York University and very involved in Israeli Apartheid Week. She said she will no longer be part of that event.

Judy also creatively facilitated an exchange program, through the CCD, with students at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and the Islamic Foundation School. The Grade 5 students visited each other and sat in on classes and prayer sessions.

"I was proud of the staff, students and parents at Paul Penna. They approached me with the request, obviously seeing [that] we can't live and die in a bubble on Bathurst Street."

There are many quiet emissaries of peace in our society, but few who have engaged in courageous "diversity" work in places like Damascus, Syria. Judy is one of these people.

From Jan. 16 to 28, as a guest of the Canadian Embassy, she visited Syria with internationally renowned peace activist Hind Kabawat. There, during the war on Gaza, she held workshops on women's issues, including prejudice, racism and diversity. On Day 2, she showed the participants the film *Pigeon*, a short documentary on the Holocaust and empathy. It was well accepted.

"My parents didn't want me to go, but I was never concerned about my safety," Judy says.

"When the participants did the evaluation, the thing they enjoyed the most was meeting me – a Jew. They were blown away that I was just another women with similar issues.

"On the first day, I told them, 'I am a proud of being a Jewish woman.'"

She feels, however, that the most important statement she made on Jewish-Arab relations came simply from her showing up. "Now these Syrian woman have finally met a Jew and harbour a different understanding of who we are.

"As a child of survivors, I could have remained bitter, and look at everybody as an enemy of the Jewish People and Israel. I chose instead to live outside of that mindset and that is why I do what I do."

avrum@veahavta.org. See Avrum's blog: http://avrum.net.

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This Week

National

York U. president speaks to *The CJN* about recent events. **Page 3**

Hungarian native seeks to unite all Jewish war vets living in Canada. **Page 7**

Young artists raise funds for Zareinu. **Page 12**

Food, Scrumptious Food

Catching up with 100 years of ketchup. **Page 21**

Arts & Travel

Maggie G. is thrilled to be singing to children. **Page 35**

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FAREWELL MACCABIAH: The 18th "Chai" Maccabiah Games wrapped up last week with colourful closing ceremonies at the amphitheatre in Latrun. Singing, dancing and fireworks marked the closing event, enjoyed by many of the 7,000 athletes from 54 countries who participated in the Games. Israeli President Shimon Peres proclaimed the Games "the best Maccabiah ever" and urged the athletes to consider making Israel their permanent home. Peres named U.S. Olympic gold-medal swimmer Jason Lezak and Hungarian chess player Judit Polgar the Games' outstanding performers. Lezak, 33, set a Maccabiah record in the 100-metre freestyle with a time of 47.78 seconds. Polgar, also 33, has been a grandmaster since age 15 – the youngest player ever to receive the designation – and is ranked 36th in the world, making her the only woman in the top 100. For further coverage, see page 34. [*Elitzur Reuveni photo*]

Options on Iran still on table: Barak

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Israel is keeping on the table all the options regarding a response to Iran's nuclear program, Defence Minister Ehud Barak told visiting U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Monday.

Barak said that a military strike is still a possibility, even as Washington tries to persuade Israel to give diplomacy more time.

"We clearly believe that no option should be removed from the table. This is our policy. We mean it. We recommend to others to take the same position, but we cannot dictate it to anyone," Barak told reporters as he stood alongside Gates during a Jerusalem press conference.

Israeli officials have said little about what military action they might have in mind. But the country has conducted a number of military exercises widely seen as possible preparations, including long-range air force manoeuvres and recent movement of Israeli warships and submarines through the Suez Canal, the quickest route to the Persian Gulf from Israel.

U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates, left, and Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak spoke to reporters in Jerusalem on Monday. [*Israel Sun photo*]

But priority should be given to diplomacy and possibly tougher sanctions against Iran, Barak said.

Gates' visit to Israel was partially aimed at dissuading Israel from taking any military action and buying time for U.S. diplomacy to bear fruit. However, the fact that Barak repeated his no-options-off-the-table comment three times seemed to indicate Gates made no visible headway in getting Israel to soften its line.

Still, the comments did not signal a major rift with the United States, which has also said there is a time limit for its diplomatic outreach. Israel has shown little enthusiasm for a global diplomatic effort that so far has failed to persuade Tehran to curb its nuclear program.

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Poland still struggling with restitution legislation – see page 32

The News in Brief

Canada

Boycott Thwarted

TORONTO — Toronto Jews responded with their wallets to charges the Royal Ontario Museum's exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls is illegal. More than 500 tickets to the exhibit were sold on the July11-12 weekend after an e-mail warning from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto that pro-Palestinian groups want the exhibit closed. Palestine House and the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid say it's illegal because Israel looted the "Palestinian artifacts" in the 1967 Six Day War. Palestine House said it "boycotts the exhibition unless the ROM admits the factual history that these scrolls are Palestinian property." On July 10, 30 people protested outside the Israeli Consulate across the street from the museum. The Jewish Defence League responded with a small counter-rally. Pickets by the pro-Palestinian groups will continue and the campaign will "escalate," a spokesperson said. The federation's Sally Szuster said the e-mail urging Jews to see the Scrolls was modelled on a successful campaign last spring to thwart a boycott of Israeli wines on Passover.

World

Refugee Status Nixed

SAO PAULO — A Jerusalem rabbi who allegedly abused children won't receive refugee status in Brazil. The decision announced July 13 by Brazilian authorities means Rabbi Elior Chen, who heads a religious sect that allegedly abused children, could soon be extradited to Israel. He can appeal. An Israeli probe continues into allegations that his abuse of one woman's children led to two of them, aged 4 and 5, being hospitalized in March in critical condition and another, 3, remaining in a persistent vegetative state. The rabbi allegedly urged followers to abuse their children, including beatings and pouring household cleaners into open wounds, to "correct their corrupt souls." An international arrest warrant was issued for him in April.

Demjanjuk Trial Set

BERLIN —The Munich trial of alleged Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk is set to begin in mid-October. Demjanjuk, 89, is charged with being an accessory to the murder of 27,900 Jews in the gas chambers at the Sobibor death camp in Poland. The prosecution is expected to call 22 witnesses. Also, eight people from the Netherlands, the United States and Germany will testify against him, including concentration camp survivors and people who lost relatives in Sobibor. The Ukraine native spent most of the postwar period in the United States before being extradited to Germany in May. The retired auto worker lived in suburban Cleveland, but was stripped of his U.S. citizenship for lying about his Nazi past.

Agriprocessors Sale To Mtl. Man Approved

DES MOINES — The Agriprocessors plant in Postville, Iowa, was sold to a Canadian company.

SHF Industries, a company formed in May by Canadian plastics manufacturer Hershey Friedman and his son-in-law, Daniel Hirsch, bought the failed kosher meat-packing plant for $8.5 million. The sale was approved July 20 by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Iowa.

Friedman, an observant Jew, has said he plans to continue operating the business as a meat-packing plant focusing on kosher products. He told the *Mishpacha Jewish Family Weekly* that he hopes to have production up and running in time for the High Holidays.

The purchase price was well below the $22 million the plant owes to unsecured creditors, including back wages and benefits to hundreds of employees. It's also much less than the $40 million Soglowek Nahariya Ltd. of Israel was prepared to offer going into a March auction for the bankrupt company. Soglowek Nahariya rescinded its offer before the auction.

According to the *Iowa Independent*, SHF will pay $1.8 million in order to pay debts owed to First Bank Business Capital and MLIC Mortgage. Under conditions of the sale, the new owners don't have to pay off any other debts.

Agriprocessors, formerly the largest kosher meat producer in the United States, has been operating at a fraction of its capacity since a May 2008 raid that trained a national spotlight on the issue of illegal immigration. It also forced the Jewish community to grapple with issues relating to the ethical treatment of workers at Jewish-owned businesses. Several company officials have faced criminal charges for their roles in employing the illegal workers and other alleged violations.

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Jewish link to York U 'absolutely essential'

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

'The February incident was an ugly incident'

After an academic year that was rife with anti-Israel tensions, a three-month strike that shut down classes and a number of anti-Semitic incidents, York University president Mamdouh Shoukri spoke to *The CJN* about his wish to learn from the past and to move forward into a brighter future for York students.

Shoukri visited *The CJN*'s offices last week to talk about recent challenges his school has faced due to heightened tensions between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian students, and about his goal to improve the campus' learning environment and academic programs.

"The Jewish community has been an important constituency for York University in the past, they have been supporters of the university and the university has been supportive of the community. I think it is important – it is absolutely essential – that this continues into the future," he said.

"Anything that can be done to strengthen that relationship and alleviate misunderstanding is something that we will pursue."

He said that York has a reputation for being a campus that is "committed to social responsibility and social justice, diversity and accessibility" as well as having a student body with a particular interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"We do our best to ensure that the environment is safe and secure and people aren't intimidated. But incidents do happen," Shoukri said.

He referred specifically to one that took place on Feb. 11, when Jewish students were barricaded in the Hillel lounge by students who shouted anti-Zionist slogans. The incident was sparked by a press conference to announce a student-run initiative to have the York Federation of Students (YFS) executive members impeached for their inactivity during the three-month CUPE strike by teaching assistants and contract faculty last year.

Mamdouh Shoukri

"The February incident was an ugly incident. It was a case of intimidation of students who had every right to present their petition or the result of the petition they put together. It had nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict and had everything to do with student government," Shoukri said.

"The university worked with the law enforcement agencies right away, and there were no charges laid by the law enforcement agencies, so we took it to the student code of conduct," Shoukri said.

In May, two students, one of whom is the incoming YFS president Krisna Saravanamuttu, were sanctioned by the university for their involvement in the incident.

"We do our best to protect our students, all our students, and ensure that we have an environment that is safe and secure and free from intimidation," Shoukri said.

"We have a zero-tolerance policy to any act of racism, anti-Semitism, intimidation to our students."

In response to a suggestion that York's administration should be more proactive in preventing incidents rather than reacting to them after the fact, and to one urging a change in policy to keep student demonstrations from disrupting classes, Shoukri said it's easy to talk about having a balance between student activism and safety and security, but it's difficult to put into practice.

"We don't want a campus with no activism – it wouldn't be York," he said. "The question becomes how to make sure that when [a demonstration] happens, that first of all, it doesn't disrupt other academic activities on campus. Second, how to make sure that when this happens, it is done in a way that is respectful of others."

Continued on page 23

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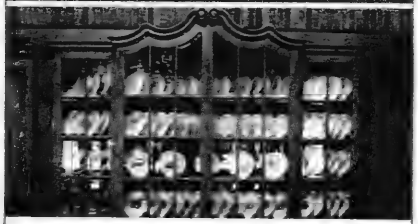

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AMIA

AMIA. It is a name we must all remember. And for all time. It is an acronym in Spanish for Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina, the official name of the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires.

There is also a serendipitous sense of double-entendre in "AMIA" with the Hebrew word *am* (people, or nation) that makes its place in our hearts especially poignant.

Thus the Spanish and the Hebrew languages felicitously combine in the single word AMIA (the Mutual Israelite Association of Argentina) to achieve a broader meaning that encompasses the more sweeping aspect of "my people" as well.

From the editor's desk...

Fifteen years ago, on July 18, a suicide bomber attacked the AMIA building and reduced it to a smouldering rubble of human and concrete carnage. The murderer wrought unimaginable horror and havoc upon the Jewish and wider communities of Buenos Aires, searing a permanent scar into the psyche and soul of Argentine, South American and world Jewry. Eighty-five people were killed, 151 were injured.

After more than a decade of exhausting, exhaustive, painstaking, even embarrassing investigation, Dr. Alberto Nisman, Argentina's attorney general, on Oct. 25, 2006, presented the findings of the special committee that had investigated the circumstances of the attack. The committee concluded that the attack against the AMIA had been carried out by Hezbollah.

But they also concluded that Hezbollah had not – indeed could not have – acted alone. The investigators concluded that "the decision to carry out the attack was made, not by a small splinter group of extremely radical Islamic functionaries, but was instead a decision that was extensively discussed and was ultimately adopted *by a consensus of the highest representatives of the Iranian government at the time*." (My emphasis)

In other words, the government of Iran was complicit in the murders.

As a result, some two weeks later in November, the judge handling the AMIA case issued international arrest warrants for seven senior Iranian officials, including then-president Hashemi Rafsanjani and senior Hezbollah operative Imad Moughnieh. (Moughnieh subsequently met his death in mysterious circumstances in a car bombing in Damascus.) One of the seven Iranians indicted – Mohsen Rezai – was a candidate in the recently held, fraudulent presidential elections in Iran.

According to the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies in Israel, the Argentine investigators concluded that the fundamental reason for the attack against AMIA was the Argentine "government's unilateral decision to terminate the nuclear materials and technology supply agreements that had been concluded some years previously between Argentina and Iran."

In their report to the Argentine attorney general, the investigators described in detail how the Iranian leaders arrived at the decision to carry out the attack.

Two and a half years before the AMIA bombing – on March 17, 1992 – the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was also bombed. Twenty-nine people were murdered then and some 300 were wounded.

The Israeli government has always maintained that Iran was responsible for both of the deadly attacks in Buenos Aires.

No one has yet been brought to justice for either attack.

To mark the sombre period surrounding the 15-year anniversary, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman went to Argentina as part of a 10-country visit to Latin America. It was the first such visit to the region by an Israeli cabinet minister in more than 20 years.

The government of Israel wanted to openly display its solidarity with and support for the Jewish community there. The centre has been rebuilt. The community did not wilt or bend to the malicious will of the sadistic and craven terrorists who are manipulated by the mullahs in Iran.

In addition, Lieberman spoke plainly about trying to counter Iran's growing influence in the area. He called Iran "the biggest sponsor of world terror organizations such as Hamas, [Islamic] Jihad and Hezbollah."

The people of Iran themselves know this to be true. We, in the West, must never forget this. We owe that to the people of Iran who, each day, demonstrate their courage against an evil and oppressive regime.

But we especially owe that debt of memory to the victims of the bombings in Buenos Aires. May "AMIA" always be a rallying cry recalling the bravery of the Jews of Argentina and stirring in our hearts the sense of peoplehood that terrorists can never understand, let alone defeat. May the memories of the terrorists' victims always be for blessing. – ***MBD***

SeeJN

WELCOMED TO ISRAEL

New immigrants to Israel from Ethiopia recently received their citizenship documents at a ceremony at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. [Flash90 photo]

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New CJC head aims to mend relations with left

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Some lead with words and bluster, while others lead by example.

Mark Freiman, the new president of Canadian Jewish Congress falls squarely into the latter category.

Freiman, who assumed his post in May, succeeds immediate past co-presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Sylvain Abitbol.

Speaking to *The CJN* at his home in Toronto earlier this month, Freiman spoke candidly about what he expects to bring to the presidency, stressing that his is a low-key approach.

"Congress depends on its lay leadership for guidance," he said. "The president, where appropriate, speaks on its behalf. I don't think it's sensible to turn anything into a cult of personality. CJC is important as a voice on behalf of the Jewish community. It's the organization that's important. It's the hard work of the professionals who work for Congress that accomplishes the goals that are set. I'm glad to lend my name to its good work."

That said, Freiman is well aware of the challenges faced by Jewish communities in both the Diaspora and in Israel, and in his soft-spoken way, he made it clear he's unafraid to face them.

He said what the community is seeing now is "a concerted effort to delegitimize the right of a Jewish state and homeland."

Beyond that, he said, the methods being used by anti-Semites and enemies of Israel have become more disingenuous than ever before.

"There are some people of goodwill who are being misled by clever, unprincipled propaganda," Freiman said. "But it can be stemmed. You have to meet this head on, find the right alliances, and call it what it is: anti-Semitism. [Then], you have to present a front as allies."

And he wants Jewish community members to realize they have many friends out there.

"The community has far more allies than one might think," he said. "Our opponents are in the minority. There is no doubt that the Jewish community has a challenge. But it's also a challenge for the enemies of Israel."

Mark Freiman

Born in a displaced persons camp in Soviet-occupied Vienna to Holocaust survivors, Freiman, 62, said Jewish identity and the future of Jewish community are of utmost importance to him and have always been a "background theme" in his life.

That's why he feels one of the best ways to ensure the continuity of the community is to secure alliances with other faith communities in what he perceives to be a "crucial time" for world Jewry.

Freiman – a lawyer by profession and a former deputy attorney general for Ontario, from 2000 to 2004, during which time he also held the portfolio of deputy minister responsible for native affairs – said he's in a position to help Congress in some of its "legal dimensions" if necessary.

He said he's worked on a number of human rights issues, including being chief counsel for the Canadian Human Rights Commission's case against infamous Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel.

"So I know a little bit about hate propaganda," Freiman said. "Congress being an advocacy organization, and me, who purports to be an advocate, it's probably a pretty good match."

Asked about initiatives he'd like to bring forward during his two-year tenure as president, Freiman immediately raised the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, an all-party body announced in June that will research the state of anti-Semitism in Canada.

"Congress will be very active in presenting views to the inquiry and helping them do its work. I think it's a very worthwhile endeavour," Freiman said, adding that Congress will continue to be active in combatting organizations "who see fit to bring forth… anti-Semitic resolutions. We will try to educate and dissuade organizations from going down a path that they probably don't understand in its full dimensions."

Freiman was referring to some of the anti-Israel resolutions that have been drawn up by CUPE Ontario over the last few years.

"There are bridges to be built with the labour movement in Canada… a group that has traditionally been friendly and had good relations with the Jewish community. In general, there is a challenge in engaging the left wing in a positive way," he said.

"The Jewish community, recently, has managed to cultivate much better relations with the centre-right and now needs to turn its attention to maintaining good relations with the centre-left as well."

Asked how this can be achieved, Freiman said it was imperative for Congress to "work with the rank and file" of the union as well as with its leaders to find "opportunities for positive dialogue."

Continued on page 7

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Volunteer seeks Israelis, Russians for Jewish veterans group

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

As a Hungarian-native who survived the Holocaust as a hidden child and fought in Israel's War of Independence in 1948 before settling in Canada, George Stern believes that all Jewish war veterans living in Canada should be recognized and organized.

Stern, who has been a volunteer and member of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada for about 10 years, has made it a personal mission to attract the hundreds of Israeli and Russian Jewish war veterans living in Canada to join his organization.

He said that when he first approached the group's board of directors and the president about including Jewish war veterans who fought for countries other than Canada, they were hesitant. But about a year ago, they agreed to reach out to Russian Jews who fought against the Nazis in World War II, as well as to Israeli Jews, who settled in Canada.

"They realized, that, first of all, Canadian veterans, unfortunately, every year there are less and less," Stern said, adding that if the organization wants to thrive 10 years from now, it needs to reach out to vets who fought in recent wars in Israel, such as the 1967 Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Stern said that within the Jewish War Veterans of Canada – which, according to its website, functions as a "Jewish veterans association with all rights to operate independently, to recognize and assist the State of Israel in any way possible"– there are many *machalniks*, volunteers who fought in Israel's War of Independence after serving in World War II.

"It's important for [Russians and Israelis] to join, because they don't have an organization at all. They have an organization for disabled soldiers, but it is only for the disabled. There is also an organization that sends gifts to [active Israeli] soldiers [the Association for Israeli Soldiers]," Stern said.

"I was searching for any office, anything for them, and there was no organization. That's why I wanted them to belong with us."

Stern, who is on the board of the ritual committee at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, has long been advocating for the recognition of Jewish war vets.

In November, his shul will be holding a special Shabbat service for Jewish war veterans for the fourth consecutive year, and this year, for the first time, it will specifically include Russian, as well as Israeli and Canadian, war vets.

"At the last Shabbat service at Beth Tikvah, there were 90-year old guys [veterans of World War II]. They came, thank God, and we were very glad, but every year there are less and less," he said.

Stern noted that a plan is in the works to build a monument in Toronto for Jewish Canadian veterans, whether they fought for Canada, Israel or Russia. (A $7-million project slated for Earl Bales Park and designed by renowned architect Daniel Libeskind was scrapped after veterans couldn't raise enough money. A scaled-down version is being envisioned as part of the redevelopment of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre.)

"We don't want to include just the names of the soldiers who died, but people who fought the wars against the Nazis and the Independence war of Israel and all the wars," he said.

"We have something in common together."

Stern said that an acquaintance of his, a Russian war veteran, told him that the absence of an organization for Russian Jewish vets makes him feel alone.

"They feel like they don't belong. Everybody feels like they want to belong," Stern said.

The annual fee to be a member of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada is $35.

For more information or to inquire about joining, call Stern at 416-223-7481, or e-mail g.stern@hotmail.com.

Hopes for dialogue with other groups

Continued from page 6

He added: "One has to be patient. But I'm a great believer that the truth does, in the end, win out. You simply have to be determined in making sure the truth is at the forefront."

When not wearing his professional hats, Freiman said he's an avid reader who also enjoys cooking and travelling.

"My secret guilty pleasure is in [doing] the *New York Times* crossword puzzle, in which I waste many, many hours," he admitted.

Freiman said that after his presidency is over, he hopes to have "consolidated the positive role of Congress as an advocate on behalf of Jewish interests… to have engaged constructively with groups both friendly and less friendly [to the community] to improve the relationships.

"I hope to have dialogued with other faith groups, including Muslim groups of goodwill, and I hope the themes that the parliamentary coalition on anti-Semitism is looking to explore, will have been explored both in that forum and in others. Because the fight against anti-Semitism is the most important thing we can be doing right now."

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Dr. Michael Dan comes from a very diverse background that includes neurosurgery, biotechnology, and organic farming.

Currently, Michael is working with Canada's First Nations to develop hydroelectric power and other sustainable energy projects.

A dedicated human rights and peace activist, Michael is a major benefactor of the University of Haifa and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and is a member of the Board of Directors of Canadian Friends of Haifa University.

To celebrate his marriage to Amira in 2006, Michael gave his bride the unique gift of an endowment fund in her name to provide Doctoral Fellowships for outstanding, underprivileged students at the University of Haifa.

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To join the community and support "Partners for Peace" contact:

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Jews, too, can live in undivided Jerusalem

The sharp and unabated criticism that the Obama administration has levelled against the presence of Jewish communities – or "settlements" as most people prefer to call them – beyond the Green Line of June 4, 1967, has been surprising as well as disappointing.

But the harsh, impatient castigation last week by the Americans of the proposed construction of some 20 residential units in the former Shepherd Hotel in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah – property that was legally purchased almost 25 years ago by Jews and approved for development by appropriate municipal authorities – was shocking and deeply disturbing.

The United States demanded of Israel that the project be stopped. For the Obama government views Jewish life in east Jerusalem as it does other "settlements" and outposts in the West Bank: it is illegal and must be frozen, if not dismantled.

The imperious, peremptory tone of the U.S. State Department's missive was unexpected by the Israeli government. To its credit, it reacted respectfully but forcefully to the American dictate. At the very first cabinet meeting last week after the diplomatic note was received in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet – and the world – that "Israel will not agree to edicts of this kind in east Jerusalem."

He elaborated.

"United Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish people in the State of Israel, and our sovereignty over the city is not subject to appeal… Jerusalem residents can purchase apartments anywhere in the city. This has been the policy of all Israeli governments. There is no ban on Arabs buying apartments in the west of the city, and there is no ban on Jews building or buying in the city's east. This is the policy of an open city. I can only describe to myself what would happen if someone would propose that Jews could not live in certain neighbourhoods in New York, London, Paris or Rome. There would certainly be a major international outcry. Accordingly, we cannot agree to such a decree in Jerusalem."

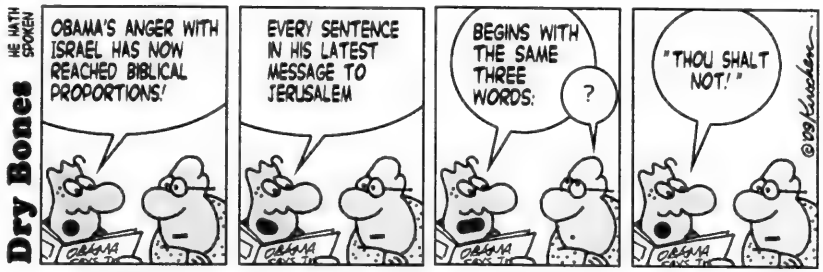
As long as all residents are compelled to comply with lawfully enacted rules, regulations, standards and bylaws concerning the acquisition and development of property, it is inconceivable that Jews would be prohibited from living in any part of Jerusalem.

The U.S. administration did not demand that Arabs desist from living in west Jerusalem. It confounds the mind and troubles the heart that it called for Jews to desist from living in east Jerusalem.

Presidential candidate Barack Obama said that Jerusalem should not be divided. His government's summary decree regarding the development of the Shepherd Hotel is inconsistent with his campaign rhetoric. More important, however, it is inconsistent with the justice and the right of Jews too to live in an undivided and united Jerusalem.

25 years ago in The CJN

Revulsion and fear greeted the election to the Knesset of Rabbi Meir Kahane, the founder of the often-violent Kach party who had stridently advocated the expulsion of Israel's Arab population. His status as a Knesset member meant he would be immune from criminal prosecution.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She'arim was terminated

With horror, I read the opening sentence of the article "Former She'arim students thrive in first year of special program" (*CJN*, Jewish Toronto, July 9). It stated that "After Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School decided to close a year ago…" She'arim did not *decide* to close. It was terminated, destroyed, decimated.

I am thankful that the three schools mentioned in the article placed a number of the former students of She'arim, and I am more than delighted to hear stories of successes. But do not dare to imply that the closing of the school solved the problem of the many children in our community whose needs are now not being met. Tell me where the children are who were not accepted into the programs of these three schools because their attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or Asperger's disorder or other issues were outside the narrow parameters of those delineated as acceptable for our Jewish schools. Tell me about all the children who are just now being assessed, who will have a very limited number of educational options open to them in the Jewish system. Tell me how long there will be programs at all in the schools, because they require a huge investment of time and services that does not contribute to the "bottom line." Tell me who mourns the loss of the possibilities that will never exist for these children. And tell me, convince me, that the Jewish institutions in control of their destinies have done right by these children.

I suppose that at present – until the next cycle of parents takes up arms against the system and pressures for more complete and encompassing services – what exists will have to do. But do not distort the truth about how the present situation came to be.

Dori Levine
Former principal of Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School
Toronto

* * *

QJC's reaction to Israel boycott

Lame, limp, lax… some words that come to mind when I read the reaction of Adam Atlas, Quebec Jewish Congress president, to the Centrale des syndicates du Quebec (CSQ)'s resolution to boycott Israel ("QJC questions union's endorsement of Israel boycott," *CJN*, July 16). He expressed "disappointment." The enemy takes great pleasure in the CSQ's stance, calling it "courageous and historic." But the QJC? Merely disappointed. What more can you expect from an organization that is ashamed to call itself Canadian. Another shame.

Sheila Mediena
Montreal

A chance to sing

The Jewish Susan Boyles are prohibited from singing in front of men ("Where are the Jewish Susan Boyles," *CJN*, July 16). As a result, they whisper in synagogue, fearful of sticking out if they do have strong voices. Furthermore, we have religious girls' schools full of wonderful sopranos and mezzo-sopranos who have never sung in their upper registers, because they have never had female models.

There is more to Torah scholarship than the Talmud. The Jewish Susan Boyle must be given the chance to sing her song or prayer, full voice, heartfelt, somewhere.

Mary Ruth Gehr
Montreal

* * *

Einstein and the Technion

The article "Einstein lives on – at Hebrew University" (*CJN*, July 9) stated that the president emeritus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Hanoch Gutfreund, "said that Einstein's most prominent association with the Zionist movement was his commitment to Hebrew U… In 1923, he travelled to what was then Palestine… to deliver a lecture on Mount Scopus, which is now part of the Hebrew U campus."

For historical purposes, it is worth noting that on the same trip, Einstein "visited Haifa in February 1923… [and] agreed to head the committee [the German committee for the Hebrew Techniah in Haifa]. Thus Dr. Albert Einstein became the first chairman of the first Technion Society in the world." (From *Technion – the Story of Israel's Institute of Technology* by Carl Alpert.)

The Technion formally commenced classes in Haifa in 1924. After emigrating to the United States, Einstein campaigned to establish the American Technion Society. Einstein, who had retained his interest in the Technion ever since he had been chairman of Technion's first society of friends in Germany more than 20 years earlier, sent frequent messages of encouragement.

In 1944, in a letter to the American Technion Society, he wrote: "It gives me real satisfaction to know that I took part in the founding of the society… I want to stress again that the Technion, as the only technological training and research institute in Palestine, is indispensable for the development of industry and every kind of practical work in the country. Its importance for the rehabilitation of our people after the war is obvious."

Gary Goldberg
National President
Canadian Technion Society

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Perspectives

Israel is no melting pot

By DONALD CARR

My wife, Judy, and I have just returned from our second visit this year to our small apartment in Jerusalem. I am again struck by the diversity of the inhabitants of this remarkable land.

No melting pot this – except perhaps in relation to the summer's incessant heat, which, as one ages, seems to take a greater toll on those of us from cooler climes. Indeed, for Canadians, Israel truly demonstrates "multiculturalism."

During our recent visit, the following vignettes made remarkable impressions.

Shula Cohen

We had our "usual" lunch with Shula Cohen. Now in her mid-90s, Shula came with her family as a very young child to Jerusalem from Argentina. As a teenager she was "married off" to a wealthy man many years her senior who lived in Beirut, Lebanon. There she became friendly with the young daughter of the Lebanese president and was a frequent visitor to the presidential palace.

In late 1947, during a reception at the palace for some dignitary, she overheard two Lebanese generals discussing an impending invasion of what was soon to be Israel. Panic-stricken, for both her parents and siblings, as well as for the Jewish community, she found a way to secret a letter, written in "girl-guide" lemon-juice invisible ink, to the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, relating what she had heard.

That letter was the genesis of a career for Shula as one of Israel's most important spies. Over several years during the 1950s, while bearing seven children, she transmitted important information, gleaned from her high contacts in Lebanon. Perhaps more importantly (on a direct human level), during that period, she single-handedly engineered the escape of countless Jews from Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, through Lebanon, into Israel. Her involvement included not just the planning, but the much more dangerous activity of actually leading the way, through Lebanon, to safety.

Captured, she spent seven years in a Syrian-administered Lebanese prison, where she was subjected to relentless torture. This included not just beatings which resulted in life-long scars, but the removal of all of her fingernails and toenails.

In 1967, along with a captured Israeli pilot, she was exchanged for hundreds of Lebanese and Syrian soldiers then in Israeli hands.

Widowed for many years, Shula now lives a quiet life alone, in a walk-up third-floor apartment in Jerusalem, with failing eyesight but a keen mind, which leads her to discuss, with great insight, whatever subjects one may care to raise with her.

Mordechai Limon

The first commander of Israel's navy, Mordechai Limon, recently died. His friend of many years, Israeli President Shimon Peres, spoke at his funeral. In addition to the serious comments about the deceased, the president related one or two lighter moments of his career. Among them was the occasion of a reception in London, given by the British military.

Several retired British generals, naval and air officers were invited. The story was told that when one of the older, retired generals, who was a little hard of hearing, was introduced to Admiral Limon, he asked "What country did you say you were from?" "Israel" was the response. "Never heard of it" said the general. The admiral said, "You probably remember it as 'Palestine,'" "Oh!" said the general. "Are those blasted Jews still giving you trouble?"

Shai Fredo

Sitting with us at a dinner, part of the annual conference of Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal, was Shai Fredo. Tall, extremely handsome, speaking English and Hebrew with ease, this young performer/actor had just returned from New York, where he had an engagement for a couple of weeks.

On being asked, he related how he had come to Israel.

His 92-year-old widowed grandfather, the patriarch of the family, had long wanted to make aliyah. Despite all obstacles, in 1982, he insisted that he, Shai's father and mother and their 12 children delay no longer. They set out on foot from their village in Ethiopia. They walked for months until they reached Sudan. There, they were obliged to stay in a refugee camp for more than a year, in miserable conditions. However, the ordeal was too much for his grandfather, and he died. It was a great blow to Shai, who had idolized his grandfather and realized that he had never realized his dream. After several more delays, along with so many other Ethiopian Jews, the bereft family finally arrived in Israel.

Shai is now a much sought-after, consummate actor-dancer, performing his one-man shows on television and on the stage. He is a living example of what the return to Zion means, regardless of place of birth, colour, language or ethnic tradition.

Prof. Yariv Ben-Eliezer

Recently we had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Yariv Ben-Eliezer, director of media studies at the prestigious Interdisciplinary Centre in Herzliya. The person who introduced him made a reference to the fact that Ben-Eliezer had run several election campaigns for Shimon Peres. However, Ben-Eliezer interrupted the introducer by saying loudly, "He didn't win any of them!"

We were in founding Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion's original Tel Aviv home, which has been maintained exactly as it was when he and his wife left for Sde Boker to spend his final years as a kibbutz member. A grandson of Ben-Gurion, Ben-Eliezer told delightful stories about growing up with that great man of history, his *saba* (grandfather).

When asked about the much-criticized nature of Israel's *hasbara* (foreign information service), he was very succinct.

He believes that it's futile to attempt to demonstrate to the world the many positive facets of Israel and how there are, for example, much-vaunted "shared values" with other democracies.

Rather, he believes that there should be direct approaches to various groupings in the rest of the world, contrasting clearly the difference between the treatment of those groups in Israel and in the Muslim Arab world.

"Ask the gays, how they would exist in a Muslim country".

"Tell those who demonstrate for women's rights what the role of women is in Arab countries."

"Ask those who trumpet what they believe to be human rights what they can expect from Hamas or the Palestinian Authority."

"Remind the blacks of North America about who brought their forbears to the slave ships from Africa and who still trade in human lives. It was and is the Arabs!"

A very forthright approach!

Zaki Shayou

Amigour is the building arm of the Jewish Agency, which acts as agent for UIA Federations Canada in carrying out charitable activities in Israel.

One attractive program is the operation of assisted-living accommodations for the aged who can't afford the high rents charged in the private sector.

The happy, tearful first meeting between Judy Feld Carr and Zaki Shayou.
[Photos courtesy of Keren Hayesod and the Jewish Agency for Israel]

In such a facility in Bat Yam, adjacent to Tel Aviv, there are many survivors of the Shoah. Unlike the majority of such survivors, these men and women lived in the former Soviet Union. They suffered not only the horrors of the Nazi invasion, but also harsh years under Communist rule. Their new home is modern, their apartments are furnished with updated fixtures and they enjoy structured activities to keep their minds and bodies active.

We joined a group of attendees of the World Conference of Keren Hayesod who visited the Bat Yam home, as part of a series of visits to see how charitable dollars are being spent.

As a welcome to the visitors, the residents' choir gave a short concert. The men wore tuxedos. The women showed off their gowns. One female member of the choir even had a beribboned, colourful, folk bonnet from her old area of Russia. All seemed to have trained voices. All had greying hair. Their performance of Russian and Yiddish folk songs, sung with such joy and concentration, brought tears to the eyes of audience members.

The director of the residence then introduced three residents.

First was the veteran battle-tried officer of the Red Army of World War II who had also been a professor. As his story was told, he stood stiffly to attention, his blazer festooned with shining medals, from top to bottom, a proud smile on his face.

Second was a striking lady, confined to a wheelchair. Her teenage story of escaping a locked building deliberately put to the fire by the Nazis, her activities with the Russian partisans, whom she then joined and her escapades in attacking German camps and installations, until the Red Army recovered lost Russian territory, sounded like the script for a Hollywood film. However, it was very real.

The director then called upon a third resident to tell his own story. Zaki, 67 years old, described his four years in a Syrian prison in Aleppo. Surviving unimaginable conditions, he was fiercely tortured in a variety of ways, almost daily. His crime? He was a Jew.

Ultimately a broken man, he was released. He was miraculously enabled to leave Syria and reach Israel. He raised his voice and with tearful eyes and reddened face he proclaimed that here – Eretz Yisrael – was the only place for a Jew to live!

I realized that my wife, Judy, sitting next to me, was not only listening attentively, but was quite agitated. "What year did Zaki leave prison and Syria?" "Nineteen-eighty." "What is Zaki's surname?" "Shayou." "Were you in prison with Mamroud?" Zaki's eyes widened as he nodded. "Do you know a 'Mrs. Judy'?" I asked. The eyes widened more. "This," I said, pointing to my wife, "is 'Mrs. Judy.'"

With tears streaming down his face, Zaki, leaped forward and embraced Judy in a gigantic bear hug, kissing her and crying "Todah! Todah! Todah! Mrs. Judy got me out!"

Judy, through her own tears, only exclaimed "I never knew what happened to you!"

The hall was pandemonium, as residents and guests alike stood up, applauded and cried. Dumbfounded, the director asked Judy to tell everyone what the fuss was all about, and she briefly described her secret rescue of the largest part of the Jewish population of Syria over many years.

As we later left the Bat Yam residence, Judy was presented with a Shabbat and Yom Tov challah cover and a matzah cover for Pesach, both having been made and meticulously embroidered by residents.

Only by Jews can these precious moments be lived, for only to Jews can these things happen.

Donald Carr is president of The Canadian Jewish News.

Opinions

The 18th Maccabiah Games and beyond

The inaugural Maccabiah Games took place in 1932 on the 1,800th anniversary of the Bar Kochba revolt. That uprising, which kept the ruling Roman legions at bay for almost three years and restored Jewish sovereignty to Judea for all of that period, is a seminal event in Jewish history. The Games themselves – their name derived from the Maccabees, who also revolted successfully, in their time against persecution by the Hellenist Seleucids – have come to reflect Jewish courage and strength. So, with the dual symbolism of a history of survival against seemingly insurmountable odds and the hallowed, often mystical, significance of "chai" (life) as the backdrop, the 18th rendition of the modern Maccabiah got under way in mid-July.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

That this sports festival is ongoing and always growing – this year hosting an estimated 7,000 athletes from 56 countries – is in itself a triumph. But it's questionable whether such growth can be sustained. Busing participants from accommodation centres to their sports venues creates special challenges in a country where traffic gridlock is the norm rather than the exception, while trying to find suitable housing for so many athletes seems to be an exercise in perpetual futility. This year, some of the junior athletes (and their parents) – Canadians included – were especially displeased about where their teams had to stay.

But beyond such logistical aggravations, it's the spiralling cost of the Games that most urgently requires attention. Unless the Maccabi World Union and its confederations around the world are able to both control their expenses and improve their fundraising, the viability of future Maccabiah Games may be at risk. What is clear, meanwhile, is that the financial burden on individual athletes has become untenable.

A clearer focus on what the Maccabiah is, and what it's not, is also needed. Though still referred to as the "Jewish Olympics," the reality is that very few world-class Jewish athletes remain attracted to the Games. Also, the quality of competition in some events has not come up to expectation. Consequently, rather than promoting itself as something it may not be, the Maccabi movement might get more mileage out of even more strongly promoting the centrality of Israel and facilitating the connectedness of young Jewish athletes to the Jewish state and its people – sentiments that are already at the core of its mission.

Merging the values of youth and sport and Jewish identity to more creatively define the Maccabi brand may turn out to be the formula that's needed to attract both athletes and funding for the next Maccabiah and those that come after it.

Haredi-secular gulf still wide in Jerusalem

Despite its image of insularity, recently a modicum of change has occurred in Jerusalem's haredi community. Haredim have generally solved their problems by looking inward, but some are beginning to recognize they need help from outside professionals. Cases of child abuse, family violence and pedophilia are now more frequently dealt with by the city's social services, police and courts and not only by the community's rabbis.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

Many haredi women are joining the workforce after receiving vocational training and not subsisting solely on the handouts their husbands collect as yeshiva students. Haredi websites abound, catering to the community's needs, but also opening it to the outside world.

And until recently, almost all haredi young men took advantage of an exemption from military service based on the presumption they're engrossed in Torah study. It's a source of tremendous resentment toward haredim by the general Israeli public. Several years ago, the Defence Ministry, the army and some rabbis came together to form a new military unit that allows young haredi men who've left Torah study to enlist without compromising their religious way of life. No women serve in this unit and its soldiers get glatt kosher food. The initial pilot project was deemed a success, and the unit was recently upgraded to a full-fledged battalion, named Netzer Yehuda, tasked with containing terrorism and unrest in the Jenin district of the West Bank. One-third of its soldiers are haredi, and some 2,500 men have joined its ranks.

Despite these positive signs, some things never change. Nary a year goes by without often-violent protests by haredim. Pretexts have included the possibility of finding ancient Jewish graves in planned road extensions, Shabbat traffic on roads adjacent to haredi neighbourhoods, a store selling chametz on Pesach and the gay pride parade.

In June, Jerusalem's newly elected secular mayor's decision to open a municipal parking lot situated near the Old City, and not far from Mea Shearim, on Saturdays sparked protests. The move addressed the genuine need of thousands of tourists and Israelis who flock to the city every Shabbat.

More recently, rioting ensued after police, acting on information from doctors at Hadassah Medical Center, detained a pregnant haredi mother of four suspected of having starved one of her children, a three-year-old, who's now in serious condition at Hadassah. The mother, who refused to co-operate with police, apparently suffers from "Munchausen's syndrome by proxy" a psychiatric disorder that causes sufferers to abuse others, usually children, to draw attention or sympathy to themselves.

In both cases, the haredim responded violently. Men lay before vehicles entering the parking lot. Stones and dirtied diapers were thrown at passing vehicles. Intersections were blocked. Police officers were called Nazis. They and municipal employees were attacked. Doctors and social workers were harassed and threatened. Traffic lights were destroyed and hundreds of communal garbage bins were torched.

The police officer in charge of the haredi mother's investigation likened the actions of some of her associates to those of underworld criminal gangs. His comments echoed apprehensions that not enough is being done to enforce the rule of law among haredim.

According to the Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies (JIIS), at the end of 2007, there were 150,000 haredim living in Jerusalem, comprising 30 per cent of its Jews. Ever-growing, the haredi community makes continued inroads into previously non-haredi neighbourhoods, changing the city's demographics. If it weren't for young haredim moving to places such as Betar Illit and Modiin Illit (both just over the Green Line in the West Bank) or Ramat Bet Shemesh in search of cheaper housing, their numbers in Jerusalem would be more dramatic. And if U.S. President Barack Obama gets his way and building in all Israeli West Bank settlements is frozen, that drama might yet unfold. JIIS projects that without internal migration, by 2020, 41 per cent of Jerusalem's Jews will be haredim.

So is there a future for a pluralistic Jerusalem? I can't say for certain, but as long as enough like-minded people are willing to actively strive for it, there's hope. That endeavour can be multi-faceted and include counter-demonstrations, solid educational institutions, industry and a vibrant cultural milieu.

During the latest spate of haredi rioting, thousands enjoyed 10 fabulous days of cinema at the 26th Jerusalem International Film Festival. It was our expression of what this city is also about.

York U and HRW: naming and shaming

Is the political war to demonize Israel losing ground? Are some of the organizations and participants, particularly Jewish academics, starting to understand that they were wrong or exploited?

It's far too early to celebrate a return to sanity, but the exposure of Human Rights Watch's (HRW) illicit romance with Saudi Arabia and the widespread ridicule of York University's recent anti-Israel conference do suggest that some cleansing and moral restoration has begun.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

HRW, which has an office and donors in Toronto, has led in the exploitation of human rights to attack Israel for the past decade. The organization was founded as Helsinki Watch in the late 1970s by Robert Bernstein in order to campaign for the release of prisoners of conscience, particularly Soviet Jews. But in the early 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet empire, the group and its leaders lost their moral compass.

To keep the money flowing and maintain political influence and ready access to the media, HRW's leaders found another mission as the arbiters (along with London-based Amnesty International) of international law in different contexts, including military invasions, guerrilla wars and ethno-national conflicts.

And few have noticed that these organizations had no professional expertise to deal with complex issues. The judgments of HRW and Amnesty have been accepted at face value, including by the CBC. (On the July 1 edition of CBC Radio's *As it Happens*, an HRW official received seven minutes to indict Israel for "war crimes" in Gaza. Interviewer Barbara Budd didn't question Marc Garlasco's limited credentials or his bias. Reuters news agency, to its credit, exposed the contradictions and pseudo-technical analysis.)

For HRW, Israel-bashing has been very profitable – budgets have grown and officials are welcomed in United Nations human rights organizations chaired by Iran and Libya. Their constant anti-Israel condemnations, dressed up as "research reports," provide automatic media access and prestige.

But like other power brokers, HRW officials became arrogant and have now been caught in a corruption scandal, following a fundraising dinner in Saudi Arabia in which the main dish was HRW's record of Israel-bashing. (Its Jewish executive director, Ken Roth, did not participate, and Sarah Leah Whitson, director of HRW's Middle East and North Africa division, has not revealed whether she wore a veil or was allowed to drive while in the country.) This escapade highlighted HRW's moral failure, leading to a closer examination of its history of bias and methodological manipulation. In response, HRW officials covered up the facts, claiming that they met with private Saudi citizens who were interested in human rights in their own country, and were not focused on Israel. But uncomfortable donors weren't buying this, and one of the guests was revealed to be a member of the Shura council. The probe grew to include all of HRW's Middle East activities, and the group is likely to undergo a total reorganization and change in officials, particularly for the Middle East, in order to regain its lost moral credibility.

Similarly, York University's "one state" conference, which took place at the end of June, led to the exposure of this gross abuse of the academic framework to promote hard-core Israel-bashing. In this case as well, the language of human rights was abused, and like HRW, those responsible tried to cover up the evidence, digging themselves in deeper. Detailed academic reports (in contrast to the emotional and counterproductive denunciations by some opponents) put faculty organizers and university administrators on the defensive.

Prof. Naama Carmi, a conference participant from Haifa University, wrote a sharp critique in the *Toronto Star*, and she expanded it in her blog, condemning the "ostensibly academic conference" in which she said Jews were "silenced and marginalized." (Prof. Carmi is on the left of the political spectrum and was once active in a number of Israeli groups claiming to promote human rights.) Like HRW, York's credibility will only recover when the officials responsible for this fiasco are no longer in positions to do further damage.

These are only two examples out of dozens, but they're important. Both show that carefully considered strategies exposing the false rhetoric of peace and human rights can unmask those responsible for these abuses in powerful institutions.

The Kirshner File

Felix Mendelssohn spoke to and from the heart

Felix Mendelssohn lifts the spirit and sends it soaring.

Mendelssohn's more than 700 compositions – symphonies, concertos, chamber music, violin and piano pieces, oratorios and songs – endure and inspire. The *Italian Symphony*, the *Reformation*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the *Violin Concerto in E minor*, the *Wedding March* and *Songs without Words*, among others, will doubtless delight audiences for centuries to come and solidify Mendelssohn's reputation as one of the finest composers of the Romantic era.

Sheldon Kirshner in Germany

Influenced by Mozart, Bach and Beethoven, Mendelssohn carved out a niche not only as a composer but also as a pianist and conductor, a feat few of his peers could match.

Mendelssohn was born in the German city of Hamburg 200 years ago this year, and his jubilee will be marked by a festival in Leipzig from Aug. 21 to Sept. 9.

Leipzig, in eastern Germany, was where he died on Nov. 4, 1847, and where a museum, the only one of its kind in the world, commemorates his extraordinary life.

Mendelssohn Haus, at 12 Goldschmidstrasse, has been preserved as his last private residence. He and his family lived here from 1845 until his untimely death at the shockingly young age of 38. Last year, 30,000 tourists, mainly Germans but also Japanese and Israelis, visited the museum.

Close to the Gewandhaus concert hall, of which he was director of music, the museum is housed in a renovated 19th-century building with creaking hardwood floors and pale green walls in which the artifacts of his career are permanently displayed.

As you wander through the building, which was built in 1843, refurbished in the 1870s and magically transformed into a museum 12 years ago, the precious objects associated with Mendelssohn come into view: the original furniture, including an upholstered sofa and matching five chairs. The grand piano, manufactured in Vienna around 1830, on which he practised. The original sheets of music he perused. A lock of his hair under glass. Portraits of Mendelssohn. Skilful watercolours of idyllic Swiss scenery painted by Mendelssohn himself on the cusp of death.

The composer – the son of a Jewish banker and the grandson of the eminent Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn – moved into this house, designed in the style of late classicism, in August 1845, accompanied by his French wife, Cecile Jeanrenaud, and their four children, Karl, Marie, Paul and Felix.

Mendelssohn's friend and fellow musician, Louis Spohr, was impressed by their first-storey flat: "Its furnishings and overall impression creates an atmosphere of luxury and wealth, but also of... very charming unpretentiousness."

A portrait of Felix Mendelssohn in Mendelessohn Haus [Sheldon Kirshner photos]

After Mendelssohn passed away, apparently heartbroken by the death of his sister and soulmate, Fanny, his wife left 12 Goldschmidstrasse, her children in tow, and the building was coverted into a paint factory. In 1867, a sheet music publisher rented the first floor, and a decade later, a merchant bought the building.

From the 1920s onward, offices, boarding rooms and a photography lab, which damaged the structure, filled the premises.

In 1991, a year after Germany was reunified and the Communist regime in the eastern part of the country fell, Kurt Masur, the 11th music director of the Gewandhaus, founded an association to perpetuate Mendelssohn's legacy.

By then, Mendelssohn's stock had been in eclipse for decades, undermined by changing musical tastes and anti-Semitism.

Mendelssohn and his three siblings were baptized as Christians in 1816 after their father, Abraham, renounced Judaism and assumed the surname of Bartholdy.

Like Heinrich Heine, the great German-Jewish poet, Mendelssohn's father believed that Christianity would be his family's "admission ticket" to European culture.

A child protégé, Mendelssohn debuted as a pianist in 1818 and composed his first work in 1820. At 15, he wrote his first symphony for full orchestra. In 1829, he arranged and conducted a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, the first one since his death in 1750, and thus played an integral role in reviving his music.

After visiting Britain, which inspired the *Scottish Symphony* and the *Hebrides Overture*, he was appointed director of music at the Gewandhaus, which is currently led by Riccardo Chailly.

Jurgen Ernst, the director of Mendelssohn Haus

Two years later, in 1837, he got married. His wife was the daughter of a Huguenot pastor.

Mendelssohn, having served as Kapellmeister in Prussia's royal court, founded the Leipzig Conservatory in 1843, the first such institution in the German lands.

Leipzig, in the 19th century, was a city of rare musical accomplishment. Bach and Robert Schumann resided here and Richard Wagner was born here. Leipzig was also the home of the famous St. Thomas Boys Choir.

Eight months after conducting his last concert at the Gewandhaus and resigning from his position at the conservatory, he died. His funeral took place in Leipzig. He was buried in the Trinity Cemetery in Berlin.

Mendelssohn's jealous rival, Wagner, who frequently accused Jews of being a harmful and foreign element in German society, published a scurrilous pamphlet, *Jewishness in Music*, after his death.

Foreshadowing Nazi propaganda, he claimed that Jewish composers were only capable of producing shallow and artificial works because they had no real connection to genuine German culture.

By no coincidence, Adolf Hitler was Wagner's admirer. During the Nazi era, Mendelssohn's compositions were banished from the public domain and his statue in front of the Gewandhaus was demolished, prompting the resignation of Leipzig's mayor.

Some of Mendelssohn's descendants, all Christians, were compelled to leave Germany as Nazi anti-Semitism intensified.

Still others, like the Prussian aristocrat Jurgen von Schwerin, whose maternal grandfather was a Mendelssohn Bartholdy, were permitted to remain in Germany. Today, the descendants of Felix and his brother, Paul, supposedly live in Berlin under different names.

Jurgen Ernst, the director of Mendelssohn Haus, explained that the decline of Mendelssohn's reputation in Germany was due not only to Wagner's malicious anti-Semitic broadside.

As he put it, "At the end of the 19th century, Romanticism went out of style. Schumann was affected by this development, too. Yet Mendelssohn was not forgotten, especially in Britain."

The Mendelssohn renaissance was spearheaded by Masur, who felt that he had been unjustly relegated to the shadows. He created the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation to save his last residence in Leipzig from further decay and raise funds for a thorough renovation. Ernst, a 54-year-old engineer and stage craftsman who has worked for the Leipzig Opera, was hired as a fundraiser. He convinced private donors, as well as municipal, state and federal governments, to contribute to the project. Extensive renovations were undertaken. Mendelssohn Haus, with its modest gardens shaded by chestnut trees, was officially inaugurated in 1997, on the 150th anniversary of his death.

Apart from Mendelssohn Haus, the Mendelssohn Project, based in the United States, also fosters appreciation for this immensely gifted and influential figure.

"Mendelssohn was a genius and a perfect stylist," said Ernst. "He was a master of harmony and melody. He spoke to and from the heart."

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Young artists featured in fundraiser for Zareinu

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

To celebrate their philosophy that all children are valuable members of the community, two non-profit groups of young people recently organized a fundraiser of collaborative art, music, spoken word and visual experiences, in support of the Zareinu Educational Centre.

The Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) and the Birthright Israel Alumni Community (BAC) held the Revelations Art Show July 12 at the Lonsdale Gallery in Toronto, showcasing the work of nine young Jewish artists who were eager to support Zareinu, a Jewish day school and treatment centre for children with physical and developmental challenges.

The idea for Revelations came from Lindsay Malet, a JUMP and Birthright participant who has a passion for the arts. Malet took the initiative to create the event last year to raise funds and awareness for Save a Child's Heart, a non-profit humanitarian project that strives to improve the quality of pediatric cardiac care for children from developing countries who suffer from heart disease.

"Last year's show involved a silent auction to raise money for the organization," Malet said. "This year, we chose a new recipient and changed the theme. We've gotten a lot more public attention and really feel that we've started a good trend."

Melanie Cheskes stands beside one of her paintings. [Rachel Albert photo]

Shoshana Allen, JUMP's program and marketing manager, said the first art show was such a success that they did not want to limit their fundraising to just one charity.

"All the proceeds from this year's show will be going to UJA [Federation of Greater Toronto] in direct support of Zareinu... an incredible cause that also represents the future of our community. We know the capacity of this demographic, and JUMP and BAC aim to continually expose [people] to organizations that need their support," she said.

"Although JUMP and BAC are both non-profits, our goal is to inspire our demographic and help them understand the Jewish idea of tikkun olam. To see people enjoying themselves, meeting other young professionals and supporting a cause is a really exciting environment to be in."

Allen said while Revelations is a display of young talent, it is also an expression of common interest in giving back to the Jewish community. Since this year's show was built from the momentum of last year's event, JUMP had many more artist applicants to consider before selecting the nine they featured. In the end, Allen said JUMP and BAC were thrilled with their decisions.

"They are all so incredibly talented in their own right. You can see their passion for their work in their pieces and that they are all on the verge of something huge. It's a great feeling to be in a room with that energy. It represents all of us at JUMP and BAC – passionate and on the verge of something much bigger than the events we put on."

Dina Taub, whose acrylic paintings examine energy in nature, was one of the artists whose works were displayed at the show. She has attended many JUMP events and volunteered at Zareinu, which made her an obvious candidate.

"I feel very special, privileged and honoured to be part of Revelations," Taub said. "Many artists in their 20s and 30s have felt isolated in this city, and this show meets a need in exposing our talents and abilities."

Melanie Cheskes, an artist who has painted in Toronto and Jerusalem, said she enjoys exploring the connection between Jewish youth and Israel. She said her pieces are usually political, and those seen at the show portrayed friends who served in the Israeli army and now find peace and solace in the country's natural springs.

"It's important to support younger, emerging artists," Cheskes said. "Revelations has made it easy for us to showcase our work in a great gallery for a great cause."

Other artists included Clare Nisker, who travelled to exotic destinations to gain perspective for her pieces; Calvin Benchimol, a photographer who captured Israel's beauty through his lens; Jeanne Louise Gordon, whose brightly coloured abstract paintings lit up the room; Karen Schmerler, whose *Unconditional*, a painting of a mother and child embracing, touched many; Dara Alter, whose painting of the Western Wall was spiritually uplifting; Yoav Kogan, who exhibited his red and black series of painted hands; and Dalia Heymann, a former industrial design student who transformed old chairs into functional and innovative objects.

Perhaps the most powerful art at the show, however, was in spoken word format – an excerpt read by Sara Farb from a play she wrote about her sister, Rebecca. Farb's piece could not have been more appropriate, as Rebecca was once a student at Zareinu.

Correction

A reference to the Canada-Israel Industrial Research & Development Foundation (CIIRDF) in the story "Cdn. astronaut visits Ramon's family" (*CJN*, July 2) suggested that the foundation was formed in 2004. In fact, the CIIRDF was established by bilateral agreement of the governments of Canada and Israel in 1994 to promote collaborative R&D between firms in the two countries.

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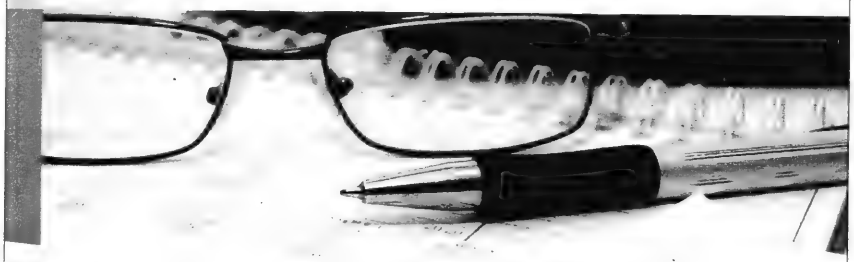

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Greater Toronto Area

TEARS AND LAUGHTER AT ALIYAH CEREMONY

In the picture on the left, Liane Sela, right, shlichat aliyah of the Jewish Agency in Canada, hugs Elizabeth Beldeb at a recent ceremony at Pearson International Airport in Toronto to wish bon voyage and *hazlachah rabah* to a group of 50 individuals making aliyah. Beldeb, her husband, Shlomo, and their four children were among the group that departed for Israel. The accompanying photo shows the emotion of saying *l'hitraot* to a loved one. The ceremony was sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Nefesh B'Nefesh, El Al and the Israeli consulate.

Coordinator, Committee for Yiddish

Through educational, cultural and engagement programs, the Committee for Yiddish, National Centre for Jewish Heritage, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, fosters and promotes Yiddish language and culture as a vibrant part of contemporary Jewish life and as a vital link between the Jewish past and future.

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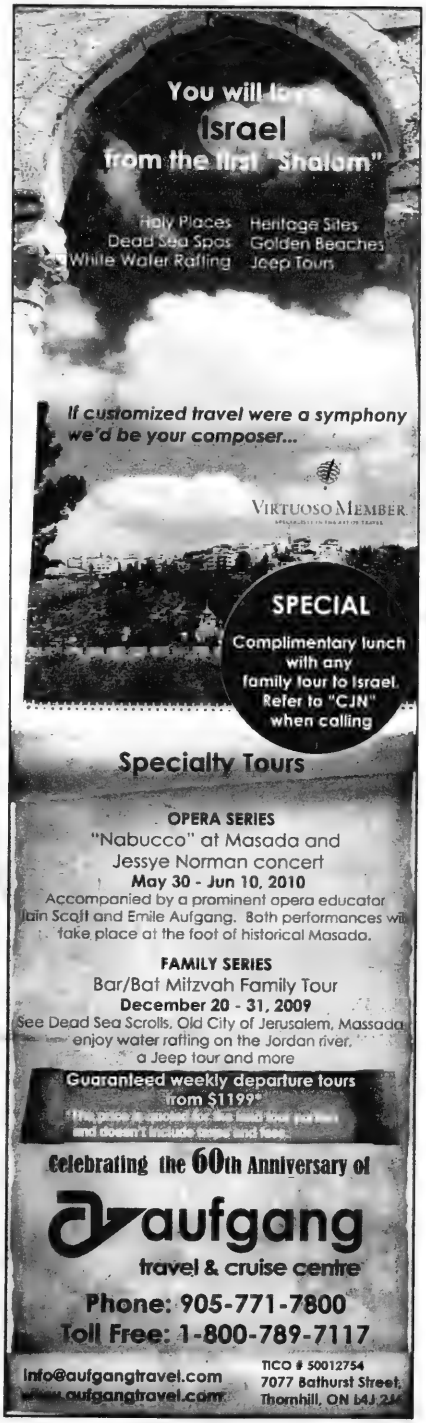
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Young Jews flee Venezuela for Canada

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

If you'd asked Jonathan and Adriana Rosemberg five years ago whether they'd be seeking refuge in Toronto, the Venezuelan couple would have responded incredulously.

Yet that's exactly what they're doing now, having fled Caracas for Toronto last month to escape what they say is a growing surge of unbearable anti-Semitism in their homeland.

Caracas, the capital, is home to the majority of Venezuela's Jews.

"Anti-Semitism has become socially acceptable in Venezuela now. It's a normal occurrence," Jonathan, 30, told *The CJN* in a recent interview at the couple's hastily rented apartment in Toronto.

"In Venezuela, [Jews] live in homes that are prisons with fences. You carry guns everywhere. We didn't want to live like that anymore," he said.

Both have left family and friends behind, and hope they can convince their relatives to escape what they describe as a "very unsafe situation for Jews" under Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's radical, socialist regime.

According to world Jewish population counts compiled by the American Jewish Committee, the Venezuelan Jewish community numbered slightly more than 15,000 in 2006.

It's likely that number has dropped dramatically since that time, the Rosembergs believe.

"At least 80 per cent of my Jewish friends and family have left Venezuela," Jonathan said. "Chavez has created [a society] that lives in ignorance and fear. Now you hear anti-Semitism on [national] radio. They are officially [quoting] from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as 'facts' about Jews. 'Zionist' is a word you can barely use in Venezuela anymore."

It's a situation that is eerily reminiscent of German Jewry's reaction to the rise of Nazism, the Rosembergs said, referring to how many Jews chose to flee Germany in the years preceding the Holocaust.

Additionally, according to popular rumour spreading throughout Venezuela, Chavez is flirting with conversion to Islam, the Rosembergs said.

In recent years, Chavez has befriended Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, praised Hezbollah during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War and has pledged monetary support for Iran's nascent nuclear program.

It's now widely believed that Hezbollah – the Iranian-backed terrorist organization – has established a base of operations in Venezuela.

"There's now a direct flight between Tehran and Caracas," Jonathan said.

Citing a rash of attacks on synagogues and Jewish establishments over the last few years, the Rosembergs accused the Venezuelan government of complicity in these events, and of using them to obtain and build a registry of Jews for their own nefarious reasons.

"I had a lot of friends back home who aren't Jewish, and [now] they reject you due to stereotyping," Adriana said, with Jonathan translating from Spanish.

The couple came to Canada on student visas, but hope to settle here permanently.

Adriana, 27, a Spanish-language communications specialist by profession, is enrolled at the University of Toronto in English language courses in order to facilitate a career, if she is able to remain in the country.

For his part, Jonathan is fluent in English, having obtained a bachelor's degree in political science from McGill University during a four-year stay in Montreal. He's starting this fall at the George Brown College Chef School.

Though he comes from a well-established family – the Rosembergs have lived in Venezuela since the early 1950s, he said – Jonathan said Chavez encourages the populace to scorn the rich, particularly wealthy Jews.

"Chavez is giving people permission to be violent," he said, noting that things became so bad for him at one point, he could only leave his home accompanied by bodyguards to feel any semblance of safety, something that would have been unthinkable to him just a few years ago.

Last year, while living in an apartment complex in Caracas, Adriana and Jonathan said they were also subjected to frequent anti-Semitic graffiti on their building, such as "Jews go home" and "Zionist=Nazi."

Being proud Jews and politically active, the Rosembergs said they often participated in rallies back home against Chavez's policies, braving rubber bullets and tear gas from Venezuelan police.

"Venezuela is a beautiful country, don't get me wrong. Up until a few years ago, the people were the nicest. Then, everything changed," Jonathan said.

The Rosembergs also allege that Venezuela's Jewish lay leadership has not been helpful to the country's community, as they've opted for a more appeasing approach to dealing with Chavez and anti-Semitic activity.

In May, Jewish members of the U.S. Congress opposed a resolution expressing solidarity with the Jewish community in Venezuela at the behest of the Confederation of Israelite Associations of Venezuela (CAIV), the country's main umbrella group of Jewish organizations.

In a phone interview with *JTA* at the time, Fred Pressner, a past president of CAIV, emphasized that the biggest problem with the resolution was its "bad timing."

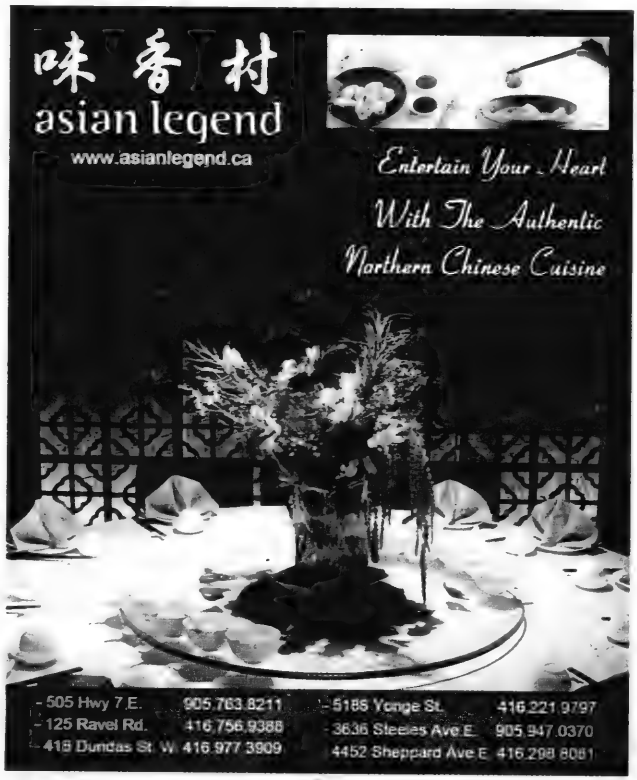
"All of our institutions are protected by the police – we cannot complain about that," Pressner said, noting that "the government reacted well" to the earlier attacks. He added that the Jewish community had recently had some "informal communications with some top level officials of the government."

However, allegations of the Chavez regime's anti-Semitism won't go away.

Among other anti-Semitic influences, the U.S. Anti-Defamation League cites Norberto Ceresole, an Argentine political scientist and Holocaust denier, as one of Chavez's ideological mentors. Ceresole wrote a book titled *Caudillo, Ejercito, Pueblo* (Leader, Army, People) about the Chavez revolution. Its introductory chapter is titled, "The Jewish question and the State of Israel."

"There's no question Chavez will continue to harass the Jewish community," Jonathan said.

Continuerd on page 18



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Blind golfer raises awareness for Beit Halochem

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

At 57, Zohar Sharon claims to have lost some of the zeal and competitive fire that characterized his earlier years in golf – sort of.

The father of a one-year-old boy, he says his interest in the sport is not what it once was, and he plans to spend more time with his son and grandchild (with another on the way) by cutting back on his time roaming the globe to play in tournaments and exhibitions.

But when asked whether that means he's ready to relinquish his title as world's best blind golfer, he responds quickly: "Never."

"He will be Number 1 until he retires," Sharon said through an interpreter.

By virtue of dominating the International Blind Golf Championships – he won the title in Northern Ireland last year by six strokes – Sharon can lay claim to the designation of best blind golfer in the world.

Truth be told, he's not bad playing against sighted golfers. When he's on his game, he shoots around 80. When his back is acting up, or if conditions are windy or his right-hand man and caddy, Shimshon Levy, is off his game, his score shoots up to 100 or more.

Zohar was in Toronto recently as a guest of Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel, the volunteer-backed organization that supports a variety of rehabilitation and cultural services to soldiers who have been injured in the service of their country.

Sharon is one of those veterans– he lost his sight in a chemical incident some 30 years ago.

During his one-week sojourn in Toronto, he was the main draw at a fundraising tournament at Angus Glen Golf Club, site of the 2007 Canadian Open.

The golf day at Angus Glen has become a regular event on the Beit Halochem Canada's calendar, said Lisa Levy, the organization's executive director.

This year, 124 people participated, with an estimated $60,000 raised for rehabilitation equipment.

"Zohar is an important part of raising awareness of how people with disabilities can participate in regular activities, rehabilitate and move on," she said.

Accompanied by his constant companion, Levy, and his seeing-eye dog, Sharon demonstrates golf skills that sighted players can only dream of.

Four years ago, while playing a round at Maple Downs, he stunned observers, including this reporter, by scoring a two under par eagle on the 387-yard par-4 third hole.

Incredibly, he's done even better than a "2" on his scorecard. Sharon has five holes-in-one to his credit, including two at tournaments in Boca Raton, Fla., and Palm Springs, Calif., and three at his home course in Caesarea.

Two of those aces were shot in the same game, he said.

Sharon wouldn't be able to succeed as he has without Levy, who tees up Sharon's balls, describes the hole, provides yardage, grounds his club behind the ball and provides all the other information that sighted golfers take in at a glance.

Sharon's golfing career takes him around the world – often to support Beit Halochem and childrens' charities back home in Israel. He figures he's on the road about one week a month. "I could do more, but I'd rather be home," he said.

Still, he practises daily and plays often, although never on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. He makes a point of wearing a kippah at tournaments.

So how did he manage to capture the blind golfers' championship when most tournaments are played on weekends? To accommodate him, they didn't play on Saturday, Sharon explained.

Golf has been very very good to Sharon, but his interests don't stop there. Before being blinded, Sharon was an art teacher and worked in sculpture. Though blind, he still creates works of art.

Sharon also works as a physiotherapist and masseur, and he's studied Chinese medicine.

He is, clearly, somewhat driven.

His interpreter, himself an army veteran who was badly injured in the 2006 Lebanon war, explained it this way:

"You get hungry when you're near death."

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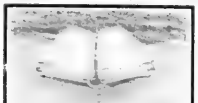
The month of Menachem Av

By RABBI ZUSHE SILBERSTEIN


Rabbinic Reflections

The word Av means "father." One asks: Why is the month in which both temples were destroyed and our people exiled called Av, or father?

The resolution of this question, however, introduces a unique Jewish approach to tragedy and misfortune. Often, we are overwhelmed by the extent of the suffering undergone by our people as a whole, and by certain individuals in particular. We ask – sometimes with anger and frustration – how could God do this?

Generally, two types of answers are offered:

• God stands aside, above involvement. He has left the world to the natural order and the tragedies were brought about by man on his own.

On one hand, this argument takes God off the hook, as it were. On the other hand, it means that we are left with an existential reality in which man must cope on his own.

• We rationalize God's judgment. We cannot judge as God judges. With our present, limited knowledge, there's no way that we can understand why tragedies take place, but when we see a bigger picture, look at previous incarnations, the standing of the entire Jewish nation at present and within history, we can comprehend the reason for the tragedies He has wrought.

However, one may not sit comfortably with this explanation. Firstly, since God is the ultimate of good, everything that He does must be good. He does not have to balance good with bad. Instead, He should be the source of unmitigated good, good that is overtly apparent as good.

Moreover, sometimes, the suffering is just so great that there is no way that we could accept any explanation for it.

In this instance, however, the question is itself the answer. There are tragedies that we cannot understand. As mortals, we don't have to understand God, yet we can trust Him. Indeed, as Maimonides says, to understand God, one has to be God.

Everything, even the fluttering of a leaf in the wind, is controlled by Divine providence. Certainly, this applies to man's – both individual and collective – fate. God is the ultimate of good and generosity. It is a most satisfying realization to appreciate that ultimately, everything that happens is in His hands. Whether or not we understand it, we can feel secure that He is the One determining our future.

This realization is also the key to transforming any Divine influence that appears to us as negative. When a father shows anger and his child looks at him lovingly in faith, the father's heart melts and he cannot persist in his rage. When we appreciate that everything that happens to us is from God and we look up to Him with love, all factors that are apparently negative will be temporary.

This is the allusion in calling this month Av – the Father: to know that everything is coming from Him.

Our rabbis add a further point, referring to the month as Menachem Av. Menachem means "comfort." The name is interpreted as indicating that God will comfort His people with the redemption, as the Haftorah read on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av declares: "Take comfort, take comfort, My people… for she has received double for all her sins." Indeed the Talmud Sanhedrin says one of the names of the Mashiach will be Menachem. More literally, Menachem Av can be interpreted as meaning: "Comforting the Father."

God, too, is aggrieved over the exile. Our Sages quote Him as saying: "Woe is the Father whose children are exiled from His table." By doing what we can to hasten the redemption, we alleviate His grief and bring Him comfort.

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein is the spiritual leader of Chabad Chabanel and Young Israel of Val Royal in Montreal.

Two giants in Jewish education

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

The world of Jewish education is much the poorer today for the loss of two men who, though very different in many ways, were united in their philosophy of caring for each child.

Until his untimely demise in November 2008 at the age of 52, Dr. Aryeh Geiger was the founder and principal of Reut school in Jerusalem, a pluralist religious school with a unique educational outlook. And the death of Rabbi Joseph Kelman in Toronto last month marks the passing of a remarkable figure who started the She'arim school for learning disabled children in Toronto and was involved in countless projects benefiting the Jewish community.

For Geiger, the assassination of Yitzchak Rabin in 1995 meant that religious education could no longer take a "business as usual" approach and needed a massive revision on many areas. Reut was founded in 1999 as a religious, pluralistic community with an emphasis not just on Jewish texts, but on social activism and helping the community at large. At Reut, students are empowered to take responsibility for their school by having a hand in decisions that actually matter in terms of student discipline and involvement.

I had the privilege of meeting Geiger at his school in late 2007, when his illness was already very advanced. He noted that Reut embodied many of the educational principles fashioned by Janusz Korczak, the director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw who was later murdered by the Nazis.

Korczak wanted education to be based on the idea that children are the breeding ground for the future of society. From an early age, the children were invited to set up codes of conduct for themselves, as well as a court of peers and a children's parliament, and to assess punishments for their own misbehaviour. For Korczak, a school community was not simply a group of children, but citizens in the making.

A few hours spent in the hallways of Reut would quickly convey the same message. Geiger treated children as rational agents who needed to take part in matters that, after all, concerned them, such as their education. Each child mattered.

In contrast with but a single encounter with Geiger, I had the great good fortune of speaking with Rabbi Kelman many times, and I had the chance to admire his enormous good works from a closer vantage point. The indefatigable nature of his quest to make sure that no child was left behind meant that he was able to press forward on projects that a lesser person would have long abandoned as doomed to failure.

Rabbi Kelman brings to mind Bernard Shaw's adage that "the reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man." Rabbi Kelman's version of "unreasonableness," his refusal to say "no" when it meant helping others, changed the world.

In eulogizing Geiger, the MK Rabbi Michael Melchior noted that the patriarch Isaac continued to dig wells even though the Philistines kept filling them up, until he finally dug one that flowed without interruption. That is the mark of greatness that defined both Geiger and Rabbi Kelman. May their memory be for a blessing.

Jewish Life

In search of the sacred

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

In eastern Europe about 2-1/2 centuries ago, whenever the founder of the chassidic movement faced a difficult task, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer – and the task he set out to perform was done. When, a generation later, the Sage of Meseritz was faced with a similar task, he would go to the same place in the woods and say: "We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers" – and what he wanted done became reality.

A generation later, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov had to perform the same task. He, too, went into the woods and said: "We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs." But when another generation had passed, the master scholar of Rishin remained at home and explained: "We cannot light a fire, we cannot speak the prayers and we do not know the place. All that remains is to tell the story of how it was once done."

This provocative anecdote describes the decline or deflection of the sacred from generation to generation. Perhaps this is inevitable as attitudes differ and conditions change.

Albert Einstein said this about the sacred: "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead and his eyes are dimmed."

Indeed, the life of the universe is bound together by the ecology of the sacred. The awe and splendour of existence is a reflection of the spiritual.

William Blake wrote that to some people, a tree in bloom is something so incredibly beautiful that it brings tears to the eyes. But to others, it's just a green encumbrance that stands in the way. Blake, the mystic, strove "to see a world in a grain of sand./ And a heaven in a wild flower./ Hold infinity in the palm of your hand./ And eternity in an hour."

Helen Keller spoke of "dreary souls who have the sunset, the morning skies, the purple of distant hills, yet their souls voyage through this enchanted world with nothing but a barren stare."

In a similar vein, Elizabeth Barrett Browning lamented, "Earth's crammed with heaven./ And every common bush afire with God./ And only he who sees takes off his shoes/ The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

The marvelous machinery of the human body is an unending and amazing source of wonder. Its sophisticated structure is revealed in the fact that the complex pattern of every individual's entire genetic structure is to be found in the tiniest cell. It was this miraculous function of the body that undoubtedly caused David, the ancient sweet singer of Israel, to declare in the Psalms, "I praise you for I am awesomely and wondrously made; your work is wonderful; I know it very well."

When, in the Bible, God commands the children of Israel to be holy, God quickly indicates how this is to be achieved. "When you reap the harvest of your land you shall not reap all the way to the edges of the field… you shall leave them for the poor and stranger." "The wages of a labourer shall not remain with you until morning." "You shall not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind." "Do not favour the poor or show deference to the rich; judge fairly." "Love your neighbour as yourself." "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens." "You shall have an honest measure and honest weights".

If trees barked like dogs and flowers hooted like owls, their grace and elegance would be noticed by multitudes who now pass by unseeing. Perhaps a greater poverty than that caused by lack of money is the poverty of unawareness.

Questions for our time: How do we achieve a reasoned life stance that's strong enough to face the challenges, contradictions and absurdities of our technological age? Can we continue to find meaning and purpose in the sacred, in those spiritual truths that are the products of centuries of years and oceans of tears?

Israel and cyberwar, Part 1

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Anyone armed with a keyboard, an Internet connection and knowledge of the web can be a participant in the Mideast conflict. For most people that means using legitimate websites, petitions and discussion areas to try to sway public opinion. Others are using sophisticated techniques to hack into computers, deface websites and disrupt the flow of data.

Wired.com wrote about a group of Israeli students who developed a program to overload pro-Hamas websites. The Help Israel Win collective formed in late December as the conflict in Gaza heated up. "We couldn't join the real combat, so we decided to fight Hamas in the cyber arena," said "Liri," one the group's organizers. The group claims to have shut down sarayaalquds.org and qudsvoice.net. Ironically, the Help Israel Win website is no longer at its original address, since it "has had to shift from website to website, as they come under attack from unknown assailants." **[tinyurl.com/webwar01]**

Last year, visitors to the Bank of Israel website noticed something was amiss when a hacker left a message saying, "As an anti-colonial Muslim, I fully support the armed resistance of the Palestinians, Iraqis and Lebanese against the U.S. and Israel. I am serious about the liberation! By any means rendered necessary!" **[tinyurl.com/webwar02]**

While most Internet skullduggery is hush-hush, such is not always the case. Last year, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Tehran office of Hamas announced it was offering the equivalent of about $2,000 to anyone who hacks into a "Zionist" website. Contest organizers described the competition as a "peaceful and non-violent initiative." I did not find any word on whether the winnings have been claimed. **[tinyurl.com/webwar 03]**

Another ongoing battle involves online petitions. Several Internet sites like ipetitions.com and petitionspot.com have sprung up. At PetitionSite.com, more than 17,000 people want to "Suspend EU-Israel Association Agreement." **[tinyurl.com/ webwar04]** Alternatively, there is also a petition calling for "Fair Play for Israel at the United Nations," with 2,974 signatures. **[tinyurl.com/webwar05]**

By the way, not all online petitions about Israel are quite as political as the ones mentioned above. A search also turned up a petition to "Stop the Huge Expansion of Horse Racing in Israel!" **[tinyurl.com/webwar07]** and another to persuade the English alternative rock group, Radiohead, to perform in Israel. **[tinyurl.com/webwar08]**

Other online conflicts attempt to exploit the power of search engines and cause people to click on their links. Let's say you want to find information about "Palestine." Type that word into Google and the first results you are presented (after the Wikipedia entries) are from PalestineHistory.com and PalestineFacts.org. You might expect the content of both sites to be similar, but that's not the case. The former presents arguments about the conflict from the Arab point of view, while the latter defends Israel's role. It's no coincidence that those viewpoints are not readily apparent from the website names. Sites often attempt to raise their search engine ranking and traffic by adopting popular but ambiguous names. Try to guess where ZionismExplained.org and DoingZionism.org fall on the political spectrum. **[tinyurl.com/webwar09]**

No contemporary cyber-conflict would be complete without Twitter, the social messaging service. In its article, "Winning the propaganda war, in 140 characters or less," the *Jerusalem Post* recently reported that David Saranga, the head of media relations for the Israeli consulate in New York, has turned to Twitter to help get his message across. **[tinyurl.com/webwar12]**

While some have mocked trying to discuss the conflict in micro-bursts and shorthand lingo, Saranga defends its use. "Since the definition of war has changed, the definition of public diplomacy has to change as well."

Here's a public Twitter exchange between Saranga and an individual named "backlotops" during the Gaza war. Can you decipher it all? Backlotops: "1 side has to stop. Why continue what hasn't worked (mass arial/grnd retaliation)? Arab Peace Initiative?"

Israelconsulate: "We R pro nego. cmtly tlks r held w the PA + tlks on the 2 state soln. we talk only w/ ppl who accept R rt 2 live." **[tinyurl.com/webwar11]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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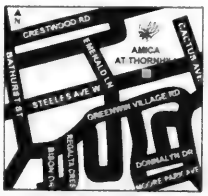

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Greater Toronto Area

Hitting kids should be banned 'under any circumstances'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Tisha b'Av, the ninth day of the month of Av, begins this week on Wednesday evening and continues through daylight hours on Thursday. The annual fast day commemorates the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem as well as other tragedies in Jewish history, and the end of the associated three-week mourning period.

Among some two dozen Jewish laws and customs that apply to the three weeks are prohibitions against shaving and listening to music. Less commonly known – and potentially disquieting, especially for those who are unfamiliar with it or lack context – is the cautionary advice against striking one's child.

"It implies that you can hit them at other times," but that's not the case, said Rabbi Reuven Bulka, spiritual leader of Ottawa's Congregation Machzikei Hadas, who also holds a PhD in psychology.

In previous generations, Rabbi Bulka noted, "a *patsch* here and there was not misunderstood. In our generation, you don't have such assurances."

He is unequivocal when he says that there is "really no room for hitting" children in modern times.

In his congregation, which is Orthodox, the issue "invariably comes up" at this time of year, and the rabbi addresses it in his daily lesson between Minchah and Ma'ariv services.

"I always do it with a chuckle," he said in a phone interview. He tells congregants, "I don't want you to derive any implications from this, because we're living in different times."

His to-the-point advice is: "Don't hit your kid in the three weeks, or for any other of the 49. Love 'em to pieces at all times."

Explaining some of the rationale behind the original law, Rabbi Bulka said, "There were a lot of calamities that happened to the Jewish people [historically, during this time]. God forbid, you don't want another calamity to happen when you hit a child."

Rabbi Immanuel Schochet, a former philosophy professor at Humber College and a leader of the Lubavitch movement in Toronto, said that the three weeks "is a time of misfortune, where even a slight mishap could lead to more serious consequences.

"Ideally, everybody would agree that hitting is not the ideal way," Rabbi Schochet said. "It would be an extraordinary measure, where there seems to be no alternative."

That said, he explained that "even where – how should I put it – physical punishment would be allowed, there is the qualification that one must be in full control of one's emotions. One must never strike out in anger. Anger is more for self-indulgence than education."

He also noted that educational practice "may change with greater insight," such as the knowledge that a child's behaviour is attributable to attention deficit disorder, not rebelliousness.

The goal is not punishment, but rather "the betterment of the child."

"You're never allowed to let off steam on another person – certainly not with a child."

Jewish law in general not only prohibits striking any human being, it prohibits raising one's hand to someone, Rabbi Schochet said, adding that a person who does so is called a *rasha*, or a wicked person.

Rabbi Mark Dratch – former spiritual leader of Toronto's Shaarei Shomayim Congregation and founder of the West Hempstead, N.Y.-based Jsafe: The Jewish Institute Supporting an Abuse-Free Environment – would also argue that "under any circumstances, [hitting a child] should be prohibited."

He said that is the "general consensus" in the psychologic community.

In some jurisdictions, he noted, it's considered a form of child abuse.

Two dozen countries have outlawed parental corporal punishment, including Israel, New Zealand, Romania, Ukraine, Cyprus and Sweden, according to information provided by Rabbi Dratch.

In Canada, parents and teachers are allowed to use "reasonable" force to correct a child, according to Section 43 of the Criminal Code.

Richard Cummings, executive director of Jewish Family & Child, told *The CJN* that JF&CS would like to see Section 43 struck down, and is part of "a coalition that has long protested" the section's retention.

Rabbi Dratch said that "physical abuse of children is prohibited. Period. Our question is whether corporal punishment is considered abusive.

"Sources abound indicating that blows that are positively motivated and are intended for a productive purpose are not only tolerated, but may also be mandatory," he told *The CJN*.

However, there have also been rabbinic authorities who banned corporal punishment, including Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in the 1800s, he noted.

"Historically, there was an assumption that hitting a child was an appropriate form of discipline," Rabbi Dratch said. "In the days of the Talmud, they tried to restrict the amount of time and the severity of these beatings."

He cited Rabbi Shmuel Bar Shilat, who taught young children in talmudic times and warned that "if you strike children, strike them only with a shoelace."

The proverbial rod, referred to by King Solomon in *Proverbs* and invoked by some as justification for hitting children, Rabbi Dratch said, "may be a metaphor for proper education and discipline, and not a literal tool."

Couple wishes to integrate

Continued from page 16

Since landing in Toronto, the Rosembergs have secured the services of an immigration lawyer in an attempt to stay in Canada permanently. They're also keen to meet other Jews and integrate into the community.

"The Toronto Jewish community has received us very well. We've been invited to dinners... and I'm impressed with the way it's organized," Jonathan said, adding that they've been urged by community members to apply to the government as "political refugees."

But the Rosembergs have so far declined to do that, insisting they want to get work and apply for citizenship, and "come into Canada through the front door" if possible, he said.

With files from JTA

Greater Toronto Area

A sense of place

By JANET FARKAS

Guest Voice

As the water dripped from my fingertips on my 13th lap of the white-tiled pool one day last spring, I began to feel nostalgic for the feeling I had the summer before, when the sun warmed my face as I swam this exact same stroke in the outdoor pool.

At the time, I thought I was swimming my last lengths in the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre pool before it closed forever. I've since learned that I will have one more summer of outdoor pleasure before the pool is demolished to make way for a shiny new fitness centre.

The BJCC is a community centre in every sense of the word. It has attracted the young and the old since its inception more than 40 years ago. I remember as a child being struck by the great depth of the empty indoor tank as the guide showed my mother, my sister and I the facilities at the YM-YWHA that was being constructed right in our own neighbourhood.

To this day, I can recall the sensation of water pouring into my mouth as I gasped to catch my breath after doing a somersault into the pool as part of a synchronized swimming rendition of *The Wizard of Oz*, in which I, as the Cowardly Lion, had never rehearsed my solo with the wool-embellished bathing cap that represented my feline mane.

Soothing body and soul in the chlorinated air

Years of swimming lessons, pleasure swims and races with friends come to mind as my hand slices through the water while I perform my own version of the back crawl this morning.

I greet "the regulars," women in shower caps who don life belts and have regal names such as Malka and Esther. They come for the shmoozing as much as the exercise. Stories about grandchildren, good restaurants and their critiques of the latest movies waft through the chlorinated air.

Many of them prefer the indoor pool, with its warm water and regulated air temperature over the uncertainty of the outdoor climate. I, on the other hand, was the first one in the pool in June, and I hope to be the last one out on Labour Day.

That pool was the first place I visited after the doctors removed the Hickman line from my chest following my cancer treatments. The freedom I felt as I slipped into the comforting water is still there each time I revisit the big L-shaped outdoor pool.

Handsome young men and vibrant young women watch over the swimmers as we follow our own routines. They comment to one another in Russian and think that we don't catch their meaning.

We all have our own *meshugas*. One man always emerges from the building flushed from his workout and plunges directly into the deep end. Another fusses with his goggles and a bathing cap before starting his front crawl. Miriam is the goodwill ambassador who greets each of us with her welcoming smile and waves, and Elliott boosts everyone's ego by telling them how much he likes them. "I like you too, Elliott," I say.

I definitely benefit from the workout – I try to swim 40 lengths each time – but it's the social aspect that keeps me coming back. After all, it was in this same outdoor pool where, at the age of 14, I not only learned artificial respiration, but how to kiss a boy while pretending to practise mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

My husband doesn't share my great love of swimming pools and my particular attraction to the BJCC, but he's supportive of my endeavours and knows that whenever I get an opportunity to swim, I seize it. He still refers to our honeymoon as the "Swimming Pool Tour of the East." OK, so I booked us into every hotel and motel in eastern Canada that boasted of a pool among its amenities. I hope that the faint smell of chlorine is still a turn-on for my spouse of some 20-odd years. I am, and always will be, a swimmer.

This is the last summer for my BJCC pool. The indoor pool is closed forever, and the outdoor pool is the last bastion of that sense of place that I feel in the valley near my home in Bathurst Manor. It's where I'm greeted by the lifeguards, the greying gentlemen and the ladies of the deep. We nod to one another and perform our water ballet. Labour Day will come too soon for each of us, and we'll have to find a new location to dip our bodies and soothe our souls.

Janet Farkas lives, and often swims, in Toronto.

בס"ד

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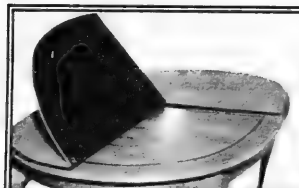

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Hebrew U researcher pioneers gene research

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

JERUSALEM — The discoveries made by scientist Howard Cedar may not lead to a cure-all cancer pill, but his research has yielded insights into the causes of cancer that could help identify those most at risk and offer them preventative care.

Cedar, head of the developmental biology and cancer research department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, spoke to a group of six Canadian journalists in June as part of a six-day tour in Israel sponsored by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU), a non-profit group that promotes and raises funds for the school.

The American-born professor, a recipient of the 2008 Wolf Prize – one of Israel's highest honours – first won scientific acclaim about 30 years ago when his research led to a new field of science called epigenetics, the study of changes in gene functions that occur without a change in the sequence of DNA.

Cedar's findings provided scientists with clues as to how genes are regulated at the molecular level.

For his investigation into DNA methylation (chemical changes that occur in DNA molecules), Cedar has since been known as the "father of gene methylation," and has discovered that methylation is involved in 95 per cent of cancer cases.

Cedar, considered Hebrew U's best chance at another Nobel Prize, explained that when methylation occurs, the result is that only one part of the DNA code is available for the cell to read.

For example, a skin cell will only have genetic instructions to make skin, while the rest of its DNA code is "switched off."

When an egg is fertilized, the first bundle of cells produced from it can develop into any cell in the body, because none of its genetic material has been methylated yet, he said.

Hebrew University's Howard Cedar in his office.
[Sheri Shefa photo]

But at some stage, the cells begin to assume particular functions – liver cells, skin cells, blood cells, etc.

"For example, the genes in liver cells are expressed, and proteins are made in the cell. Other genes in the liver cells are methylated. They are turned off in the liver cell," Cedar said.

"So you could walk along the DNA, and say, 'This is on, this is off, this is on, this is off.' The reason the liver gets made the way it does is because of the way the switches are turned on… Is this going to be a liver, or is this going to be a kidney?"

This information is relevant to the study of cancer, because now, with scientists having the technology to thoroughly examine cancer cells, they've discovered that cancer is a kind of "switching disease."

In other words, cancers form when genes that are supposed to be turned off are turned on, and vice versa.

He added that regardless of the kind of cancer, methylation occurs in almost every tumour.

In late 2008, Cedar and his Hebrew U colleague Yehudit Bergman identified the mechanism by which human cells assume particular functions. With that information, they learned that genetic diseases such as Fragile X Syndrome – the most common form of developmental disability – also result from a gene that's been turned off that is supposed to be turned on.

"There is nothing wrong with the gene – the gene's fine. We only need to find a way to turn that gene on, like a switch," he said.

Based on research he conducted on mice that were genetically manipulated to develop colon cancer, he and his team discovered that if those same mice were given drugs to inhibit DNA methylation from birth, the disease could be prevented.

Cedar – who is also a researcher at the new Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC), for which CFHU has pledged to raise $50 million – said that he's pleased to be partnering with Canadian scientists, including McGill University's Moshe Szyf.

It's one example of the interdisciplinary partnerships made through IMRIC in the hope of giving scientists in various research areas the opportunity to work together to better understand and prevent diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Cedar said he is excited about the potential that IMRIC provides and praised Canadian donors for "seeing the bigger picture" and realizing that supporting Israeli scientists means they, too, will benefit from any medical discoveries that come out of Israel.

"We are very lucky that the Canadians love us."

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Catching up with 100 years of ketchup

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Photos from the early days of Heinz in Canada.

When my daughter, Jodi, first started dating her husband, Paul, 23 years ago, she was a ketchup addict – she put ketchup on everything, including pizza! Paul was absolutely horrified because he grew up in a house where they almost never used ketchup. Today, Jodi still loves to put ketchup on burgers and fries and she also uses ketchup in her sweet and sour meatballs, but her ketchup intake is under control.

Did you know that next to Finland, Canadians consume more ketchup than anyone else in the world? This summer, Heinz Canada is celebrating its 100th anniversary and has developed a recipe for The Great Canadian Heinz Ketchup Cake as a novel way to use it for more than fries and burgers. The cake is unexpectedly red, perfectly spiced and totally delicious – giving it the taste of carrot cake without all the work.

Canadians have the chance to win $25,000 in cash or one of 100 instant win Broil King barbecues from now until Aug. 31 with the Heinz Ketchup Fan of the Century contest. Enter at Heinzitup.com and, in 100 words or less, explain why you are the biggest Heinz Ketchup fan of all time.

Here are two terrific recipes that use ketchup as a main ingredient. The meatball recipe comes from *Second Helpings Please* and has been passed down from generation to generation. It's the number 1 recipe on my website http://www.gourmania.com. Enjoy…

GREAT CANADIAN HEINZ KETCHUP CAKE

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. each ground nutmeg and ginger
1/2 cup Heinz tomato ketchup
1/2 cup water
2 tbsp. red food colouring
3/4 cup butter, softened
1 1/2 cups packed dark brown sugar
2 eggs

Frosting:
6 oz. brick-style cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup butter, softened
1 tsp. vanilla extract
4 cups icing sugar

Preheat the oven to 350. Grease two 9-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with parchment paper.

Stir the flour with the baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and ginger into a bowl.

Stir the ketchup, water and colouring in a separate bowl. Set aside.

Beat the butter and blend in the sugar in a large bowl until smooth. Beat in the eggs. Add the flour mixture and ketchup mixture. Beat on low, scraping down the bowl as needed, until combined. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat for 1 minute. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans. Bake for 30 minutes or until the centre springs back when touched lightly. Cool the cakes for 15 minutes before turning onto a rack to cool completely.

Frosting: Beat the cream cheese, butter and vanilla on medium speed for 2 minutes or until smooth. Gradually beat in the sugar on low, scraping the bowl as needed. Beat on high until fluffy. Frost between the cake layers and over the sides and top of the cake. Makes 12 servings.

TANGY SWEET & SOUR MEATBALLS

Source: *Second Helpings Please*
1 1/2 lb. minced meat
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
1 egg
2 tbsp. matzah meal
1 1/2 cups ketchup
2 cups ginger ale

Combine first 6 ingredients and form into small balls. Combine ketchup and ginger ale in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Drop meatballs into sauce, cover and simmer for 2 hours. Yield: 6 servings as an appetizer, 4 servings as a main course.

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Feature

Treasured witnesses to Jewish antiquity

By HINDY NAJMAN, EVA MROCZEK AND CHAD STAUBER

Guest Voice

The Dead Sea Scrolls recently arrived in Toronto – each in its own business class seat – and have taken up residence at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Now, after well over two years of hard work by an international team, including Dan Rahimi, the ROM's vice-president of gallery development, and former Torontonian Prof. Risa Levitt Kohn, curator, these precious witnesses to the ancient Jewish past are on display until Jan. 3, 2010.

The Scrolls exhibition has generated great interest among the public in Toronto, but it's also a tremendous boon for the University of Toronto's Centre for Jewish Studies and its academic program in ancient Judaism.

Many people have heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but few know the details of their discovery and fewer still understand their significance. The story of the scrolls' discovery sounds like a tale from the Arabian Nights.

Bedouin goatherders stumble upon a cave on a rock-face which leads down to the Dead Sea near an ancient site called *Khirbet Qumran* (Arabic for 'Ruins of Qumran'). One of the brothers throws a stone inside and hears a vessel shatter. Excited by the prospect of finding hidden treasure, but fearful of confronting a guardian *jinn* (genie) protecting it, the brothers go back to their tent to discuss their next move. The next morning, the eldest brother, Mohammed ed-Dhib (the Wolf) arises early to beat the others to the riches. What he finds greatly disappoints him: not the hoped-for treasure, but mottled rolls of musty parchment. Nevertheless, within a few years, the world would hail this discovery as one of the greatest of the 20th century.

For nearly 1,000 years, the cave had housed seven of the best-preserved scrolls from Jewish antiquity, now known as the Manual of Discipline, the War Scroll, the Thanksgiving Scroll, the Genesis Apocryphon, and a Commentary on Habbakuk, as well as two copies of the Book of Isaiah.

Over the next 10 years or so, archeologists would find a total of 11 caves in the vicinity of *Khirbet Qumran*, yielding some 25,000 fragments from which 800 to 900 other scrolls could be reconstructed. They were written primarily in Hebrew, with some in Aramaic, and a few small fragments in ancient Greek.

In the years after their discovery, it became more and more apparent that the scrolls would change the face of biblical scholarship. Remnants of every book of the Hebrew Bible, except Esther and Nechemiah, were recovered from the caves.

The presence of old fragments of the Hebrew Bible may not sound so amazing, but it becomes quite astounding when one bears in mind that up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest complete Hebrew manuscript of the Masoretic Text (the Jewish Bible in Hebrew and Aramaic) dated from 1008 CE. Suddenly biblical scholars were given access to evidence that was 1,200 years older than the oldest texts they had previously known.

On the one hand, the continuity is remarkable: biblical texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls differ from the texts read by Jews today in only minor ways that are of interest mainly to scholars. On the other hand, a largely unfamiliar world comes into view, thanks to the non-biblical or "sectarian" texts, reflecting perspectives that differ from the Rabbinic Judaism that would become mainstream over the subsequent centuries.

Debates about who inhabited Qumran and who hid the scrolls are ongoing. Most identify those who produced and preserved the scrolls as the Essenes, although this identification is subject to vigorous challenge. In any event, scrolls such as the Manual of Discipline and the War Scroll were written from the perspective of a group that believed they were the true "chosen people," the "Sons of Light," in opposition to all other Jews and foreigners, whom they called the "Sons of Darkness."

This group produced some of the earliest surviving midrashic texts, such as the Commentary of Habakkuk, which reinterpreted the ancient prophets, applying their words to the sectarians' own time. Some of the halachic views expressed in the scrolls appear in Rabbinic literature as minority opinions, worthy of mention but not considered normative.

For the Jewish community, then, this exhibition opens a window onto a rich and vibrant ancient time, when various traditions of interpretation of Torah, Halachah and prayer were emerging. Some found their place within Rabbinic Judaism, while others were incorporated into early Christianity, and still others reappeared centuries later with the rise of Islam.

The Scrolls on display during the first rotation include portions of texts such as the book of Daniel and a collection of Psalms, a fragment of the so-called Book of the War (related to the War Scroll mentioned above) and the Damascus Document, a legendized history of the origins of the community that preserved the Scrolls. While the texts appear in fragmentary form and have suffered some deterioration, much of the writing is still legible. The script is not very different from what we find in a modern Tanach, and a patient Hebrew reader, leaning over a display case at the ROM, can make out the very words that a Jewish scribe inked on his scroll more than 2,000 years ago.

The richness of the Scrolls' cultural and historical context is reflected in the magnificent exhibition, which allows us not only to see some of the fragments, but also to catch a glimpse of the complex world – both Jewish and Greco-Roman – from which they came.

Thanks to the expertise of Levitt Kohn, a Toronto native who attended both York University and U of T and who now directs the Jewish studies program at San Diego State University, the Scrolls are firmly placed within their context, among artifacts from Qumran, Jerusalem, Sepphoris and other parts of Judea and Galilee.

In addition to presenting the artifacts and fragments for viewing, the ROM has given us an auditory experience as well. As we walk through the dramatic, darkened space where the fragments are displayed, we hear recordings of selected texts recited in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, reminding us that in antiquity, many people experienced these words primarily by hearing them.

What the Scrolls meant in their own context, and what they contribute to our current understanding of how traditions developed, are questions that drive scholars of ancient Judaism throughout the academic world.

We are all indebted to the ROM and to the Israel Antiquities Authority for bringing the scrolls to Toronto and to the Tanenbaum family for the Anne Tanenbaum lecture series, featuring leading Dead Sea Scolls authorities from around the world, that will run for the benefit of the public concurrently with the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit.

This is a remarkable gift for all of us to enjoy as we learn about what unites us as Jews and also about the backdrop against which the three monotheistic faiths emerged.

Prof. Hindy Najman is the director of the Centre for Jewish Studies and a member of the Department and Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. Eva Mroczek and Chad Stauber are PhD candidates at U of T.

Scrolls conference to feature wide array of scholars

The Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition at the ROM is also the occasion for an academic conference, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, set for Nov. 15 to 18 in Toronto.

It will be the most important Dead Sea Scrolls conference ever held in Canada, attracting top scholars from Israel, North America and Europe. The conference is being organized by Alex Gropper, president of the Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies and a longtime teacher at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, as well as by professors Sarianna Metso and Hindy Najman of the University of Toronto, and Prof. Eileen Schuller from McMaster University. It's being chaired by Miguel Singer and Barry Zagdanski.

The organizers have also invited a group of 15 scholars to give academic presentations geared toward university faculty and graduate students.

In addition, several lectures are planned for the general community by top scholars such as Prof. James Kugel of Harvard University and Bar-Ilan University and Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The conference will also serve as an opportunity for training young scholars as well as high school students from TanenbaumCHAT to learn about the Scrolls and ancient Judaism from world-renowned experts in the field.

On Campus

'We're taking seriously all the issues'

Continued from page 3

In an effort to improve the tense atmosphere between student groups on campus, in March, Shoukri initiated the Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community to work on developing recommendations toward that end.

The task force, headed by Osgoode Hall Law School dean and incoming York provost Patrick Monahan – who sat in on the meeting at *The CJN*'s office – called on members of the community to submit recommendations on how to improve the climate at York.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) and Hillel of Greater Toronto submitted a report to the task force in June and are anticipating the task force's report at the end of August.

"I really can't get into a lot of details other than to say that at this time, we're taking seriously all the issues that have been brought to our attention… [The task force members make up] a diverse group and we're working by consensus," Monahan said.

Shoukri added that the report will be made public.

"We will not shy away from saying, 'We will do this, but this we cannot do for whatever reason.' We will be very open with our community," he said.

Another issue that concerned many members of the Jewish community was the York-sponsored conference in June called Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace.

The concern stemmed from the fact that a large majority of the speakers promoted a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – a solution that would mean the end of a Jewish state – and some speakers were activists in the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel.

Although Shoukri reiterated his position on academic freedom, he said he plans to commission "an independent, highly respected person… to have a look, interview people and review what went on in planning and in our own decisions and advise us on the lessons learned" from the conference experience.

With York facing pressure from the Jewish community to protect its students from intimidation, as well as confronting a 10 per cent drop in applications for the 2009-10 academic year, Shoukri said he's focused on learning from past incidents, moving forward and strengthening the university's academic capacity.

"That will be achieved by building on what we have and expanding our presence in science, applied sciences and different disciplines," Shoukri said.

"We are focusing on modernizing our organizational structure to make sure that we become a more efficient organization and make sure that our financial and budgetary decisions are aligned with our academic priorities."

He added that he is excited about the "urbanization" of York.

"Our campus is undergoing incredible change. It will not be a suburban campus. Think of it this way: In 2014 or 2015, you will have two subway stations – one in the middle of campus and one at the edge of campus," Shoukri said.

"We have a clear agenda… We know what we want and we are trying to provide the tools – the administrative tools, the decision-making tools – that will allow us to move in a very clear direction."

Advertising Feature

Grand Opening - Amica at Thornhill, 546 Steeles Ave., West held its official Grand Opening celebration on Wednesday July 8. The opening of Amica's Wellness & Vitality™ retirement residence was attended by local dignitaries, Amica executives, family and friends of the residents.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov to Kevin Haas & Danielle Wayne on their engagement. Proud parents are Sonia Haas and Alex Haas and Hazal & Kelvin Wayne.

Mazel tov to Alon & Barbie Zimmerman in Israel on the birth of their 10th child, Yisroel Avrom. From Bubbie Reva and the *gantzeh mishpacha* in Canada.

Mazel tov to Mollie Finewax on your 88th birthday, July 15, from your children, family and friends. WOW!

Mazel tov to Josh Carr & Tovah Altman, who were married on June 21st in Vancouver, B.C.

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Celebrating Jewish Life

Mazel tov on the wedding of Yoni Cohen & Devora Jacobowitz.

Mazel tov on the birth of Baby Girl Piltz.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines: Because of the civic holiday, Wednesday, July 29, is the deadline for the Aug. 13 issue. Monday, Aug. 10, is the deadline for the Aug. 20 issue. I receive calls on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 235, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com and info@cjnews.com.

Thursday, Aug. 6

YIDDISH VINKL

Adam Fuerstenberg, professor emeritus at Ryerson University and director of Yiddish and executive director of the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, UJA Federation, speaks in Yiddish on "Leonard Cohen: Apocalyptic Troubadour of Melancholia and Love." $15, includes lunch, tax, tip and program. Free Times Café, 320 College St., noon. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Other News

FRIENDS OF NBB

Annual Friends of NBB (Camp Northland B'nai Brith) weekend, Friday, Aug. 14 - Sunday, Aug. 16. Visit familiar camp sites and use the facilities. Day and evening programs. Meals included. For information or registration for the weekend, or for Friends' Day, Aug. 16, call 905-881-0018 or e-mail happycamper@campnbb.com.

GIRLS NIGHT IN

The Canadian Cancer Society has launched a new fundraising program. It invites women to host a get-together in which guests donate what they might spend on a typical night out. Visit the website www.GirlsNightInForCancer.ca for a host kit and information.

MISSION TO ISRAEL

Young at Heart Mission to Israel, the Israel experience for active seniors, Oct.15-29, is led by Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University. Includes visits to historical, archeological and holy sites, and a tour of Bar-Ilan U. For more information, call 888-248-2720 or e-mail admin@cfbiu.org.

MEDINA THEATRE

Staged reading performance of *Over the River and through the Woods* written by **Joe DiPietro**, directed by **Mario D'Alimonte**. Aug. 9, Temple Sinai, $5. Rescheduled from an earlier date. For information, call **Lois**, 416-781-8076, or **Morris**, 416-785-0344.

SECURITY TRAINING

Jewish Defence League of Canada elite security training course, Tuesday evenings. For all fit adults and students. For details, 416-736-7000. Also Movie Night, Monday evenings, 8 p.m. Toronto Zionist Centre, 788 Marlee Ave. Snacks and refreshments.

PATIO PARTY

Young Professionals Group, hosted by Beth Tikvah, Beth Sholom and Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda synagogues. Ages 22-30. Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda, Aug. 7, 7:30, dinner and drinks. $10 in advance, $12 at door. Special guests – Ethiopian Israeli Young Professionals. RSVP by noon, Aug. 4. Contact **Lauren Cohn,** lauren@beby.org, or **Jillian Windman**, jillianwindman@gmail.com or 416-633-3838, ext. 229.

KRAV MAGA

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue youth department and Keren Sports present Krav Maga, Israeli martial arts, for ages 5-17. Learn techniques used to train members of the Israel Defence Forces. Taught in Hebrew by a certified instructor. Shul members $199, non-members $259. Meet the instructor, **Avi**, and watch a demonstration at an open house on Aug 12, Scout Room, 6-8 p.m. Registration begins Aug. 12. For more information, call 416-633-3838, ext. 229, or e-mail lauren@beby.org.

GAMES, SNACKS & FUN

Adath Israel Synagogue hosts bridge, mah-jong, Rummy Q Wednesdays, 1-4 p.m. Admission $2 includes pastry, coffee, tea

Continued on page 25

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Continued from page 24

and soft drinks. Men and women, shul members and non-members welcome. For more information, call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Marcia**, 416-932-1229.

MEDICAL ETHICS

International Conference on Jewish Medical Ethics, Aug. 20-Aug. 23. Fairmont Tremblant. Sponsored by Orthodox Union, Torah in Motion, Yeshiva University, Shaare Zedek Medical Center. Lectures, shiurim, panel discussions. For information or registration, 1-866-633-5770, or www.torahinmotion.org/medical.

PLAYDATE NURSERY

Carefully structured programs for toddlers at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. Choose from Me & My Bubbie, Me & My Mommy, Me & Shabbat, Me & My Nanny. 30 morning sessions from mid-October to mid-June. Play groups available for ages 1-2 years and 2-3 years. Now taking registration for the fall/winter sessions. For more information, call 416-633-3838, ext. 289.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors, MNJCC. Guided visit to the restored Kiever Synagogue. Shul president **David Pincus** talks about its history, architecture, Judaica and folk art. Aug. 6, 1:30 p.m. Refreshments. $2. Also new beginners computer course for seniors. Information and registration for both, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Educational support group, a pilot project run by **Chai Tikvah** and the **Circle of Care's Family Caregivers Connections Program**, for senior (over 55) caregivers of family members with mental health illness. 6 Tuesday evenings, Aug. 18-Sept. 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre Music Room. For more information or to register, call 416-373-4093. Parking, transportation and respite services available. Caregiver and family members do not need to be residing together.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, Aug. 13, noon. Register now for trip to Casino Niagara, Tuesday, Aug. 18, and Casino Rama, Wednesday, Aug. 26. Card Rummy, Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Social Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Bingo, Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Mah-jong, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Seniors Walking Group, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. Non-members welcome. Call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell. For information, call 416-630-9444.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE
1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Lecture on worldwide anti-Semitism by **Frank Dimant**, vice-president, B'nai Brith Canada, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 10 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

Concert, Aug. 5, 1:30-2:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

"Boosting Your Self-Esteem" – wellness lecture by personal growth coach **Judy Weiss**. 1:30 p.m. No charge.

WAGMAN CENTRE
55 Ameer Ave., 416-785-2500, ext. 2267.

Montrealers Group, with **Shawn**. Thursday, Aug. 6, 10:30 a.m., Fireside Lounge.

Flower pressing, Aug.15 and 25. 1-2:30 p.m. Creative Arts Room.

Fitness programs: Current session ends Friday, July 31. Next session begins Monday, Aug. 17. In person registration, Wagman Centre Lobby, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Advance registration. Friday, July 31

Creative Arts Studio sessions end July 30. Next session begins Monday, Aug. 10. During August, fabric collage program lets you decorate shirts using fabric cutouts, fabric paints, beads and other mediums. Mondays, 1-3 p.m.

Billiards Club, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, 2-4 p.m., Music Room.

Dear Abby discussion group, Thursdays 2-3 p.m., Fireside Lounge.

Ice Cream Social: Summer youth volunteers serve pareve chocolate and vanilla ice cream Wednesday afternoons, 1:30-2:30 p.m., all through August.

Jazz Time: An hour of toe-tapping and hand-clapping with the George Grosman Band. Assembly Room, Thursday, Aug. 20, 3-4 p.m. Free. Sponsored by Wagman member **Andy Kozma**. Register by Friday, Aug. 14.

Book Club, facilitated by **Marilyn Fine**, meets once a month to review a chosen title. Members receive a copy of the book one month before each program. Next meeting Thursday, Aug. 20, 1:30 p.m., classrooms A and B.

Outings

• Toronto Summer Music Festival presents "Emerging Artists" on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. $5 covers cost of the bus.

• Walmart shopping on Monday, Aug. 10, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $5.

• MZTV Television Museum on Monday, Aug.17, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $8 covers bus and admission.

• Orillia on the Lake, Friday, Aug. 21, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. $16 bus transportation and cruise. Bring lunch or lunch money.

August recreation programs

• Mondays, plant care, Scrabble.

• Tuesdays, Rummy Q, bingo, live entertainment. On Aug. 4, **Mickey Lewin**; Aug. 18, **Doug Goodeye**.

• Wednesdays, plant care, wisdom of the ages, today's hot topics.

• Thursdays, shmooze the news, social bridge, Yiddish.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

The MNJCC Community Choir has a few spaces open in its men's sections. Rehearsals Wednesday evenings. Auditions July 27-Aug. 7. Contact **Harriet Wichin**, ext. 133, or harrietw@mnjcc.org.

Summer Hebrew Courses: Modern Hebrew for Beginners, level B; Intensive Grammar Course; Hebrew Through Israeli songs; Hebrew Grammar Essentials, 4 workshops. Register ext. 0

Cooking Classes with **Elise Burton**. Register now for Aug. 26 session: 6:30-9 p.m. Middle Eastern *mezze*, small appetizers. $25 per class. Register ext. 0

Zion Ozeri, One history, Many Stories: A family album of Israel at 60: Co-presented with Koffler Centre of the Arts. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space, ongoing to Aug. 31.

HELPING OTHERS: Two non-profit groups of young adults, Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) and the Birthright Israel Alumni Community, recently organized the Revelations Art Show at the Lonsdale Gallery, in support of the Zareinu Educational Centre. The show featured works by nine young Jewish artists. Seen from left are event participants David Collin, Marvin Navy, Heather Popliger, Richard Lancaster-Brooks and JUMP program and marketing manager Shoshana Allen. *Please see related story on page 12.* **[Rachel Albert photo]**

BACKYARD BASH FOR SICKKIDS: Longtime friends Jori Lichtman, left, and Leslie Zborovski and their kids enjoyed weekly playdates. Grateful for their healthy children, and for the great work that the Hospital for Sick Children does, they hosted Backyard Bash for SickKids. About 100 people enjoyed a swing set, sandbox, playhouse, crafts, bouncy castle, prizes, food, temporary tattoos and water tables. The event raised more than $1,300.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 28

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OBITUARIES
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Steeles Memorial Chapel

Stambler, Marion	July 9/09	Private
Wakerman, Sara	July 4/09	550 Cummer Ave
Igra, David	July 5/09	105 Camborne Ave
Little, Sally Sophie	July 6/09	15 Canyon Ave
Corcos, Evelyne	July 8/09	4005 Bayview Ave
Wolfe, Larry	July 10/09	50 Sultana Ave
Dvorina, Esfira	July 10/09	Private
Wagowsky, Sally	July 12/09	3560 Bathurst St
Duchen, Wilfred	July 12/09	784 Centre St
Saldov, Allan	July 12/09	18 Hammerstone Cres
Chkolnik, Soura	July 14/09	Private
Krauss, Hilda	July 15/09	2 Buchan Crt
Lebenbaum, Chana	July 14/09	43 Greenbush Cres
Goldberg, Marcia	July 7/09	35 Canyon Ave
Bendayan, Jacob (Jack)	July 16/09	3 Goldfinch Crt

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Ethel Shiman	Jul 4/09	80 Antibes Drive
Ben Horowitz	Jul 6/09	307 Ridley Blvd
Bert Bainerman	Jul 6/09	7300 Yonge Street
Estherelke Kaplan	Jul 7/09	55-A Avenue Rd
Sarah Belzberg	Jul 7/09	429 Walmer Road
Arnie Wiskin	Jul 6/09	16 Flemington Rd
Moe Greenspoon	Jul 9/09	1 Clark Avenue W.
Rhonda Goodman	Jul 8/09	555 Sheppard Ave W
Max Reiken	Jul 4/09	3560 Bathurst St.
Cecille Fisher	Jul 8/09	2 Forest Laneway
Ethel Bron	Jul 9/09	645 Castlefield Ave.
Florence Silver	Jul 10/09	3900 Yonge St.
Piter Bruhin	Jul 11/09	4866 Bathurst St.
Janet Hellmann	Jul 13/09	A Amlabar Place
Alan Winnick	Jul 13/09	265 Ridley Blvd
Paula Gold	Jul 15/09	106 Cocksfield Ave.
Bernard Simkins	Jul 15/09	1035 Eglinton Ave W.
Phyllis Gotlieb	Jul 14/09	Lower Village Gate
Jochewed Eva Goldberg	Jul 16/09	3560 Bathurst St.
Sandra Greenspoon	Jul 17/09	4981 Bathurst St.
Sam Kirshenblatt	Jul 16/09	89 Playfair Avenue
Sidney Lebow	Jul 17/09	3555 Bathurst St.

HEDREW DASIC MEMORIAL

Aaron Feldman	Jul 7/09	4001 Bayview Ave.
Joseph Cladman	Jul 12/09	605 Finch Ave. W.
Sam Walerstein	Jul 16/09	6000 Bathurst Street

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מה יהיה
שגריר ישראל בארה"ב אמר בנאום מרכזי שאיראן, מחומשת בפצצה אטומית, יכולה להכחיד את ישראל בדקה אחת. אלה הם דברים חזקים ומעוררי מחלוקת. מצד אחד עומדים אלה שאומרים שחובה שהעולם בכלל, והנשיא אובאמה בפרט,יבינו את הסכנן הרב שבגישה הרכה והפייסנית כלפי איראן. אנשים אלה אומרים ששליט איראן הוא הראשון מאז היטלר שהכריז גלויות שיש להשמיד את מדינת ישראל, ועל כן צריך לקחת בשיא הרצינות את כוונתו לפתח אנרגיה אטומית.
מצד שני עומדים אלה שמאמינים שישראל מנסה להגדיל את הסיכון האיראני כדי להסיר את עיני העולם מההתנחלויות. הם מצטטים את ראש סוכנות האטום שאמר שאין סימנים לכך שאיראן רוצה לפתח פצצת אטום, וכוונתה היא לפתח כורי גרעין כתחליף לנפט. טיעון זה נשמע מאוד קלוש למדינה שהיא מיצרניות הנפט הגדולות בעולם והנפט זורם בה כמו מים.
בין שתי הגישות האלה צריכים אזרחי ישראל לחיות חיים נורמאלים- בהחלט משימה לא קלה, ששום אזרח באף מדינה אחרת בעולם צריך לחוות.
אבל שישאר בינינו.

ברק ורעם
אהרון ברק, הנשיא הקודם של בית המשפט העליון בישראל, הוא ללא ספק אחד הדמויות המוערכות ביותר בישראל. אפשר להגדיר אותו כצור קיומה של ישראל, הפוסק האחרון במקרים הכי קשים ומעוררי מחלוקת. במשך כל הקריירה העשירה שלו שמר ברק את דיעותיו הפרטיות לעצמו. עכשיו, בפעם הראשונה, שנים אחרי שפרש מכס המשפט, הוא התבטא ושיתף בדיעותיו האישיות. מה יש לומר, הוא הביא לסערת ברקים ורעמים.
מה שאומר ברק זה שישראל, שאמורה להיות ארץ שדואגת לכל תושביה, דואגת במציאות רק ליהודים שיושבים בה ומפלה לרעה את אלה שאינם יהודים. לדבריו מצב זה מנוגד למגילת העצמאות ולעקרונות החוק הבינלאומי.
אלה הם דברים מאוד נוקבים. גם לדעתו של ברק צריכה ישראל להישאר מדינה עם צביון יהודי, אבל דווקא משום כך עליה להתאמץ ביתר שאת להבטיח שזכויות המיעוטים מתקיימות בה. במצב הנוכחי, מופלים המיעוטים בכל רמה, משירותי חינוך לבריאות וזכויות פרט.
לא סוד הוא שחלקים רחבים באוכלוסיה היהודית בישראל לא ממש מתעניינים או מייחסים חשיבות למצב המיעוט הערבי. לדעתם היו רוב המיעוטים האלה שמחים על חורבנה של ישראל ומצטרפים למחריביה, אם יבואו. ועל כן-אין סיבה מיוחדת להתרגש ממצבם.
אישית-אני סבור שמדינה שאינה דואגת למיעוטיה איננה דמוקרטית במובן המלא והאמיתי של המילה.
יש בעולם קולות הולכים ומתגברים שטוענים שישראל היא מדינת אפרטהייד. הצהרתו האחרונה והמנומקת של אהרון ברק, אמנם לא טוענת שישראל היא מדינת אפרטהייד, אבל בהחלט מחזקת את הטענה הזאת.
וזה צריך להטריד את כל מי שאכפת לו מישראל.
ושישאר בינינו.

Debunking a long-held falsehood

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

On July 8, the *New York Times* printed an excerpt from *Myths, Illusions, and Peace*, a book on the Arab-Israeli peace process, by Dennis Ross and David Makovsky.

In the excerpt, headlined "Linkage: The Mother of all Myths," Ross and Makovsky confront head-on one of the most persistent misunderstandings about the Middle East: the idea "that ending the Arab-Israeli conflict is prerequisite to addressing the maladies of the Middle East. Solve it, and in doing so conclude all other conflicts. Fail, and instability – even war – will engulf the entire region."

This notion has been advanced for decades by not only Palestinian and Arab leaders, but also key European and American officials. "The problem with this premise," Ross and Makovsky argue, "is that it is not true."

The authors list numerous Middle East conflicts and coups that had nothing to do with the Arab-Israel conflict: for example, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88); the Persian Gulf War (1990-91) and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Ross and Makovsky continue: "Since the origins of so many regional tensions and rivalries are not connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is hard to see how resolving it would unlock other regional stalemates or sources of instability. Iran, for example, is not pursuing its nuclear ambitions because there is an Arab-Israeli conflict. Sectarian groups in Iraq would not suddenly put aside their internal struggles if the Palestinian issue were resolved. Like so many conflicts in the region, these struggles have their own dynamic."

They also point out that, while the Israeli-Palestinian dispute must be resolved, contrary to widespread misperception, "it has not spilled over to destabilize the Middle East."

The excerpt concludes with some rhetorical questions: "Yet the argument of linkage endures to this day, and with powerful promoters. Why does it persist? And why has it been accepted among top policymakers as if it is factually correct?"

One reason is that the conflict has been a convenient excuse for Arab and Muslim leaders to avoid problems with their own inept and often corrupt, repressive governance, and shift the blame to Israel. Even in Egypt and Jordan, countries that have reached peace agreements with Israel, anti-Israel (and anti-Jewish) vitriol has abated only somewhat – again providing an outlet for oppressed citizens to vent their frustrations, while keeping the ruling regimes above the fray.

Also ignored is the fact that Islamic powers and parties such as Iran and Hamas may trumpet the "plight of the Palestinians," but they don't want to see a peaceful resolution to the conflict. For them, the final outcome can only be the disappearance of Israel. A two-state solution or any reconciliation with Israel as a Jewish state is only a cause for further conflict.

Thus, the oft-heard complaint that the failure to create a Palestinian state is fuelling Islamic radicalism in the Middle East and beyond has inverted the truth: this radicalism feeds on the perpetuation of the conflict and would not be assuaged by any resolution that leaves Israel in place and in peace.

Yet, according to Howard W. French in a review of *Myths, Illusions, and Peace* ("Debunking Commonplaces About a Singular Region," *New York Times*, July 8), the Ross-Makovsky argument against linkage is "somewhat overstated."

In a May 28 review of the book, the *Economist* magazine also found the anti-linkage argument not without merit but "overdone." It argued that the authors want the United States to pursue peace to defuse a conflict that "is stoking Islamic radicalism and anti-Americanism." The *Economist* failed to note that, for Ross and Makovsky, the pursuit of genuine Arab-Israeli peace is important in its own terms, not because it will neutralize a mythical reason for a rise in Islamic extremism.

Ross and Makovsky have pointed Middle East analysts in a useful direction: toward clear, factually based thinking, and away from blind, persistent myth-making.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Coast to Coast

Arab-Israeli journalist criticizes Obama's Middle East policies

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — An Arab-Israeli journalist who is a Muslim said that U.S. President Barack Obama made a big mistake in not supporting Iranian protesters more forcefully in the wake of Iran's recent presidential election.

Many Iranians, as well as some western countries, say the election was fraudulent.

Obama's reticence only emboldened Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to clamp down on protestors, the *Jerusalem Post*'s Khaled Abu Toameh told journalists at a recent lunch meeting organized by the Quebec-Israel Committee. Toameh met subsequently with journalists in Toronto as well.

And that in turn emboldened Hamas in Gaza to feel secure in its continued stranglehold there.

"This has all made Hamas stronger," Toameh said, because Hamas depends on Iranian support to stay in power.

When the protests began, he said, "Hamas people were worried that Ahmadinejad would fall."

But that didn't turn out to be the case. While discontent persists within a "large portion" of Iranian society and will eventually either bring reform or bring down Ahmadinejad, Obama's reaction was a case of "too little, too late," Toameh said

"Moderate" Arab regimes such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, who don't like Ahmadinejad or his country's territorial and nuclear ambitions any more than Israel does, were also concerned about Obama's response, he said.

Toameh, who has worked as a journalist for the *New York Times*, the *U.S. News and World Report* and NBC, started his career with a Palestine Liberation Organization publication called *Al-Fajr*.

But it didn't take long for Toameh to appreciate the difference between the PLO's completely controlled media and Israel's totally free and open version.

"There's just no comparing them," he said.

Toameh also said that no comparison could be made between Israel's freedoms – which he said are greatly envied by many if not most Arabs and Palestinians – and the lives of the people in the other countries of the region.

Khaled Abu Toameh is a journalist at the *Jerusalem Post*.

Deep down, Toameh said, "the majority of us want to live with Israel or in Israel," with more than a few even anxious to acquire Israeli passports.

He dismissed the notion increasingly heard outside Israel that it is an "apartheid" society that should be boycotted.

"I am an Arab Israeli and can tell you Israel is not an apartheid state," he said.

Israel should, however, devote more resources to supporting the Arab sectors within Israeli society, he added.

Sometimes, Toameh said a bit facetiously, he feels safer speaking his views, however supportive of Israel they may appear, "in Ramallah than on university campuses here [in North America]."

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Toameh said Obama has made an error by focusing on Israel's settlement policies, instead of the corruption that continues to permeate the Palestinian Authority (PA) under Fatah.

"Remember, it was Fatah's corruption that brought Hamas to power in Gaza," Toameh said.

He said that encouraging coexistence and the building of a true civil society within the PA, one not led by weak and corrupt leaders, but by those "capable of delivering," would be the first real step toward peace.

"The PA is a total failure," Toameh said. "The biggest problem is no leadership among the Palestinians."

He described PA leader Mahmoud Abbas as both weak and corrupt, and no different than all the Palestinian leaders who preceded him.

Ironically, Toameh said, Israel has to keep propping up Fatah in the PA because the alternative – Hamas – is worse. "The PA," he said, "is in power only because of the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] keeping them."

He said nothing less than a real war now exists between Hamas and Fatah. If elections were held again in Gaza today, he said, Hamas would win.

In Toameh's view, the only way to undermine Hamas is to "give Palestinians a better alternative."

"We have to help the Palestinians help themselves," he said. "We need strong and reliable partners, but Abu Mazen [Abbas] is simply not capable of governing."

Within Israel itself, Toameh said, most Israeli Arabs would prefer to live as citizens of Israel, but an Israel that does not "discriminate."

In the Knesset, he said, Arab MK voices are becoming increasingly "radicalized" and want to "disconnect" from the Jewish state.

Toameh does not believe most Arab-Israelis feel the same way and said they want to fight "for integration, not separation."

JEWISH AND MUSLIM INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: A group of 28 rabbis and imams from 11 European countries attempted to balance lofty ideals with complex religious and political realities at the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding's inaugural conference of European religious leaders. The conference was held in New York and Washington over four days during the third week of July. Participants visited Ellis Island, Yankee Stadium, the 96th Street Mosque, Yeshiva University, the White House and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Pictured with some of the conference participants in front of New York City Hall are Karen Mock, fourth from left, and beside her, on her left, Shahid Akhtar. Mock and Akhtar represented the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims at the conference, and made a presentation about interfaith dialogue programs between Jews and Muslims in Canada.

Author discovers nuggets of Montreal Jewish history

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — David Lewis, future leader of the New Democratic Party, was on the fast track in Britain's Labour Party, and even considered prime ministerial material as a young man.

Lewis (Losh), who was born 100 years ago in Russia and grew up in a poor immigrant family in Montreal, is believed to the first Canadian Jew to win a Rhodes Scholarship.

While at Oxford, Lewis was a power debater and advocate of socialism, having masterfully overcome the disadvantage of his late acquisition of English. The young Montrealer caught the eye of future Labour leader Michael Foote. Lewis was asked to run as a Labour candidate in a safe seat and was offered a position in the prominent law firm of party leader Stafford Cripps, who believed Lewis should be in the cabinet when the party returned to power.

But Lewis decided to return to Canada, and soon became national secretary of the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, forerunner of the NDP.

This bit of little-known information can be gleaned from the recently published *Fabled City: The Jews of Montreal* by Joe King.

Just when you thought King must have exhausted his stock of anecdotes about Jewish Montreal, King has come out with another book of stories about interesting Jewish personalities – both prominent and obscure – who have contributed to not only the community, but the city, the province, the country and sometimes beyond as well.

They left their mark in a wide range of fields from commerce to medicine and philanthropy, as well as public life and culture, and less traditional endeavours.

Fabled City (Price-Patterson) follows on King's popular *From the Ghetto to the Main* (2000) and its sequel, *Baron Byng to Bagels* (2006). He calls Fabled City the fruit of 40 years of research in archives, libraries and other primary sources.

At 85, King also knew first-hand many of the people he writes about, first as a print and then television journalist, and later as a community professional, notably during his many years as public relations director of Allied Jewish Community Services, as Federation CJA was then called.

> ***Who served the first smoked-meat sandwiches in Montreal?***

King has recycled some of the material from his earlier books, and other information is well-known to anyone with a knowledge of the Montreal Jewish community.

But the book is organized in a readable way, centring on more than 50 different individuals and vignettes, divided into 30 short chapters, and spanning the 250 years of official Jewish presence in Quebec. As is noted on the introductory page, Jews may have earlier set foot on this land, but by French decree, only Roman Catholics were allowed to live in New France.

How many knew that a Jew was second-in-command in the British navy at the time of Gen. James Wolfe's victory on the Plains of Abraham, that a Jewish engineer introduced hydro-electric power to Quebec, or that Montreal once had a Jewish police chief. Not all of King's subjects are heroes and saints; he includes a chapter on the Jewish Mafia.

The profiles are not only historic. Jews who are prominent today are also sketched, including those who helped sponsor the book's publication, including Thomas Hecht and David Azrieli

Fabled City touches on some of the issues that gripped Montreal Jewry, from the serious to the light-hearted, from the fight to lift the barriers to Jewish immigration in the 1930s to the still-raging debate over who served the first smoked-meat sandwiches in Montreal.

It's entertaining reading for anyone, no matter how much they thought they knew, and valuable for young people not so well-versed in the past. As with King's earlier books, he expects this one to be popular with nostalgic former Montrealers scattered around the world.

The book is illustrated with 379 photos, many of them archival. Some of the most eye-catching are those from family albums, such as the picture of Mildred Bronfman's (daughter of Abe) 1936 wedding to Bernard Lande, in which she wears a dress with a very long train, and the photograph of a teenage Tom Hecht with his parents and sisters soon after their arrival in Montreal in the early 1940s from Europe.

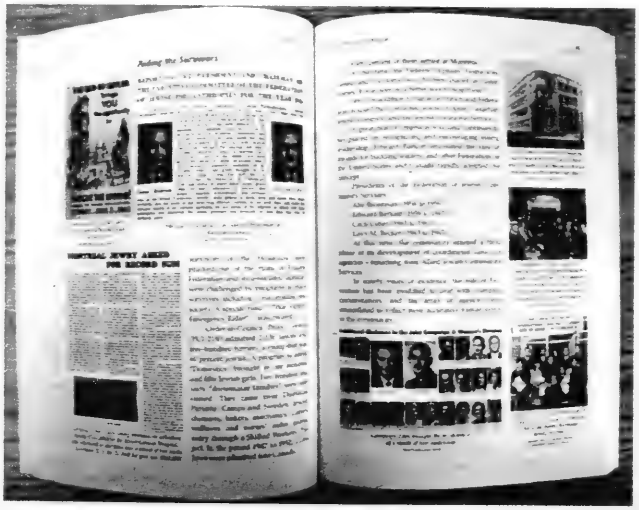
King explains in his preface that his mission is to continue to record what Jews have accomplished despite what he calls "the stupidity" of anti-Semitism.

"This book chronicles only a tiny segment of the immense Jewish contribution to the growth of Montreal. It would take a thick encyclopedia to outline the entire story," he writes, which means readers can probably look forward to more tales from the fabled city.

There are three "villains" in King's book – prime minister Mackenzie King, his Quebec lieutenant and justice minister, Ernest Lapointe, and Vincent Massey, then high commissioner to Britain – who failed to respond to the desperate plight of Jews persecuted by Nazism, the worst record of any western nation.

This callousness was Canada's loss, King argues. "Never in the history of mankind was there a greater opportunity for a country to benefit from the treasure-trove of genius fleeing Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and other countries."

Credit for the title goes to another great Jewish Montrealer, A.M. Klein, whose poem *Autobiographical* contains the lines: "It is a fabled city that I seek/ It stands in Space's vapours and Time's haze/ Thence comes my sadness in remembered joy..."



Joe King's *Fabled City: The Jews of Montreal* is lavishly illustrated with archival photos. The book is expected to be popular with former Montrealers.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Visual artist... focuses on her survivor grandparents

By SARAH PHILLIPS
Special to The CJN

Jessica Thalmann's family history was altered forever by the events of the Holocaust.

In her most recent artistic endeavour, Thalmann, the grandchild of survivors, explored the nightmare from behind her camera lens and through the eyes of her grandparents.

During last year's fall semester, the 20-year-old York University visual arts and English literature major was assigned a heritage project. Her photography teacher instructed the third-year class to use art as an investigative tool to examine a part of their identity.

"We got the assignment right before the strike and I thought, 'Thank God,'" Thalmann said, referring to what turned out to be an open deadline due to last year's work stoppage by York teaching assistants and sessional staff.

"I don't use my identity in my artwork at all. I actually hate that."

Jessica Thalmann

After a few failed attempts to capture herself within the frame, including taking snaps of her blurred figure in front of synagogues across Toronto, Thalmann turned the camera on her family.

She looked to her grandparents, both Holocaust survivors, as inspiration and used their images to convey the past and the future as a way to illustrate her identity.

"The project started out for my grandparents, but it has developed into something for a larger community. For people like them – for people who want their stories told and don't know how or have the means to tell it."

For the assignment, Thalmann photocopied old pictures of her grandparents from the 1930s onto transparency sheets and projected the images onto her grandparents.

The snapshots illustrate the spaces in which Harry and Mania Auerbach have lived out their lives – and, as Holocaust survivors, it's a miracle they lived at all.

In this way, the images are an affirmation of their lives, Thalmann said.

"I wanted to also capture them as they are right now on film so that I have a document that will last a very long time," she said. "It was really hard to be so self-reflective and look at my grandparents in that kind of way."

Thalmann has always been interested in artistic expression and, at the age of 17, she held her first exhibition in her last year of high school at the Toronto French School's annual International Baccalaureate Arts Show.

For the event, Thalmann completed a series of paintings inspired by her daily commute to school, in which she took the TTC from suburban Thornhill into the busy city streets of Toronto.

"We were underground together in a confined space, very intimate in a way that one doesn't think about, doesn't want to think about. How do we interact as a city, as a people, in these spaces? How don't we interact?"

The project made her realize that she was destined to be an artist.

"That was really my first taste of art, and I loved it," Thalmann said. "I knew I wanted to be an artist. I just didn't know how that would come about."

Thalmann is the most recent recipient of York's Willowdale Award, which recognizes exceptional achievement in painting by an upper-level undergraduate student, and she'll have an opportunity to present a solo show in the university's Gales Gallery.

She is also president of York's Creative Arts Students Association and vice-president of the Visual Arts Student Association.

In March 2009, at the Whippersnapper Gallery on Queen Street in Toronto, Thalmann and fellow York fine arts students put together an exhibition of their talents. Their goal was to develop an inclusive artistic community of York students.

"York has a very fragmented student body, especially in fine arts," said Thalmann. "I found that we could extend its identity into the downtown Toronto scene, where not a lot of York kids are represented. What I am trying to do with my peers is to make York visible."

Thalmann also continues to push the visibility of her heritage by continuing with her photography.

She wants to expand her Holocaust remembrance project by finding more people willing to talk to her or allow her to photograph them.

"It's important for young Jews or young individuals to understand – despite how hard it is – the ramifications of such an event. And even if it does hurt, we are descendants of such a traumatic event, and we can't negate the importance of something like that," she said.

"I think photographs are documents of memory and change over time, but memory is something that is fickle. But we rely on it in a way and it is something that we can't really understand. I like that nature and I tried to play with it."

More than just a document of the passage of time, Thalmann's images show both the resiliency and vulnerability of her grandparents. Her series is haunting and the photographs question our understanding of history, heritage, identity, trauma and memory.

Thalmann presented her work at the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition in Nathan Philips Square earlier this month and plans to take part in this year's Nuit Blanche in Toronto on Oct. 3.

Thalmann was inspired by her grandparents, Holocaust survivors, when she was given a photography assignment to use art to investigate her own identity.

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Rabbis arrested in N.J. sting

JTA

WASHINGTON — Several rabbis were arrested as part of a public corruption and international money-laundering investigation in New Jersey.

According to reports, among the 44 people arrested last Thursday morning by the FBI, along with the rabbis, were the mayors of three New Jersey towns, a deputy mayor and a state assembly member. They were to appear in federal court in Newark later in the day.

The money-laundering suspects were accused of moving "at least tens of millions of dollars through charitable, nonprofit entities controlled by rabbis in New York and New Jersey," according to a release by acting U.S. Attorney Ralph Marra.

Prosecutors said they worked with an informant who had been charged with bank fraud in May 2006, Bloomberg.com said. Investigators obtained hundreds of hours of audio and video recordings, according to prosecutors.

The rabbis arrested were religious leaders from Syrian Jewish neighbourhoods in Deal and Elberon, N.J., as well as Brooklyn, N.Y. The *Asbury Park Press* reported that the investigation involved the Deal Yeshiva, a Sephardi institution that has a boys' division in Ocean Township and a girls' school in West Long Branch.

The arrests reportedly are the result of a two-year probe by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service that began with an investigation of money transfers by members of the Syrian enclaves in Deal and Brooklyn, two tight-knit and wealthy communities.

The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and the IRS removed at least three boxes from the Deal Yeshiva as students were arriving at school last Thursday, the *Star-Ledger* reported, as well as several boxes from Congregation Ohel Yaacob in the same town.

The charged rabbis include Rabbi Saul Kassin, 87, of Congregation Shaare Zion in Brooklyn, N.Y.; Rabbi Eliahu Ben Haim, 58, the principal rabbi of Congregation Ohel Yaacob in Deal; Rabbi Edmond Nahum, 56, of the Deal Synagogue; Rabbi Mordchai Fish, 56, of Congregation Sheves Achim in Brooklyn; and Rabbi Lavel Schwartz, 57, Rabbi Fish's brother. They were charged with money laundering.

Rabbi Kassin is accused of laundering more than $200,000 through the informant from June 2007 through December 2008, according to prosecutors. Rabbi Fish, Rabbi Schwartz and two other defendants used a charitable, tax-exempt organization called BCG, which was associated with Rabbi Fish's synagogue, to launder money, according to the FBI.

The mayors of Hoboken, Ridgefield and Secaucus, the deputy mayor of Jersey City and an assembly member from Ocean Township were caught in the operation.

Also charged is Rabbi Levy-Izhak Rosenbaum, 58, of Brooklyn, who was accused of conspiring with others to acquire and trade human organs for use in transplantation. In one case noted in the complaint, Rabbi Rosenbaum said it would cost $150,000 – half up front. Rabbi Rosenbaum said some of the money would go to the donor and some to doctors in Israel, according to the complaint.

Bloomberg identified the co-operating witness as Solomon Dwek, a real estate developer in Monmouth County, N.J., who was charged in 2006 with scheming to defraud PNC Bank out of $50 million, according to a person familiar with the matter and court records. Dwek was never indicted. He has received 17 extensions to continue the period in which his case had to be presented to a federal grand jury.

U.S. representatives meet with Israel and her neighbours

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel and the United States are working to advance "common interests," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting.

He was speaking of this week's "important" visits to Israel by U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, Middle East special envoy George Mitchell and national security adviser Gen. James Jones.

Netanyahu said the visits are being held as part of a tight network of links between Israel and the United States "that has existed in the past and will to continue to exist in the present.

"Our common interests encompass all the main areas of bilateral co-operation," he said. "I believe that such an intensive continuity in contacts with the U.S. reflects our common denominator in the search for security stability, economic development, diplomatic progress and other strategic issues. This network of relations is important and steadfast."

Netanyahu downplayed differences between Israel and the United States on issues such as a freeze in settlement construction.

"Naturally, even within the fabric of friendly bilateral relations between two allies, there will not be full agreement on every point," the Israeli leader said. "On various-issues, we are trying to reach the same understanding so that together we may advance our common goals – peace, security and prosperity for the entire Middle East."

U.S. special envoy Mitchell called differences between Israel and the United States "discussions among friends" and "not disputes among adversaries."

Mitchell met Sunday evening in Tel Aviv with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Olmert as part of a series of meetings scheduled this week in the region.

"The American commitment to Israel's security is unshakable and will not change," Mitchell reportedly told Barak.

Barak told Mitchell that Israel is "willing to do all it takes to help" achieve peace in the region "while maintaining our vital interests. We understand the partners' needs, and we undoubtedly could use Mitchell's experience and wisdom in order to try and achieve this."

Mitchell met Sunday morning in Damascus with Syrian President Bashar Assad, and he called on Syria to help bring about peace in the Middle East.

"If we are to succeed, we will need Arabs and Israelis alike to work with us to bring about comprehensive peace," Mitchell told reporters following his meeting with Assad, *Ha'aretz* reported. "We will welcome the full co-operation of the government of the Syrian Arab Republic in this historic endeavour."

Mitchell said that restarting talks between Israel and Syria in the near future is one of the goals of President Barack Obama's administration. Turkey has said it is ready to resume mediation of those talks.

Syria continues to be under U.S. sanctions over its support for Hamas, but the United States under Obama recently sent an ambassador to the country for the first time in more than four years.

Mitchell was scheduled to meet Monday with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and the following day with Netanyahu.

Sanctions against Iran still a possibility

Continued from page 1

Gates, for his part, said that U.S. President Barack Obama, having offered to engage Iran over its disputed nuclear program, hopes for a response to the overture by late September.

"I think that the president is certainly anticipating or hoping for some kind of response this fall, perhaps by the time of the UN General Assembly," Gates told reporters.

The annual United Nations gathering takes place in late September.

Gates said that sanctions were a possibility if diplomacy fails, while also mentioning plans for a loosely defined defence umbrella meant to protect U.S. allies in the region.

"We will continue to ensure that Israel has the most advanced weapons for its national defence," he said.

Barak stressed that the schedule for U.S.-led engagement with Iran should be kept short.

The United States and Israel believe Iran is attempting to develop atomic weapons. Israel sees a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat, particularly in light of bellicose comments from Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Tehran's support for violent anti-Israel militant groups. Iran says its nuclear program is exclusively aimed at producing electricity.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later met with Gates in what his office described as a "highly positive atmosphere." The two discussed a comprehensive range of bilateral, diplomatic, defence and strategic issues.

A large part of the discussion was devoted to Iran. Gates said that the United States and Israel see eye to eye regarding the Iranian nuclear threat and that the United States engagement with Tehran will not be open-ended.

Netanyahu reiterated the seriousness with which Israel views Iran's nuclear ambitions and the need to utilize all available means to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weapons capability.

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OSCE endorses resolution to tackle anti-Semitism

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly recently concluded its annual conference in Vilnius by adopting a declaration that included resolutions on steps to address anti-Semitism and to promote free trade in the Mediterranean basin.

The Vilnius Declaration, passed by the assembly, which includes parliamentarians from 56 democratic countries, calls on member states and legislators to take action against "the dramatic increase in recorded anti-Semitic hate crimes and attacks targeting Jewish persons and property." The resolution also warned against "incidents of government-backed anti-Semitism in general and state-backed genocidal anti-Semitism in particular."

(Iran has been accused by MP Irwin Cotler and others of advocating genocidal anti-Semitism against Israel.)

The OSCE has passed resolutions since 2002 condemning anti-Semitism. This year's resolution was proposed by Canadian Senator Jerry Grafstein, vice-president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In a speech to the assembly, Grafstein pointed out that more than 300,000 Jews lived in Lithuania before the Holocaust and that 95 per cent were "hunted and slaughtered… It is important here in Vilnius that we remember what happened and record our opposition to anti-Semitism."

A second resolution called for "creation of a free trade area [which] will… contribute significantly to the efforts to achieve peace in the Mediterranean region."

Grafstein said trade between Israel and its Arab neighbours could lay the basis for improved political relations.

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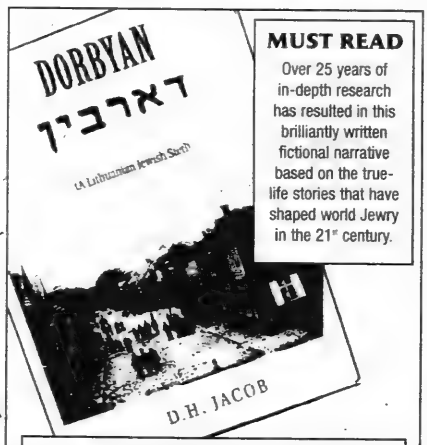

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Private property issue looms large over Polish-Jewish relations

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

WARSAW, Poland — Poland continues to grapple with one of the last unresolved legacies of the Nazi and Communist eras.

Seventy years after its occupation by Germany in World War II and 20 years since its liberation from the yoke of Soviet communism, Poland has yet to pass restitution legislation to compensate Poles for lost private property.

By all accounts, Jews, who comprised about 10 per cent of Poland's pre-war population, account for almost 20 per cent of the claimants.

Under a 1997 agreement, Poland has begun to return communal property. But according to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which has discussed the issue with Polish representatives, Poland is the only major country in the former Soviet bloc not to have settled this thorny problem.

A view of Warsaw, where Jews claim lost private properties [Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Last year, the then-prime minister of Poland, Jaroslaw Kaczcynski, and Poland's ambassador to Israel, Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska, both promised that the government would work to adopt a law to redress the issue.

Yet to this day, Poland has not lived up to its promise.

According to Stanislaw Krajewski, a member of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, and a founder of the Polish-Israeli Friendship Society, there have been 10 attempts to resolve the issue since Poland's peaceful passage to democracy in 1989.

Eight years ago, the then-president of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, vetoed such a bill, saying it violated the constitution and would be too costly to bear. In 2006, the Polish government submitted draft legislation proposing compensation for confiscated private property. But the bill was limited in scope, not including properties in Warsaw, the capital, and offering only 20 cents per dollar.

"It's a massive problem because millions of people are involved," said Krajewski, a Warsaw University philosophy professor. "It would be a huge financial burden on Poland."

By one estimate, Jewish property claims run the gamut from $30 to $40 billion (US), this at a time when Poland is struggling with a deepening recession that is expected to grow still worse in 2010.

The issue is exacerbated by two factors. Nearly half of Warsaw's infrastructure was destroyed during the war and replaced by new buildings, and some of the areas populated by Jews before 1939 lie outside Poland's present border.

In a recent interview in Warsaw, the chief rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, an advocate of Polish-Jewish reconciliation, said that Poland's failure to expedite the problem is a "major moral stain" on its soul.

Last year, in a piece in a Polish daily newspaper, the president of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, wrote, "To deny the return of stolen property or adequate compensation violates basic democratic principles. Such a denial to a Holocaust victim is a double humiliation. People who barely survived the war and later learned that everything they owned had been seized by others, including the Polish state, cannot be expected to wait any longer."

In a position paper, the World Jewish Restitution Organization said, "Assets taken over or expropriated must be given back, otherwise the wrong committed is not redressed. The international community demands it. Morality requires it." It added, "Poland should attempt to have all private properties confiscated from 1939 to the end of the Communist regime restituted to their former owners or their heirs, even if many such properties are currently possessed by third parties."

Last week, the new executive vice-president of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Gregory Schneider, said that it will continue to work with the World Jewish Restitution Organization in Poland.

"It is a matter of basic justice that stolen property be returned," he said. "We are not seeking a designated amount. Rather, we seek justice."

Zvi Rav-Ner, Israel's ambassador to Poland, told *The CJN* that Israel has raised the issue.

"We are asking them to find a solution. It's a difficult, painful, complicated issue. We just hope they find a solution. Within 15 to 20 years, there won't be [Holocaust] survivors left to benefit from a restitution law."

Konstany Gebert – a Polish-Jewish journalist and director of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture, an American-based organization that funds Jewish projects in Poland – warned that Poland will face an avalanche of lawsuits should action not be taken.

"Poland could be sued to the heavens," he said.

Three years ago, the New York Legal Assistance Group, a non-profit organization that provides free civil legal services to Holocaust survivors, threatened to file a claim against Poland in the European Court of Human Rights.

The claim would have been on behalf of French survivor Henryk Pikielny, who challenged Poland's refusal to give back his father's factory in Lodz.

Last year, Baroness Deech, a former British Broadcasting Corporation governor, hired lawyers in an attempt to force Poland to compensate her for properties that belonged to her maternal grandmother, who was murdered in a German concentration camp.

Polish officials realize that the issue is eroding Poland's image abroad.

"I wish it could have been settled already," said Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka, secretary of state for community relations and social affairs in the chancellery of the president and Poland's soon to be consul general in New York City.

"Now there's a financial crisis," she added. "But finally it has to be done, as soon as possible. We don't need this. It makes both sides nervous. Our relations [with the Diaspora] could be hurt. I'm very worried about it. But I can't imagine that the government will pass restitution legislation in this economic crisis. I ask the Jewish community to be patient."

Maciej Kozlowski, Poland's former ambassador to Israel and currently its ambassador at large for Jewish relations, urged Jews to understand his country's difficulties.

Due to border changes since 1945, a number of properties claimed by Jews are now in Ukraine, Belarus and Germany, he explained in an interview. "To write a law that excludes such property would be very difficult."

In any event, he noted, Poland is in no position to pay full value for lost properties.

Kozlowski, whose family estate near Krakow was confiscated by the Communist regime, expressed pessimism that Jewish claimants can ever be satisfied. "If we give them 20 per cent of the value of a property, we'll be asked for 50 per cent. It's a legal nightmare,"

He has no idea when Poland will finally come clean. "No one knows when a law will be passed. It's a very complicated issue."

Israel & the Jewish World

Halimi murderer gets life in prison, 14 gang members to be retried

JTA

PARIS — Fourteen of 27 gang members convicted of abetting the murder of Ilan Halimi will be retried.

Paris public prosecutors agreed to appeal the July 10 verdict against 14 members of a gang convicted of kidnapping Ilan Halimi and torturing the 23-year-old man to the point of death in 2006.

The announcement was made following the request on July 13 for an appeal by French Justice Minister Michele Alliot-Marie.

In line with Alliot-Marie's wishes, only those verdicts concerning gang members who received prison terms that were a few years shorter than recommended by the prosecutor will be appealed.

Gang leader Youssouf Fofana received the maximum punishment of life in prison and won't be retried.

The Halimi family and Jewish organizations have argued that the shorter prison terms did not match the severity of the crime, particularly since the French court ruled that the motive contained an anti-Semitic component.

Some 250 people gathered near the justice minister's office on July 13 in Paris in memory of Halimi, the French news agency AFP reported.

Fofana was sentenced to life in prison and 22 years without parole for organizing the gang kidnapping, torture and murder of Halimi.

Although Halimi family lawyer Francis Szpiner told French journalists he was "pleased" the Paris court had "recognized the anti-Semitic character of the crime," he and leaders of the French Jewish community criticized the lighter sentences given to fellow members of Fofana's gang, the Barbarians.

Szpiner said he regretted the court "showed a particular indulgence for those who aided and abetted Fofana in his crime," and he called on Alliot-Marie to appeal the verdict.

Two of Fofana's lieutenants who played particularly active roles in the 24-day torture of Halimi were sentenced to 15- and 18-year prison terms, respectively. The public prosecutor had asked for 20.

The young woman known as "Emma," who was used to lure Halimi to his attackers, was sentenced to nine years of jail time rather than 12. She was under 18 at the time of the crime and did not notify police during Halimi's three-week detention.

Of the 26 suspects who faced trial, which lasted two months, two gang members were acquitted and others received sentences ranging from six months to 18 years in prison.

The general prosecutor in the case told French journalists that the court's final decision was "fair."

At the verdict announcement, Fofana simulated applause, according to French reports.

The Jewish umbrella organization CRIF also criticized the court's decision, calling it "too lenient" toward Fofana's accomplices. CRIF also regretted that the trial was kept closed to journalists, a condition that "withdrew the exemplary and educational value that [the trial] should have had."

Halimi was found near death, naked and bound, by railroad tracks outside of Paris in February 2006.

Israel Briefs

Technion's special robot

Scientists at the Technion Institute of Technology have created a tiny robot able to crawl through a person's veins in order to diagnose and potentially treat artery blockage and cancer. The world's smallest robot, with a diameter of one millimetre, it's powered by an external magnetic field allowing it to be controlled for an unlimited amount of time during medical procedures.

'Nakba' reference excised

"Nakba," the Arabic term meaning "catastrophe" used to describe the creation of the State of Israel, will be removed from school textbooks. The announcement was made by Israel's Education Ministry. The term was approved for use in a textbook for Arab-Israeli schools in 2007. "After studying the matter with education experts, it was decided that the term nakba should be removed," Yisrael Twito, a spokesperson for Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar, told *Ha'aretz*. "It is inconceivable that in Israel we would talk about the establishment of the state as a catastrophe."

Dead Sea a finalist

The Dead Sea is one of 28 finalists in an international competition to name the seven natural wonders of the world. The announcement was made by the New 7 Wonders of Nature Foundation, which is organizing the competition. The Dead Sea will compete with other natural wonders such as the Amazon River, the Galapagos Islands, the Grand Canyon and the Maldives. Organizers expect more than 1 billion people to take part in online voting at www. new7wonders.com into 2011, when the finalists will be announced.

Security fence to stay

Israel won't be dismantling the West Bank security fence, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. The Israeli leader called the fence "a critical component of Israel's security" and told the Knesset that it "will remain in place and will not be dismantled." Reports in the Israeli media indicated that the Palestinian Authority had relayed a demand to U.S. President Barack Obama that the fence be removed because the West Bank security situation had improved. Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat told Reuters he had approached the United States on the issue. "The Israelis know that the wall adds to the complexities," he said. "It's part of the problem and not part of the solution." Netanyahu told Knesset lawmakers that the fence should be credited with restoring security and preventing the entry of Palestinian suicide bombers into Israeli towns, and thus it should stay.

– with files from JTA

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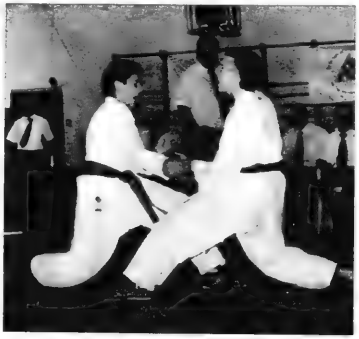

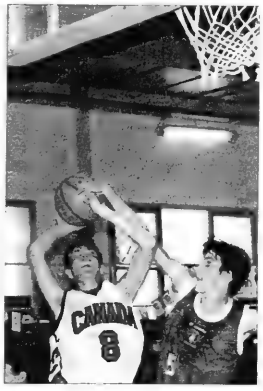

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Led by the double gold medal performance of sprinter Nicole Gitlin, the Canadian Maccabi team won 63 medals at the recently concluded 18th Maccabiah Games in Israel. Gitlin, from Saskatoon, earned her two gold medals in the 100-metre and 200-metre track and field events. Her 11.83 time in the 100 metres was 8/100s off the Maccabi World Union record.

Canada, with 12 gold, 14 silver and 37 bronze, finished behind only Israel and the United States in the overall medal tally. The men's softball team cruised through the competition, compiling a 10-0 record en route to their gold medal. The junior girls soccer team had to work a little harder, defeating favoured Team USA for gold in a shootout after double overtime. The women's volleyball team, competing for the first time at the Maccabiah Games, won a bronze medal. The men's basketball team also won a bronze, despite playing the medal game with only six players, as three others were out due to injury.

Seen here (right) are members of Team Canada at the Games and at the Dead Sea during a relaxing moment.

[Tom Petersil photos courtesy Maccabi Canada]

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Singing for kids is a thrill and a joy for Maggie G.

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

During her recent Father's Day concert at Dundas Square in Toronto, children's singer-songwriter Margot Glatt got kids into the summer spirit by getting them to play with imaginary beach balls, to the tune of her song *Take Your Big Beach Ball*.

"When you're doing a show, [kids] like to be involved," said Glatt, who goes by the stage name Maggie G. "You want to share that experience with them. It's not an intellectual experience – it's a shared fun experience."

Although Glatt grew up with a family who was heavily involved in the music business – her father was a promoter and her mother taught music to kids – she didn't get into writing children's music until after her first son was born.

Maggie G. is ecstatic about getting one of her songs on *Picnic Playground* a compilation of children's songs.

Her big break came when a friend asked her to write the lyrics for the *Safety Song* for the Canada Safety Council's Elmer the Safety Elephant. From there, she ended up working on the mid-'90s TV series, *Little Star*, about a crew of six puppets who travel through space and time aboard the smiling spaceship, Mimosa. The series can still be seen in Belgium and South Africa.

Glatt, who cites Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan and American folksinger Pete Seeger – whom she met when she was three years old – as her influences, released her first children's album, *Around the House With Maggie G.*, in November 2008.

Aidan Mason, the guitarist-singer she works with, co-wrote many of the songs on the CD.

Stéphane Deschamps, who worked with Glatt on *Little Star*, helped re-create some of the songs from the show for her 18-track album.

Glatt is excited about the newly released *Picnic Playground*, a collection of songs by the children's record label Putumayo Kids. Her song *Let's Bake Cookies* is the only one by a Canadian on the CD.

"I was ecstatic," Glatt said about getting her song on the recording. So ecstatic, in fact, that she made a music video for the song that you can view on YouTube.

Something else that excites Glatt is having the opportunity to make music for children.

"To be able to do it [create music] for kids is just really cool. I never actually thought I'd be up there on stage singing to kids, and it's totally a thrill and a joy."

Maggie G., then three years old, learns the basics from Pete Seeger.

Glatt did not see herself as a performer as she had stage fright when she was a child. At the age of 12, given the option to visit Israel or have a bat mitzvah, Glatt chose Israel because the thought of singing in front of a congregation terrified her.

While performing still makes her nervous, pretending that she is singing to her own children, Adrian and Morgan, helps to relieve the pressure, she said.

"[Kids] don't judge you for your vocal stylings. They are watching to see if you communicate with them. When you get up on a stage in front of kids, they already want to love you."

One of her greatest joys, performing and in everyday life, is making others happy. "Doing things that make people happy is definitely true of my character. If you can share your music and bring a smile, that's a wonderful feeling," Glatt said.

"Music is my comfort food. It's what I know, and it's what I love," she added.

You can listen to samples of Glatt's album and get more information on her website www.maggiemusic.com. To buy *Picnic Playground*, visit www.putumayokids.com.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

SUMMER LITERARY COLUMN, PART TWO: MELECH GRAFSTEIN & SHOLOM ALEICHEM

It was just over a century ago, in 1908, that a young Jewish lad in Warsaw, Poland, had a brief personal encounter with **Sholom Aleichem** that he would remember for the rest of his life. **Melech Grafstein**, then a 15-year-old Bundist and Yiddish theatre devotee, had earlier seen him reading on stage and also davening in the local Chevra Shas Synagogue.

But it was another thing entirely when Aleichem came into the wine shop where Grafstein worked, and the young man excitedly whispered into his boss' ear the name of their important customer. As the proprietor sought out the rare wine that Aleichem had requested, Grafstein made bold to exchange a few words with him on the subject of literature. Paying for the wine, Aleichem asked that two more bottles be delivered to his hotel, and it was Grafstein who soon arrived at the Hotel Victoria, bottles in hand, hoping for another memorable encounter.

"When the hotel porter wanted to relieve me of my parcel, I refused to part with it, insisting on personal delivery," he would later write in a delightful reminiscence. "Sholom Aleichem was not in his room, but his wife received me very graciously. I refused the tip she offered me, saying that it was an honour and a pleasure to serve such a noble madam and the wife of such a great author. She answered this compliment with a charming smile. Although only 15, I played the role of a cavalier, bowing from the waist and kissing her hand."

A noteworthy postscript to this story occurred six years later, in 1914, when Aleichem visited Toronto and spoke at Massey Hall. Grafstein, who by then had joined some of his well-known family members here, attempted to greet him backstage and "found him resting in the dressing-room, worn out from his appearance before his enthusiastic audience. His wife was fluttering over him, holding a glass of warm milk in one hand and a white towel in the other, which she used to wipe the sweat from his forehead. I saw that both had aged greatly, and I did not have the heart to intrude. Not long after this, the immortal Jewish humorist left this world forever."

Like a good wine, Grafstein's adoration of Aleichem matured over the next four decades, a period in which he settled with his wife, Rose, in London, Ont., raised a large brood of children and became a successful textiles merchant. Always involved in a variety of Zionist and Yiddish cultural activities, Grafstein in the mid-1940s founded Farlag Melech Grafstein, an eponymous Jewish publishing house that produced a high-quality magazine, the *Jewish Observer*, as well as a superlative hagiographic tribute to the "Mark Twain of the Yiddish world" with a folio-sized and dazzlingly illustrated book titled *Sholom Aleichem Panorama*.

Appearing just over 60 years ago in 1948, the 415-page volume was clearly a labour of love on the part of its publisher, who devoted two years of life and spared no expense in its assembly. The table of contents extended over four pages and included essays and diverse reminiscences, translated stories and dramatic works, and an assortment of letters by and about its famous subject. The book even featured beautifully illustrated end-papers and a fancy ribbon bookmark.

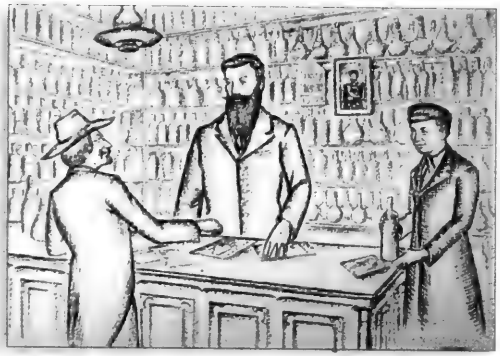
The contributors included such well-known figures as **Itzik Manger**, **S. Niger**, **Maurice Samuel**, **David Rome**, **A.M. Klein** and Aleichem's daughter, **Lala Kaufman**, as well as Grafstein himself. **Isadore Goldstick**, Grafstein's friend and colleague in London, Ont., and a well-known scholar and Jewish leader, provided many of the translations – so expertly that Schocken later anthologized them under separate cover. Illustrations, including dozens of likenesses of the pioneering Yiddish writer, came from **Arthur Szyk**, **Lionel S. Reiss**, **Saul Raskin** and other top Jewish artists, including several that had been commissioned exclusively for this volume.

An imprint of the publishing house Farlag Melech Grafstein (1948).

The book had a limited print run and used copies today are rare. Grafstein also produced a less lavish but no less glowing book on his alternate literary idol, Yiddish writer **Y.L. Peretz**, a volume that today is also exceedingly rare.

"London, not our great imperial city, but a small town in Ontario, Canada, has produced and sent out a Sholom Aleichem book that is really magnificent," noted the *Jewish Chronicle* of London England soon after the *Panorama* appeared. The reviewer added, however, that the volume was a bit too "over-rich" and "ostentatious" for his taste. But its high production values only reflected Grafstein's unbridled adoration of Aleichem and his sense, shared by many ardent Yiddishists, that no pedestal could be high enough for this patriarchal literary figure.

Besides its many fine attributes, the *Sholom Aleichem Panorama* accomplished two notable firsts. First, it brought renewed attention to Aleichem two decades before the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* gilded the writer's reputation anew. Second, it contained an imperative early "In Memoriam" page to the six million who had only recently perished, urging readers to "remember what the Nazi-Amalek did to your people."



The late London, Ont. merchant and publisher Melech Grafstein, depicted at right at age 15, commissioned this illustration of his encounter with Yiddish writer Sholom Aleichem, left, in the wine shop in which he worked in Warsaw in 1908.

It must have been partly in response to the fresh European tragedy that Grafstein sought to remember the vibrant cultural life of his youth and give it a new, resplendent existence in a book – where it continues to shine even today. You will be well rewarded to request a copy of the *Sholom Aleichem Panorama* on your next visit to a major university or public library.

* * *

Synagogue Tour: Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre presents a guided visit to the beautifully restored Kiever Synagogue with **David Pincus**, president and historian, to learn about history, architecture, Judaica and folk art. 750 Spadina Ave. at Bloor Street West. Thursday, Aug. 6, 1:30 p.m.

Correction

The article about Jeff Bien, "Poet makes the transition to singer" (*CJN*, July 9), contained several errors.

Although Bien did live in Montreal many years ago, he is a resident of Kemptville, Ont., a small community near Ottawa.

Also, Bien sang the songs on his new CD live several times prior to his doing so for the CD, and his *Kaddish* was inspired by French composer Maurice Ravel, whose version of *Kaddish* is the first of *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques*, composed by Ravel in the early 1900s.

Finally, Bien studied theology at university several years ago, but he is not now a theology student. *The CJN* apologizes for the errors.

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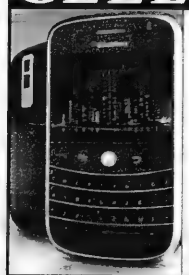

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Banding together for a cause

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Next Wednesday, veteran bandleaders from Toronto's simchah circuit will unite once more in an evening of song and dance, all to help child victims of terror in Israel.

The second annual Band-Tastic event will rock and roll over at Le Parc Conference and Banquet Centre in Thornhill (Aug. 5, 7 p.m., 8432 Leslie St.), with proceeds going to help send children from the besieged city of Sderot in the Negev to JNF summer and winter camps across Israel.

Last year's Band-Tastic event saw nearly 400 participants dance, sing and enjoy a festive mood created by the musicians and a silent auction.

The auction will be held again this year and tickets are now on sale for an "early bird" price of $60, Stephen Adler, a public relations co-ordinator for the event, told *The CJN*.

Participating band leaders – which this year include Saul Helman, Stan Hiltz, George St. Kitts, Rick Levine, Shelley Miller, Larry Rodness, Alan Shiner, Kenny Simon and Paul Zurionce – are all donating their time and energy, and they're looking forward to creating the same buzz that accompanied the inaugural Band-tastic gala last year at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Adler said.

Rodness told *The CJN* he's looking forward to his second go-around this year with Band-Tastic, after playing in the event last year.

"Last year's gig was more than I could hope for with respect to turn-out," he said, adding that getting the chance to play with his colleagues in the music business for a good cause was "fun" in and of itself.

"We all dredged up great memories. And the camaraderie translated to a great feeling on stage when we performed that night. The guests came expecting a unique event, and it was, both for them and for us."

He said rehearsals this year have taken on an extra tinge of excitement because there will be some new faces on stage and the musicians all feel more relaxed heading into Band-Tastic this year, now that they know what to expect.

For tickets, e-mail sheila.krone@jnf.ca, or call 416-638-7200, ext. 30.

Band leaders Larry Rodness on guitar, Saul Helman on drums and Kenny Simon on bass guitar during rehearsals last year for Band-Tastic [Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf photo]

Van Wilder director hungry to make his own movie

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

Harvey Glazer wants to make *his* movie.

That's not to say his recent film *Van Wilder: Freshman Year* wasn't a fun and intense movie-making experience. It's just that the 35-year-old Toronto resident is hungry to create a work of art he can proudly call his own.

"I want to direct something that is 100 per cent mine," Glazer says. "And all criticism of that film will be something I'm accountable for, because I created it."

For the past few years of his nascent career as a filmmaker, Glazer has been tapped to helm third-party projects.

Van Wilder: Freshman Year, which went straight to DVD, is the third film in the *Van Wilder* franchise, which started in 2002 with Ryan Reynolds cast as the lead. Glazer directed *Kickin' It Old Skool* in 2006, produced by Bob Yari of *Crash* fame.

Harvey Glazer

But it's not as if Glazer is new to figuring out how to polish a prized gem. He's best known as a music-video director, with more than 108 music videos under his belt. If you've watched a music video by Canadian artists Classified, Jully Black or Choclair, you've likely seen Glazer's work. His company Twothreefivefilms is one of the leading firms for music-video production in Canada.

He points out the different approaches to tackling music videos and films. "Videos are all about style and esthetic, but in films you are closely working with people to bring out emotions," he says.

If Spike Jonze can smoothly transition from music-video director (Beastie Boys, Weezer) to film director (*Being John Malkovich*), why not a chirpy Jewish Canadian who grew up in Thornhill, Ont.?

Glazer has been involved in comedy films so far, a genre that requires a particular skill set. "For *Van Wilder*, I wanted to go back to the films I liked in the 1980s, such as *Porky's*. We gave it an old-school feel," he says, adding how references to classic comedies act as a homage to the films that inspired him.

Has Judaism affected his film career? "It's given me that trademark Jewish sense of humour," Glazer admits.

Speaking of Jewish humour, Glazer says he would love to work with Adam Sandler, but only if he could "take him back to his *Billy Madison* days." (*Billy Madison* is a 1995 comedy starring Sandler as a slacker who must go back to school in order to take over his father's company.)

Glazer says his life as a film director varies wildly from the quick shoots he did on music videos. Picture a year of your life dedicated to one project, one group of actors and production staff. "You eat, sleep and live on the movie you're working on," Glazer says. But he adds that the dedication makes the project substantial and meaningful, a goal that is more than just a notch in the belt. It's brush-stroked with every rewrite and reshoot the director wanted.

Glazer has begun the important phase of networking with key film personnel, whether they are contacts at TeleFilm or Hollywood producers. He says he's currently building his career path, and he only sees more intriguing work on the horizon.

And once he makes the film that's 100 per cent Harvey Glazer? "I hope people like the vision of what I set out to do," he says.

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Holocaust literature and Yann Martel

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

Some writers have all the fun. Yann Martel, whose *Life of Pi* won the Man Booker Prize and sold almost two million copies in paperback, has sold the followup for $3 million – the outcome of an auction managed by his Toronto-based agent, which was won by Spiegel & Grau, part of Random House.

Norman Ravin

The new book, according to Martel, will be an allegory of the Holocaust involving animals. Speaking to the *New York Times* from Saskatoon, Martel described his treatment of the Holocaust this way: "I was thinking that you don't have many imaginative takes on it like George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and its take on Stalinism." Citing Roberto Benigni's film *Life Is Beautiful* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* as models, Martel pointed to what he sees as a lack of metaphorical treatments of the events of the war. Artists are, he feels, "fearful of letting the imagination loose on the Holocaust."

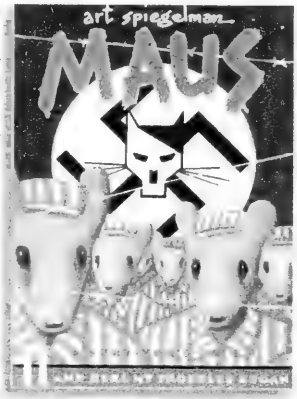
Life is Beautiful and *Maus* are two examples of "imaginative takes" on The Holocaust.

A lot can be said about such claims, even without Martel's as-yet untitled book at hand. In this case, the ephemera of an author's interview allows us to prepare for what will undoubtedly be a fresh literary juggernaut in the ongoing artistic response to the war. The first thing one can say is there have been influential allegorical "takes" on the Holocaust. They include early and successful responses, such as André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*, which does not build its narrative around animals, but uses familiar motifs from folklore and legend and other kinds of phantasmagoric effect.

Unsuccessful allegorical efforts include Leslie Epstein's *King of the Jews*, whose imaginative response to the Lodz Ghetto's Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski styles itself after Hollywood slapstick movies, aiming to address the extremity of events with the elastic bodies and comic-book yawping of American popular culture. An even stranger and much more interesting book along these lines is Gordon Lish's *Extravaganza*, which is built upon Lish's version of the bitterly funny vaudeville act of a comic duo known as Smith and Dale. Running darkly behind their patter is an ever-growing awareness of the Holocaust's bleak outcome.

The foremost allegorical Holocaust novel is Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939*, which appeared in English translation in 1980. A slim Kafkaesque parable, *Badenheim* presents a moment in time in a prewar central European spa town, and makes no mention of the oncoming war or the burden of Europe's Nazification, although it continuously points toward our knowledge of these things. It is true that Appelfeld's book is nearly unique in the Holocaust canon, yet it sits atop it, reflecting readers' (and writers') willingness to understand the events of the war by way of extended allegory or fable.

Martel's reference to the *Maus* books suggests either his own light reading of Spiegelman or a quality of ambiguity in *Maus* that begs misinterpretation. One doesn't think of Spiegelman's masterpiece as an allegorical text. Its use of mice, cats, pigs and other well-chosen animal faces for different nationalities is so ironic in its application that the effect is one of masterly caricature that constantly points to its own artifice. A remarkable example of this appears in a scene set in wartime Sosnowiecz, where, to masquerade as a non-Jew, the author's father ties a pig mask over his mouse face (what can this possibly mean, the reader wonders; what has changed in Vladek Spiegelman's demeanour to effect the charade?)



One must acknowledge, too, the graphic honesty of Spiegelman's portrayal of "mouse" corpses, piled as they were at the end of the war at Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen. Quite unlike anything allegorical, and more direct than much literary and filmic representation of the war, these images are reminiscent of the atrocity story captured in newsreel footage of the camps. It's difficult to know what Martel could mean by social realist Holocaust art, but there is no question about the weight of historical detail in *Maus*.

Another source of allegory dealing with the Holocaust is a growing field of writing for children about the war. In this work such motifs as stars, trains, lost children and camps whose chimneys smoke darkly, day and night, are treated as suggestive objects that teach moral lessons to five- or eight-year-olds without showing them the actuality of German atrocity.

This latter feature – Holocaust history presented without violence – came up often in the reception of Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*. Although my experience is anecdotal, I was often told by the film's viewers that they found it satisfying to see a film about the war "without the awfulness and violence." Regardless of what one felt about Benigni's film, there is, at least, the responsibility to consider the effect of such audience response.

What is the point of the kind of counterarguments offered above? In part they are cautionary. Sweeping claims that don't accurately reflect the state of the arts are inherently self-serving. They aid Martel in preparing the ground for his own effort, which should prove itself on its own literary terms; they reorder the landscape and assert a need for certain kinds of books that may not be as pressing as Martel says it is; they strive to reshuffle the canon – to place certain books at the peak and forget others. The average reader won't care about such things, but a careful reader of novels about the war should.

It may be less than fun to refuse a ticket aboard the yahoo express being prepared by Random House for the release of Martel's novel. Its supporters are already proclaiming its readiness to "become part of the canon of books about the Holocaust" that will "sell over time." The former issue – what gets into the canon – ought to be largely an audience-based decision. The latter hope – for sales eternal – reflects a publisher's pursuit of a title that will be reprinted in many languages over decades. Martel is not responsible for the way he is promoted, but his remarks from summery Saskatoon offered unguardedly when the *Times* came calling – reflect a lack of regard for the writerly effort, both great and failed, that came before him.

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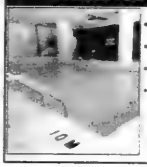

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NCAA baseball beckons Toronto teens

By SHAUN SHLOMO FELDMAN
CJN Intern

Maxx Tissenbaum and Steven Betcherman have a lot in common. Both are 18, both are recent high school graduates and both are moving up quickly in the world of baseball.

Tissenbaum seemed destined for the sport, as baseball practically runs in his family. His grandfather, father and mother were all ball players and, almost symbolically, Tissenbaum's first gift when he was born was a baseball glove he was small enough to sit in.

But what sealed the deal for the Toronto native was the film *Back To Back*, a documentary about the Blue Jays winning the World Series twice in a row in the early 1990s, which he would watch for hours on end as a kid.

It seems fitting, then, that Tissenbaum now has the chance to prove his mettle as a professional ball player with the team he admires most: the Toronto Blue Jays themselves.

Last month, the Jays picked five Canadian players in the last 10 rounds of the draft – Tissenbaum made it into the 43rd slot. He initially assumed he wasn't going to make the draft after not hearing from the Jays for several days, so when he received a call from scouting director Kevin Briand informing him he was one of the players they were planning on negotiating a contract with, he was ecstatic.

"I was jumping out of my shoes," he said. "I just looked over to my dad, because we were driving home from lunch at that point, and whispered to him so as not to sound too excited on the phone, 'Oh my God, I just got drafted by the Blue Jays!' and as soon as I got home I called half of the world to try to tell everybody to make sure I didn't miss anybody."

Maxx Tissenbaum

Tissenbaum just finished high school and is moving to Long Island to attend Stony Brook University, which has a NCAA Division 1 baseball team ranked in the top 50 and where he will study business management. Briand advised Tissenbaum and his fellow draft picks to spend the next few years honing their skills playing college baseball before going pro.

"They said, 'You all have good universities to go to – it's probably best to go to university right now and then deal with playing professional baseball three or four years down the road.' So they picked us sort of as a nod to our talent now, and if we have a terrific summer, like absolutely off the charts, they said they'd deal with trying to sign us then," he said.

Tissenbaum's parents were a major influence on his decision to focus on baseball, which began when he started playing for the North York Blues, a local team, more than a decade ago. He credits his father as the driving force behind his professional direction, and he recalls how the elder Tissenbaum would hone his son's skills through rigorous training routines after school in order to improve his game.

"My dad and I would stand out on our driveway for an hour and a half and he would just hit me 150 ground balls, back and forth and back and forth across our driveway till both of us were too tired to keep going. And then we decided it would be the same drill every single day," he said.

The six-foot-one-and-a-half, 200-pound shortstop currently plays for the Toronto Mets, an all-star city team in the Premier Baseball League of Ontario. He is optimistic about his chances of playing for the Jays at a future date.

"What everyone has said all along is that when you get drafted in high school, your chances only get better when you go to university, because you're playing against the next level talent pool… So, I think in the future it will probably happen again and hopefully, it'll be a little higher, a bigger chance next time," he said.

Like Tissenbaum, Team Ontario third baseman Steven Betcherman also has a long history in the sport, having been involved in organized baseball since he was six years old.

"I guess I always just loved the game," he said. "Even when I was a little kid, I'd always watch the Jays games… I played all those [other] sports when I was younger, but I always loved baseball."

Betcherman is enrolled at Rollins College in Florida, where he will begin classes next semester. It wasn't his first choice, however. He was planning to attend the University of Vermont, until the school eliminated its baseball program in February due to funding issues.

"It was shocking," Betcherman said of the university's decision, "because I'm all ready to go, and three months later, they have to cancel the program. That never really happens. But I was in touch with Rollins before, and after that I called them again and they had a spot for me, so everything worked out OK."

Betcherman is in his third year training with Team Ontario head coach Murray Marshall in sessions that take place three to four times a week, but he's expecting his regimen to get more intensive as he enters college.

He's also been doing quite a bit of travelling lately. The Toronto native returned to his hometown a few weeks ago after playing in Oklahoma with Team Ontario, and he's now back in the United States again, playing in Ohio and Texas before going off to school. He says he's made a lot of friends while playing for Team Ontario and appreciates being around people who share his enthusiasm for the sport.

"I'm really good friends with all the guys on my team, but of the ones from school, I'm pretty much the only one who plays serious baseball."

Although his throwing game is strong, batting is the area he says he still needs the most work in.

"Defensively, I feel I'm pretty good. That's probably the best part of my game. If I could just work on hitting for power, that would be great."

Betcherman is looking forward to continuing his studies in biology, his strongest subject, and is planning on majoring in sports medicine as a complement to his professional goals.

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Canada wins gold, silver at Jewish hockey tournament

By STEVE SIMMONS
Special to The CJN

METULLA, ISRAEL — When the second World Jewish Hockey Tournament had come to an impressive end, players from three countries stood arm and arm on the ice, snapping pictures, exchanging hugs and jerseys, trying to make the experience last just a minute longer.

It was that kind of 10 days at the Canada Centre, emotional, passionate, a sporting and cultural adventure of a lifetime, with nine teams and five countries of hockey players a kick save away from the border of Lebanon.

As expected, the American and Canadian teams dominated the event, with each country coming away with gold medal victories. Team USA won the senior (over-18) division and Team Canada White, coached by former Maple Leafs' star Steve Thomas, running the table in the junior (17-and-under) division.

For full story, visit our website at www.cjnews.com.

'You are what you eat': prof

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Like religious traditions, food plays a significant role in maintaining cultural bonds within a community, said Hersh Jacobs, a Ryerson University professor who teaches a course on the geography of food.

"The great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber talked about how people… belong to organizations and are in the business of differentiating themselves from different groups and creating a sense of bond and cohesion within a group. I just think that food is one way to achieve that goal," Jacobs said in an interview.

"We identify ourselves on the basis of the kinds of things we eat, and a lot of traditions, whether they are religious traditions or cultural traditions, in some way have some kinds of foods that are connected to certain holidays… Food is a way of expressing your identity and food says something about who you are individually, who you are collectively… and something about who you are geographically."

He said that an example of a religious tradition that focuses on food is the Passover seder.

Traditional Passover foods, such as matzah and bitter herbs, are typically eaten each year at a seder to symbolize certain aspects of the story about the Jewish Exodus from Egypt.

"It's not just purely a religious experience. It's more of a cultural and bonding experience," Jacobs said.

He said that food is also an important part of life-cycle events such as funerals and shivahs.

"In Jewish culture, people send food into the houses, and it is part of your acknowledgment and part of your connecting with the family and expressing your sorrow and support for the family," Jacobs said.

"For me, at least, it is often more enjoyable than food at other times. You feel guilty almost – maybe it's part of Jewish guilt – you feel guilty for enjoying food while you sit there, while you're lamenting the death of someone who is important to you."

He added that what people eat also says a lot about where a person comes from and who they are.

"Of course, you are what you eat… When you're going on a date or something like that for the first time, how you eat and what you eat says a lot about who you are and it tells you a lot about the person you're with," Jacobs said.

"People take enormous pride in the food they eat, and one way of readily offending an individual is to say something unkind, [such as] 'I think Italian food is disgusting… or Jewish food is designed to kill man.'"

He said that diets are relatively contemporary and geographical, meaning, that what we eat is "of this time and of this place."

That being said, foods continue to evolve and change as people move from one place to another and new ingredients are introduced to a community.

"When you think of Italian food, what are the cornerstones of Italian food? Tomato sauce, gnocchi, polenta. Polenta is like a cornmeal. Tomatoes – there were no tomatoes in Europe until [Christopher] Columbus. Tomatoes are a New World fruit. Until Columbus came, there was no tomato sauce. How do you even conceive of Italian food without tomato sauce?" Jacobs said.

"When you think of gnocchi, it was made with potatoes. There were no potatoes. They originated in the Andes. There was no polenta because corn again is a New World vegetable."

Just as Italian food has evolved to include New World ingredients and influences, so, too, has Jewish food.

"If diets change and evolve with the movement of people, with wars and conquests and the shifting of people from place to place, there are very few groups of people who have been more peripatetic than Jews in terms of their movement," Jacobs said.

"Jews from Russia come to western Europe, to North America… As Jews have gone from place to place, they have incorporated and adapted new ingredients and new techniques and recipes and they changed and incorporated what they could."

ORANGE-SCENTED COUSCOUS

2 c water
5- 6 tblsp orange juice, divided
1 tblsp olive oil
1 tsp finely grated orange peel
1 1/2 c couscous

Mix 2 c water, 2 tblsp juice, oil, and peel in medium saucepan; bring to boil. Stir in couscous; cover and remove from heat. Let stand until liquid is absorbed and couscous is tender, about 12 min. Fluff with fork, adding orange juice by tablespoonfuls to taste. Season with salt and pepper.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

I met this new guy, Phil, and we've had three dates so far. He seems like a decent guy – good sense of humour, a gentleman, bright, dependable, adorable – but he has one major shtick: he's afraid of germs. How do I know? The other day we went out for dinner, and I ordered soup. It was so delicious that I wanted to share, so I filled up my spoon, blew on it a little, and, with my hand under the spoon, brought it to his mouth so he could taste it.

You'd think I was serving him spiders. He instinctively jerked back and said, "Let me taste it myself," and he used his own spoon to taste the soup.

I am seeing lots of little signs that indicate he has germ issues. He's also obsessed with using hand sanitizer – and here I thought he was the ultimate gentleman for not kissing me after three dates.

Do you think I should take a pass on this one? He's so cute and has a great personality.

Germ Squirm

Dear Germ Squirm

If you're serious about making it work with Phil, pull out the big guns and just ask. Tell him what your observations are, and give him some concrete examples of what you've observed. Give him the opportunity to explain if, in fact, it is just a "preference" to use his own spoon and hand sanitizer all the time, or if it's part or a bigger problem.

Germaphobia and/or OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) are very real conditions that shouldn't be taken lightly. If this is a "shtick," as you call it, and not an actual underlying issue that plagues this guy, you need to know that. The only way to know is to communicate.

Many people carry around a little bottle of hand sanitizer these days and prefer not to share cutlery. We're bombarded with germ-warfare awareness every day – from the excessive reporting of swine flu to grocery aisles full of antibacterial products to hand sanitizer at every turn. Some supermarkets are now providing wipes for your shopping cart.

Germ busting has become part of everyday life.

As for Phil, perhaps he really is just being a gentleman by not kissing you yet. If you really like this guy, don't be shy and get the real facts.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN., *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional*

How to be happy for no reason

Life Coach Corner
By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

So many of us look outside of ourselves to find true happiness. We think that finding the perfect career or relationship or achieving a goal will lead to the ultimate in finding our bliss.

But it actually goes even deeper than that says Marci Shimoff, who has written a magnificent book called *Happy For No Reason: 7 Steps to Being Happy From the Inside Out*. Naturally, I was intrigued by the title alone and wanted to understand more about this exciting premise, so I called Shimoff in California.

In her book, Shimoff intersperses comments from some of the world's leading experts in the fields of positive psychology with personal stories from more than 100 truly happy people. She offers up a seven-step program that will help you be happier right now, "no matter where you start."

What an inspiring concept – a way to help people find a deeper and more lasting happiness that doesn't depend on externals but is always available to you once you tap into the wellspring of happiness that resides inside of your being.

As one of the bestselling authors of *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul* and *Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul*, Shimoff has her fingertips on the pulse of how to raise your "happiness set point" and gives us practical steps on how to practise being happier right now.

As she says, "Studies show that each of us has a happiness set point, a fixed range of happiness we tend to return to throughout our life that's approximately 50 per cent genetic and 50 per cent learned. In the same way you'd crank up the thermostat to get comfortable on a chilly day, you can actually raise your happiness set point!"

In *Happy For No Reason*, Shimoff gives us practical "how-to" strategies that will help us experience happiness from the inside out.

Some of the chapters include subjects such as taking "ownership of your happiness." She looks at how to find solutions instead of problems and how to find the gifts in life and make peace with yourself.

A beautiful section in the book deals with how not to believe everything your mind tells you, and how to let go of the negative thoughts that don't serve you. This chapter also looks at ways to "incline your mind toward joy."

How to "let love lead" and practise forgiveness, gratitude and loving-kindness and how to "make the cells of your body happy" are some other steps toward being happy for no reason, along with plugging yourself "into spirit" – by listening to your inner voice and trusting the universe to unfold as it should.

One of the most profound chapters is on how to live inspired by purpose and contribute to something greater than yourself. Another notable chapter is on how to cultivate nourishing relationships and how to surround yourself with such great support that you see the world as your family.

The 21 "habits" in the book are what make the difference, and Shimoff suggests you work on even one at a time, the one that resonates for you the most, and practise that for a few weeks.

"You will see your life transforming within a short period of time. You may want to find a happiness buddy. Tell them what your happiness habit of the week is and check in with each other. Just having your attention on raising your happiness level will make a difference and will create the lasting change that will lead you to the life of your dreams."

To learn more about Shimoff's joyful and inspiring book, you can check out her site at www.happyfornoreason.com.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net

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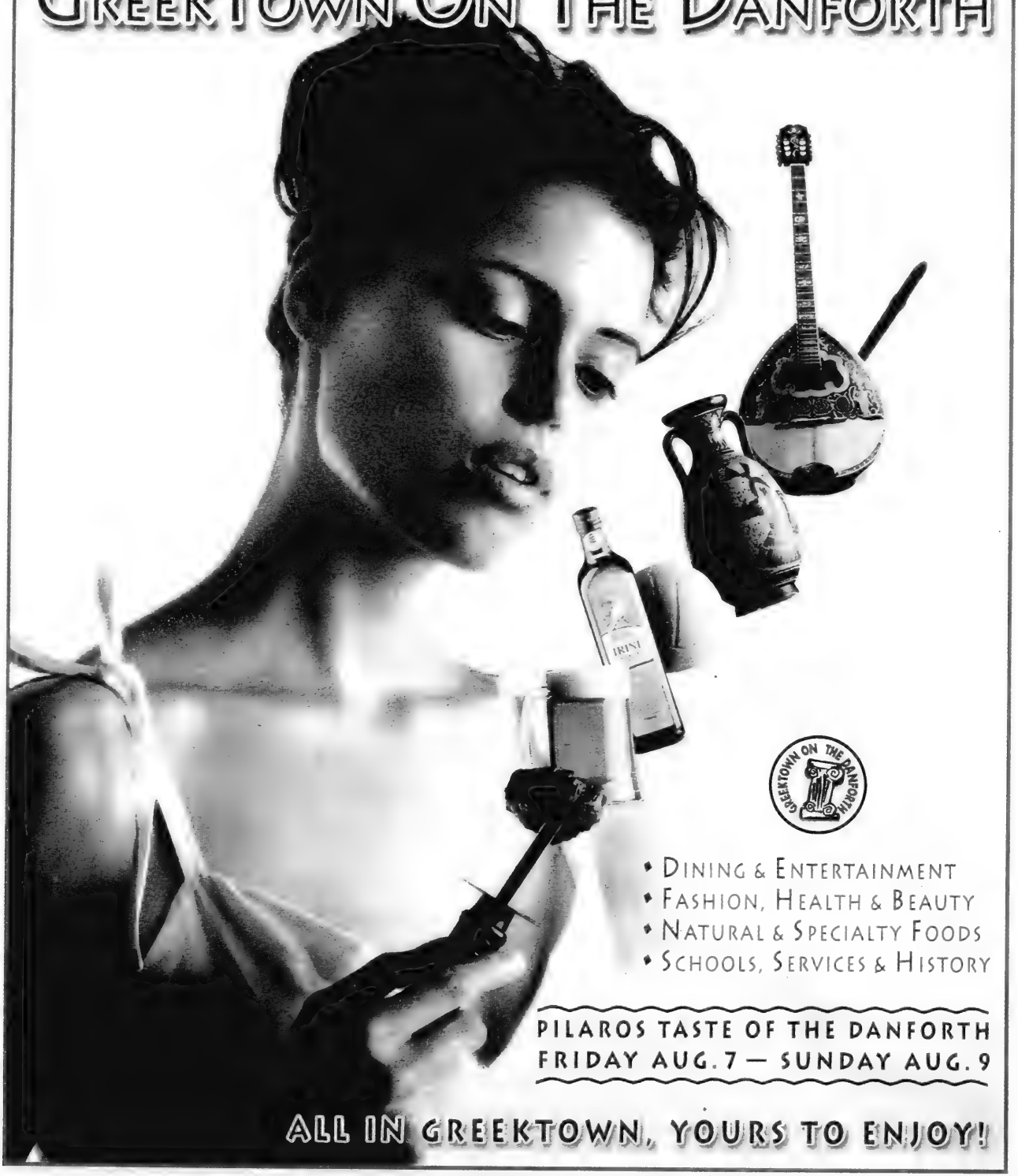
GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH



GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

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PILAROS TASTE OF THE DANFORTH
FRIDAY AUG. 7 — SUNDAY AUG. 9

ALL IN GREEKTOWN, YOURS TO ENJOY!

Discover A New "Taste" at Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth

Toronto's favourite festival offers fun for the whole family

Toronto's favourite street festival has a whole new way to celebrate the fun and flavours of Greece and summer in the city. Every year in August, the city of Toronto flocks to Greektown on the Danforth. Now celebrating its 16th year, the Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth is Canada's largest street festival, welcoming approximately 1.3 million visitors. A Decima Research poll reported that 90% of respondents identified "The Taste" as their favourite GTA festival event — beating out such iconic events as the Toronto International Film Festival, Caribana and Pride Week.

Everyone gets to be Greek for the day

The GTA has more than 200,000 residents of Greek ancestry, the third largest Hellenic community outside of Greece, and between August 7th and August 9th, 2009, everyone who comes to the Danforth gets to be Greek for the day.

This year the Taste Of The Danforth welcomes a new Title Sponsor, Pilaros. Pilaros International Inc. is a leading importer of Mediterranean food products, primarily olives and olive oil — what the ancient Greeks referred to as "The Essence of Life".

This year's Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth has loads of fun, family-friendly activities for your entertainment and enjoyment. Here are a few of the programs, exhibitors and performers:

- The Celebrity Stage featuring "A Taste of Broadway", including *The Sound of Music*, *THE JERSEY BOYS*, Stage West's *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do* featuring the music of Neil Sedaka, and Second City;

- Kevin Brauch, hugely popular host of *The Thirsty Traveler*;
- The Greek Stage featuring traditional Greek dancers, singers and musicians;
- The Danforth Stage featuring an eclectic array of music and lifestyle-related programs and performances;
- The Sports Zone, including challenges created by Toronto's professional sports teams featuring the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Toronto Raptors, the Toronto Argonauts, and the Toronto Marlies. There will also be two volleyball courts (one for adults and one for children), and lots more chances for people to test their skills and win fun prizes;
- An Olympiada, offering fun-themed activities for the young, including a Mount Olympus Climbing Wall and a host of mini Olympic-style activities;
- A Mill Street Beer Garden and a Moosehead Beer Garden to help keep thirsty patrons refreshed, as well as a Mott's Clamato Caesar Garden and a Wine & Spirits Garden featuring sommeliers and a series of seminars on wines;
- And, of course, dozens and dozens of tasty sampling opportunities from the Danforth's amazing array of multi-ethnic cuisines.

On Friday afternoon, August 7th, as part of our "Pre-Show", celebrities, politicians, members of the media and corporations will be kicking up their heels with "Beds On Wheels" at the 5th Annual Danforth Dash Bed Race, in support of the Toronto East General Hospital Foundation. To date this event, which is hosted by the Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth, has raised in excess of $100,000 towards the purchase of new electric hospital beds for TEGH. In addition to supporting The Danforth Dash, the Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth has donated upwards of $900,000 to Toronto East General Hospital.

We will also be welcoming The Toronto Police Precision Motorcycle Team, *The Winged Wheels*, in a special 20th anniversary performance.

Food, drink, entertainment, sports, games and much more

Our feature country this year for our new "Taste of the World" program is Japan. There will be Japanese karate and dance performers on our stages. Visitors to the festival will have an opportunity to win a Trip For Two to Japan, compliments of the Japan National Tourism Organization, Air Canada and Cerulean Tower Tokyu Hotel.

There will also be opportunities to win an Aegean Splendour Trip For Two To Glorious Greece, courtesy of Transat Holidays. This is a nine days/seven nights trip consisting of a four-night island cruise plus three nights in Athens, air transportation, 15 meals, transfer to cruise ship, transfer to hotel in Athens and transfer to airport.

With great food, great entertainment and great family fun, a splendid time is guaranteed for all at the 16th annual Pilaros Taste Of The Danforth.

DISCOVER A NEW TASTE
Pilaros
TASTE OF THE DANFORTH
AUGUST 7–9, 2009
• Olympiada featuring a Mount Olympus Climbing Wall & mini Olympics-type games • Sports Zone including challenges from the Toronto Argos, Maple Leafs, Raptors & Marlies • Celebrity Stage featuring live performances from The Sound of Music, JERSEY BOYS, Second City & Stage West – Breaking Up is Hard to Do • Mill St. Brewery & Moosehead Beer Gardens, Mott's Clamato Caesar Garden • Wine & Spirits Garden featuring sommeliers & seminars • Greek Stage featuring Greek music, song & dance • Danforth Stage featuring everything from yoga to swing dancing, from jazz to the blues • Chance to win a trip to Japan courtesy of Japan National Tourism Organization • Chance to win an Aegean Splendour trip to glorious Greece courtesy of Transat Holidays • Food, Food & More Food! Loads of Free Samples & Prizes
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GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Mezes the gold standard on Danforth

You can feel the positive energy as you approach the patio. You can hear the buzz as you enter. Your excitement builds as you're seated. Your taste buds dance with anticipation as you're handed a menu.

It's magic.

Most of the fine Greek restaurants on the Danforth will give you a pleasant dining experience. **Mezes** goes one step further by elevating even the most casual meal into a festive occasion. You'll experience such joie-de-vivre (the Greeks call it *kharisma*) that you'll find yourself wondering what special event you're celebrating.

Just another meal? At Mezes, there's no such thing.

Mezes makes every meal an event not by gimmickry or by song and dance, but simply by their approach to food. They treat it with such reverence that merely serving it is an occasion. And sharing isn't an option here, it's Plan A. The namesake, appetizer-sized *mezes* are meant to be ordered in multitudes and collectively enjoyed by the table. This communal style of dining — as authentically Greek as the gastronomy — isn't just sharing, it's a form of bonding.

"It makes for a convivial meal," says Mezes proprietor Sue Zindros. "It stimulates conversation, sharing good feelings as well as food, and it encourages people to try new things."

Most better restaurants now advertise their cuisine as "authentic" and "fresh from scratch", but Mezes has quietly been fulfilling both these mandates since Day 1. If anything, at Mezes these claims are *understated*.

Authentic and fresh enough for you?

Mezes pays top dollar for all their ingredients to ensure you enjoy the best of everything. But that added expense is not reflected in their prices.

"Our customers can taste the difference freshness and quality make. We believe in rewarding them for that, not penalizing them," says Sue.

The consistent excellence menu-wide makes it difficult to pick favourites here, so most customers start by ordering a large assortment of appetizers. They're all first-rate, but don't just fall back on old favourites like hummous and tzatziki; no visit to GreekTown is complete without sampling Mezes' *Gigantes* and *Dolmades*. When it comes time to order your entrée — if you can manage to get through the cornucopia of mezes — there's an equally compelling array of home-cooked meat, poultry, fish and vegetarian specialties to tempt your palate.

Mezes offers one of the most extensive Greek wine portfolios not just in Toronto, but nationwide, and can recommend the ideal accompaniment to your meal.

You'll find shades of copper in the decor and silverware on the table, but on your plate everything served at Mezes is pure gold.

Mezes

AUTHENTIC GREEK CUISINE

456 DANFORTH AVENUE

416-778-5150

WWW.MEZES.CA

Christina's authenticity has universal appeal

If one restaurant can be said to embody all the good qualities that GreekTown is known for, **Christina's** is that place.

Authentic Greek cuisine served in a festive ambience. A choice of dining indoors with elegance and intimacy, or outdoors on a convivial patio. And a bit of *je-ne-sais-quoi* — that intangible magnetism that makes celebrities and local Danforth-goers alike choose this restaurant over dozens of others at their disposal.

Christina's appeal stems from all of the aforementioned attributes, but food is always first and foremost in GreekTown. The term "authentic" is ubiquitous — you'll see it on almost every menu — but here it really carries weight, as those who've travelled to Greece will attest.

The fresh fish and seafood is a prime example. "Fresh catch of the day" heads the menu; it's what you'd typically be served in a Greek fishing village, and here is no different. Also popular are the Grilled fresh Atlantic salmon (brushed with herbs and spices) and Filet of sole (lightly pan fried with herbs and garlic).

As any Greek will tell you, "authenticity" means allowing the full flavour of the food to emerge, not smothering it in elaborate sauces to create the illusion of grandeur. With fresh fish that sometimes means "less is more", using exactly the right amount of herbs and seasoning for optimum taste — not a shake or sprig more.

The Lobster Tail broiled in garlic butter is a long-time favourite among the seafood entrées, but don't overlook the subtle synergy of tastes and textures in a Seafood Platter. For two, the *Aegean* brims with Shrimp, scallops, salmon and mussels sautéed in a tomato herb sauce; for several, the *Mediterranean* combines lobster tail, tiger shrimp, salmon, scallops, kalamari and mussels.

The meat entrées and vegetarian options are also first-rate, but don't expect to be confused by hundreds of choices. Christina's philosophy has always been to offer only as many specialties as they can prepare perfectly — a "Mother Knows Best" approach you'll find in any good Greek home. Or any good Jewish home, for that matter.

Live music and belly dancing on Friday and Saturday, an extensive wine list and the opportunity to host intimate private parties add to Christina's appeal. Partners Bill, Tony and Kathy are proud of their multiple awards, but the smile on your face is the trophy they covet most.

Christina's

On The Danforth

492 Danforth at Logan

416-463-4418 christinas.ca

"Great respect for the food they serve" — Sara Waxman

BEST GREEK 2007, 2008 — *Where Toronto*

Best in the City, Best Greek Restaurant 2008 — *toronto.com*

For Astoria, the future of Greek dining is now

If there's one word that's synonymous with "**GreekTown On The Danforth**", it's "Astoria." For well over 30 years, this venerable "institution of higher dining" has come to symbolize the culinary qualities the Danforth is known for: great food, great quality, and great value.

Building on and enhancing the Astoria brand

Astoria's recent major renovation has seen it emerge brighter and roomier than ever, without losing any of its intimacy. If it shone before, now it positively sparkles. A nouveau rustic take on traditional Greek motifs unfurls in rich golds and maroons, with elegant tile underfoot and soaring sky blue overhead.

Company Director Peter Kerasiotis undertook the renovation with a view to embracing the needs and tastes of a new generation of diners while remaining mindful of Astoria's long-standing clientele. "Many of our original guests are still regulars three decades later," he notes. "They rely on us for their family outings and special occasions, and it's their loyalty that has allowed us to grow. We took our time renovating our original location and building our new location in Mississauga because we wanted to ensure a seamless transition. The idea was to build on and enhance the Astoria brand, not dilute it. That is something our customers would never have accepted. They expect satisfaction, and we intend to give it to them."

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, says Kerasiotis. The essentials — freshness, quality, and friendly personal service — are still unfailingly apparent at both locations. Astoria still imports staples such as feta cheese, olive oil and olives in small quantities directly from Greece. Their staggering portions still quell the most outrageous appetites.

Astoria's now-famous "souvlaki window", always a beehive of activity, is an indelible image of Danforth life. Judged **"Best of the City"** by *Toronto Life* and **"Best of Toronto"** by *Now*, Astoria's souvlaki helped make it a multiple winner of the **Toronto Sun's Readers' Choice Award** as Toronto's favourite Greek restaurant. Astoria was also rated "Best Greek International Restaurant" by *Where*.

Other jewels on the menu include hearty moussaka, exquisite grilled sea bass and salmon steaks — and Greek appetizers like grilled calamari and creamy homemade tzatziki, if you can keep your souvlaki craving at bay long enough to sample them.

ASTORIA

shish kebob house

"The Future of Greek Dining"

390 Danforth Avenue
at Chester subway
416.463.2838

1970 Dundas St. East
Unit 1, Mississauga
905.615.1444

www.astoriashishkebobhouse.com

"Best of the City"

Toronto Life

Location and atmosphere are other Astoria assets. For a big restaurant, it's remarkably cozy, due to its corner location and dual outdoor patios (still the Danforth's largest, and now among its brightest as well!)

It's no accident that the first signs of an upcurve in the popularity of Greek cuisine coincided with Astoria's opening, nor is it coincidental that its continued growth in popularity parallels that of the Astoria we know today.

Heading eastbound on Bloor, you know you're on the Danforth once you hit Broadview; but you don't really *feel* it until Astoria leaps joyously into view, bidding you "Welcome to GreekTown" in words that the food lover in you understands so well.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Pan's charm no mystery: small place, big taste

Chris Christodoulou is *not* a master of feng shui, nor does his menu contain any Japanese influences. But the intimate enclave known as **Pan On The Danforth** shows such masterful use of space, you'd swear a feng shui master was behind it.

Blending many diverse elements into a harmonious whole, Pan glows with a rare charm. More has been accomplished here in less space than in perhaps any other restaurant in Toronto. Interleaved brickwork, gleaming hardwood floors, a cachet of curtains, nested wine rack and ensconced fireplace capped by an embossed copper ceiling merge seamlessly to form Toronto's coziest, most intimate dining environment. For Best Interior Designer of a Greek Restaurant, may we have the envelope, please?

"That's ridiculous," laughs Chris. "I'm just not smart enough to be either an engineer or an interior designer, so I have to do a bit of both." You can see the results in a series of excellent photographs and take a virtual tour at panonthedanforth.com.

A quaint dining environment is a big plus — as are live music and belly dancing Friday and Saturday — but it's the cuisine that makes or breaks a restaurant. Here, Pan shines. They don't just serve Mediterranean food; they bring it to life. And in order to encourage their always-steady traffic flow to continue unabated, they've introduced set dinner menus priced at $20, $25 and $30 to complement the regular menu.

Having spent most of their adult lives together in the restaurant business, the Christodoulous have seen it all and done it all. Chris chuckles at the so-called culinary "trends" that come and go. "There's no great mystery," he smiles. "You buy the freshest fish, meat, poultry and vegetables, then you cook them like every meal was your Mona Lisa. Like your life depended on it. Because in this business, it does!"

His customers understand. They know a great culinary masterpiece when they taste one. And they don't have to traipse through the Louvre to experience it.

PAN
Mediterranean Cuisine
516 Danforth Ave. 416-466-8158
www.panonthedanforth.com

"The greatest Greek Food Toronto has ever known" — *Globe & Mail*
"Freshness and textural detail of the essence" — *Toronto Life*

Fish lovers drop anchor at Pantheon

Pantheon is not a fishing vessel, nor will you see chef Nick Paroussis casting a net over the counter or out the back door.

With the plethora of fresh fish served here, however, the analogy is not far-fetched. In 11 short years, Pantheon has distinguished itself as the premier destination for fresh fish and seafood, not only in GreekTown but Toronto-wide.

The popular favourites like Red snapper, Atlantic salmon and sea bass are here in abundance, but so are many other exotic selections you're unlikely to find elsewhere. Baby sea smelts and fresh anchovies are imported directly from Greece. Striped bass, orange roughy, black porgy, red mullet, sea smelts, and many others, impeccably prepared and seasoned, gratify the most discriminating fish lovers. At Pantheon, you could dine on a different fresh fish every day for a fortnight.

But selection alone does not a reputation make. Freshness is paramount and timing critical, particularly with fish and seafood. A minute too long on the grill or in the pan can detract from moistness, texture and taste. When he's cooking, Paroussis is locked in like Tiger Woods studying a championship putt.

Paroussis' partner John Troupis and his son Bobby Troupis understand that food is not merely sustenance, but art and soul. In that spirit, they do their utmost to ensure that each customer's visit is a sensory experience.

It's paid off. Pantheon has doubled in size since it opened and now offers two bright, spacious dining rooms. Semi-private dining with a comforting fireplace is available in the east room.

In a business where turnover is the norm, Pantheon's continuity stands out. The same head chef and most of the same wait staff present when it opened are still in place. People enjoy working here, they like the clientele, and the clientele likes them. Continuity fosters loyalty, and vice versa.

The Olympic Pantheon was blessed with the opportunity to taste the Ambrosia and Nectar of the Gods. The Olympics happen every four years, but at Pantheon, in the heart of GreekTown, you can indulge in those same taste sensations whenever the mood strikes you.

Mouthwatering homemade desserts, surprisingly low prices and the freshest fish this side of Greece. Our ship has come in.

407 Danforth Avenue
ACROSS FROM CHESTER SUBWAY
416-778-1929
OPEN 11 AM – MIDNIGHT, 7 DAYS
www.pantheonrestaurant.com

"... a winning charm ..."
"... fresh fish, care with good products and little razzmatazz nudges Pantheon ahead of most competitors ..."
"As golden and desirable as an Olympic medal"

Demetre's Desserts affirms pleasure over denial

If there's one person you love to hate, it's someone who can inhale the most luscious desserts on the planet — say, the kind served at Caffé Demetre — without gaining an ounce.

Themy and Alex, the owners of Demetre's, don't promise to transform you into that person. What they *do* promise is that the only "gain" your dessert will produce is a bigger smile.

"There's a difference between discipline and denial," says Themy. "We all have cravings. Indulging them is part of the enjoyment of life. *Discipline* is treating yourself to a freshly-made dessert in the right portion size. *Denial* is forcing yourself to do without it entirely."

What generally happens in the latter case, he says, is that people either (a) eat a low-fat or low-cal substitute, which fails to satisfy and only intensifies the craving, or (b) when the unreasonably-suppressed craving resurfaces, they grab the nearest chocolate bar or packaged nosh, with an aftermath of guilt and an aftertaste that's annoying and cloyingly sweet. Most of these packaged "goodies" are also full of chemicals. So much better and healthier to treat yourself to the real McCoy in the first place, he says.

A compelling argument. This kid would make a good lawyer.

"Your mom probably told you homemade is better, and she's right. This is homemade ice cream served in a café setting. *Fresh*. Not just fresh daily; fresh *to order*. We make our ice cream with state-of-the-art equipment. We use the finest ingredients money can buy. Our customers accept no substitutes. They want to feel treated, not cheated."

If you think Themy's merely singing for his supper, consider this. Someone who really *does* sing for her supper — Barbara Streisand — was so taken with Demetre's product that she sung its praises during a recent ACC concert. That's the kind of advertising money can't buy.

For hand-made ice cream that goes down as smoothly as a Streisand melody, this is clearly your destination. But Demetre's is much more than an ice cream parlour. Their crêpes and Belgian waffles are made according to the same exacting standards and with the same premium fresh ingredients, as are the sauces drizzled irresistibly over desserts too numerous to name. Bowls, cones, splits, sundaes, cake-and-ice-cream combos, one more mouthwatering than the next. The coffees — both conventional and specialty — are all top-drawer.

Despite Demetre's soaring popularity — off the charts since Streisand sang its praises — Themy and Alex are adamant about remaining well-grounded. "You're only as good as your last batch of ice cream," says Alex. "You can taste the difference quality makes, and we will not compromise that — ever."

Sweet music to an ice cream lover's ears.

caffe Demetre
400 Danforth Ave. at Chester
416.778.6654
CDdanforth@rogers.com

Even Leaf fans wing it to Detroit Eatery

If you're a Leaf fan and the best burger in town is served at a Red Wing hangout, do you eat there?

Leaf fans — and fans of old-fashioned home cooking in general — have spoken. The answer is a resounding **YES.**

The incredible homemade burgers served up at **Detroit Eatery** have become the stuff of legend. The big chains should send their head honchos here to learn what a *real* burger tastes like.

These bountiful burgers would be much harder for a Leaf fan to appreciate if the proprietors were the rub-it-in type. But they're not.

On the contrary, Alex Antaris and his son Chris are endearingly humble and easy-going. When he's not serving, Alex can often be seen on the bench in front of the restaurant, holding court with customers, friends, and neighbours. His friendly banter is as much a part of the Detroit experience as wife Eva's delectable offerings that emerge, piping hot, from Detroit's busy kitchen.

If you're strictly old-school as far as your burgers are concerned, Detroit's your destination. The patties are individually handmade from the finest lean ground beef; no freezing, no pre-forming, no fillers.

The Antarises inherited the name Detroit when they bought the business in 1987. Chris, 18 and still involved in hockey at the time, took it upon himself to festoon the walls with Red Wing memorabilia. The rest is history.

And what history! Members of the Detroit Red Wings not only visit (Kris Draper's a regular), they also bring the Cup with them when they win it — which is often. Will the Leafs do likewise, if/when? Good thing the Antarises are in it for the long haul.

But hockey players aren't the only celebrities who do Detroit. On a given day you might see Jim Cuddy, Rick Mercer, Steve Paige, Gord Downey — or anyone who knows good home cooking when they taste it.

Detroit jumpstarts your day with a championship-worthy breakfast special that rivals the burgers in popularity. It's available all day long. Gargantuan sandwiches (steak, corn beef, roast beef and club) and steaming homemade soups hit the spot like a Gordie Howe slapshot. Old-school.

Open 8 am to 9 pm seven days a week and licensed, Detroit tames even the most ravenous appetites in an ambience so relaxed it's easy to forget you're in a restaurant.

There's not much more you can ask of an eatery.

Well, maybe one thing.

The next time Draper brings the Cup 'round for a visit, would you mind asking him if we can keep it for a year? We haven't seen it in ages.

DETROIT EATERY
389 DANFORTH AVENUE
ACROSS FROM CHESTER SUBWAY
416-461-0136 • Open 8 to 9 daily

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Thuna Herbals' past a beacon for future

It's a delightful anachronism reminiscent of an old English apothecary shop. Fifteen hundred glass jars, each filled with a different herb or root, stacked high in orderly rows. The original creaking hardwood floor. And a proprietor who's all about knowledge and caring.

Established in 1888 (how's that for history?), this family business is now run by Evelyn Dorfman, the granddaughter of founder Dr. Max Harriman Thuna, and a staff of qualified herbalists on the original turn-of-the-century premises at 298 Danforth Avenue.

Over the years, the Thuna family has seen the use of herbal remedies — once the *de facto* method of treatment for most medical problems — lose ground to the synthetic drugs that have flooded the marketplace.

More recently, however, the pendulum has slowly but surely begun to swing back, as more and more people seek alternatives to mainstream medicine. Thuna's doesn't diagnose problems presented to them; rather, they advise customers seeking a diagnosis to obtain it from their medical practitioners. Some come with the blessing of their GP, but many are referred by naturopathic practitioners. Typically, clients come in on their own initiative.

Saul Pasen helped pioneer herbalism in Canada

THUNA HERBALS
298 Danforth Avenue
416-465-3366

Drawing on their schooling, Dorfman and staff choose from some 2,000 herbs, berries, roots, and leaves the precise combination most likely to alleviate an ailment presented to them. To cite but one example, a formula for bladder infection, or even interstitial cystitis, might include uva-ursi leaves, buchu leaves, parsley leaves, marshmallow root, corn silk, and goldenseal leaves.

Dr. Thuna and his children, including son-in-law Saul Pasen, pictured above, helped pioneer herbalism in Canada.

The current premises stand as a rich reminder of Canadian history. Even if you have only a passing interest in herbalism, you owe it to yourself to visit this Toronto landmark. And who knows — by asking a few questions, you might become further enlightened on this ancient practice.

521 more fun than a Fortune 500 company

If you're looking to chill out and chase the summer heat with a cool beverage that goes down smooth...

If you know exactly what an espresso or caffé latté should taste like, and won't settle for less...

And if you don't mind sharing it with a *meshugenah* who always seems to show up whenever you do—

Oops, sorry, that's the owner.

This guy is *funny*. If soul-soothing laughter is worth its weight in gold, then we should be paying double for our drinks. But we won't. We'll just kick back and let nature take its course. Which, at Café 521, means listening to Lambros Babatsikos weigh in on politics, business, sports, and any other subject he happens to be passionate about. Which is just about everything.

Behind the bluster, of course, resides plenty of *seichl*. Ditto for his much less ebullient but equally personable brother Frank.

Reared in their father's restaurant business since they were both knee-high to a grasshopper, the Babatsikos brothers opened Café 521 in 1999, transforming the corner of Danforth and Fenwick into a one-of-a kind L-shaped restaurant and bar. They have since renovated it twice. The most recent upgrade, courtesy of George Foussias of Hirschberg Design, has elevated the trendy spot to iconic status.

"Ohhhh, **iconic**," groans Lambros. "Now you're going to say that we're an icon like **Saul Korman** is an icon. Next thing you know he'll be in here measuring me for a suit!"

Tape measure or no, 521 definitely measures up. With digs like these in which to enjoy Toronto's finest scotches, martinis and specialty mixed beverages — as well as delicious light meals — their reputation continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Seating that's easy on the backside, prices that are gentle on the pocketbook, and friendly service certainly enhance their status as a favourite Danforth meeting spot.

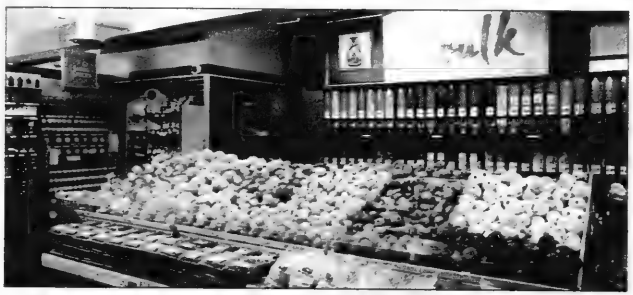
521 is also a wonderful venue for private parties, with a variety of seating arrangements. The restaurant fronts two different streets, and its three sections (bar at front, dining area midway, private lounge at rear) are connected by three huge portals. The resulting depth perspective affords guests a telescopic view of the street.

There are no Fortune 500 companies on the Danforth, but through their enterprising manner and irrepressible good nature, the Babatsikos brothers are making *this* 500 number famous for better reasons: good food, good service and good cheer. And, needless to say, a better return on your enjoyment dollar.

Whether you're looking to enjoy a quick lunch or an after-dinner drink — or turn a relaxing dinner into a *very* relaxing evening — this hot spot gives you 521 reasons to chill out.

521 DANFORTH AVENUE
416.463.3968

Big Carrot's loyal clientele embraces its ethos and products



If you have a favourite store that gives you great service, you tend to keep shopping there — especially when part of that service is the expert advice needed to make an informed purchase. The Big Carrot has become that destination store for an entire generation, and its customers have reciprocated with a level of loyalty unparalleled in the retail food business.

If you shop at The Big Carrot, you'll understand why it doesn't "feel" quite like any other store: it isn't. It's businesslike, but in no way "corporate"; the personal touch is ever-present. Because it's a worker-owned co-op, its members have an all-for-one and one-for-all attitude and never lose sight of the big picture: putting the customer first.

Ironically, in exemplifying the qualities typically associated with a small business, The Big Carrot has gotten bigger. Three separate expansions in the past 10 years have seen it almost double in space. Metropolitan Toronto's largest Canadian-owned purveyor of products for healthy living offers you much to enjoy.

The Big Carrot is really three stores in one: a health food store and market; a wholistic dispensary; and an organic juice, coffee and sandwich bar. It caters to a loyal clientele that embraces both its ethos and its products: minimally processed, organically grown, cruelty free, environmentally safe and, increasingly, non-GMO. Many of these products are also Kosher-certified.

Health-conscious customers seek out The Big Carrot for its extensive organic fruit and vegetable department (over 100 varieties at peak season) and its unmatched selection of organic bulk foods, dairy products, frozen foods, and packaged goods. Its extensive body care department boasts Canada's widest selection of personal care products for the entire family, including baby.

The Big Carrot's well-versed staff can help you decide which products will suit your dietary needs and your palate. If it's wheat-free — if it's dairy-free — if it's simply *good for you*, The Big Carrot has it.

For natural and organic pastas, breads, buns, bagels, flatbreads, cookies, muffins, and other wholesome nosherie, no other store — or bakery, for that matter — even comes close. There are literally dozens of choices here, many of them wheat-free, dairy-free, Kosher-certified — or a combination thereof. The Big Carrot has by far Toronto's largest selection of soy milks and other non-dairy beverages, both fresh and tetra pack.

Among many others, the Kosher-certified products include Crofter's Organic Premium Fruit Spreads from Ontario; Beit-Yitzhak jams from Israel; Sunflower Kitchen dips, pesto and soups; Imagine Foods Tetra Pack Dairy-Free Soups (the ultimate in convenience); Nature's Path Organic Cereals; Organic Meadow Yogurts & Pressed Cheese; Amy's soups, pizzas and frozen entrées; and an immense variety of chips and other snack foods such as Cocoa Camino Chocolate Bars.

One advantage of shopping here is that when you're thinking of buying a product you haven't tried before, you'll almost always find a staff member who's tried it and can give you an informed opinion.

A perfect example is the organic, Kosher-certified Italian Volcano lemon juice from Italy. Having tried various bottled lemon juice products before, we were skeptical. We'd never encountered one that measured up to freshly-squeezed lemon juice. But the produce manager not only used it and swore by it, he knew other customers who were likewise thrilled with it.

One sprinkling on a fresh avocado made us a believer. Try this and you'll only squeeze fresh lemons because you *want* to, not because you *have* to.

And that's just one product. The idea that dozens of others may be on The Big Carrot's shelves waiting for you to discover turns your shopping trip into a treasure hunt. It's easy to become hooked on the quality and health benefits of the products and the convivial ambience.

In the spacious, sunny body-care department, you'll get the same personal service and hands-on experience as in the grocery department.

The Big Carrot houses Toronto's only 100% organic juice bar. There are over 50 choices of juices, blender drinks, nutritional boosts, shakes, and fair-trade organic coffees, as well as sandwiches and other treats. The Deli counter offers more than 50 mouthwatering selections, both hot and cold.

The Big Carrot has remained the leader in an increasingly crowded field by offering products that are as good for the environment as they are for its customers, and by offering a level of expertise and personal service unmatched in the industry. It also demonstrates its environmental friendliness by heating its juice bar entirely from solar panels.

Through its ongoing expansion, The Big Carrot has retained the humility and friendliness of its early years. This is a store that's down to earth in every possible sense, and a real pleasure to visit. It's an oasis of calm amid the chaos of everyday life. A visit here isn't just grocery, supplement and cosmetics shopping; it's a balm to the spirit.

THE BIG CARROT
"SEARCHING FOR NATURE'S FINEST"
348 Danforth Ave. 416-466-2129
Wholistic Dispensary 416-466-8432
www.thebigcarrot.ca
Mon–Fri 9-9 • Sat 9–8 • Sun 11–6

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

At MR. GREEK, great taste and good health go hand in hand

The name "MR. GREEK" has become synonymous with excellence in Mediterranean cuisine. In growing the brand from the original Danforth restaurant in 1988 to 25 locations today, MR. GREEK has played a leading role in popularizing this culinary genre throughout the GTA and beyond.

In growing the brand, however, MR. GREEK has remained faithful to the quality and hospitality of its beginnings. "Expansion does not mean dilution," says President George Raios. On the contrary, he notes, that fact that each franchise adheres to a set of strict standards

Growing the brand while remaining true to its roots

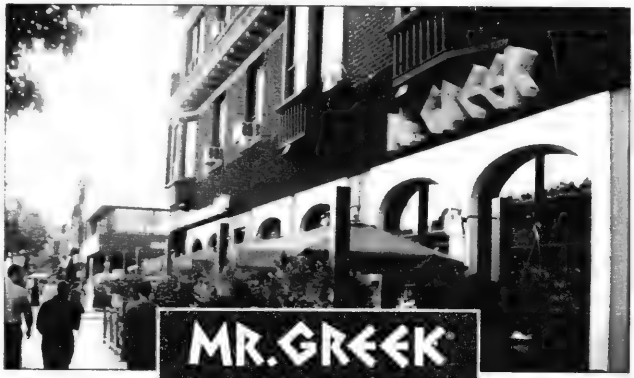
is their customers' assurance of an exceptional dining experience at any MR. GREEK location or MR. GREEK catered event.

How you're greeted is one of those standards, adds Raios. "We're not just inviting you into our restaurant, we're welcoming you into our home. A warm reception is not a suggestion — it's a requirement."

In perusing the menu you'll discover that MR. GREEK's pioneering spirit extends beyond the dining area into the kitchen.

Some who equate Greek cuisine with souvlaki, rice and potatoes have come to think of it as "heavy". It's a limiting vision that MR. GREEK set out to dispel in late 2006 at both the perceptual and culinary levels.

Not content with a menu that had already won awards, MR. GREEK hired professional food consultant Rosie Maclean to refine its recipes with a view to reducing overall sodium and fat. The result is a presentation of nutritionally balanced meals without compromising taste, authenticity or quality.



526 Danforth Avenue • 416-461-3434
www.mrgreek.com

Never one for half measures, Raios further underscored MR. GREEK's commitment to a healthy lifestyle by posting the nutritional content of MR. GREEK's dishes on the company's website. Included with this analysis is a scientific explanation of the health benefits of olive oil, a staple in Mediterranean cuisine. All the oils used at MR. GREEK are trans-fat free.

Upgrading an already-healthy menu and supplying relevant information on nutritional content was an easy decision, says Raios. "We believe in full transparency, and talk is cheap. In order to change perception long-term, you have to change reality."

Old-fashioned, healthy home cooking has always been a core concept for Greek restaurants, he says. "We wanted to ensure that in our case, the "healthy" part of the equation was supported with facts. Our customers can enjoy any item on our menu in the knowledge that at MR. GREEK, great taste and good health go hand in hand."

Your Greek experience might begin with a freshly tossed Greek Salad, dressed with MR. GREEK's signature vinaigrette — a tempting combination of fresh tomato, cucumbers, kalamata olives, feta cheese and romaine. Among the main courses, you'll find MR. GREEK's expertly grilled souvlaki deserving of its reputation as 'Canada's favourite'. Moussaka is carefully prepared with a traditional recipe that would make any Bubie proud. The Taverna Chicken is magnificently moist with sealed-in juices. Lamb "Arnaki" Fournou —

Supporting the healthy home cooking perception with facts

lamb shoulder slow roasted in its own juices — is so tender you won't even need to use a knife.

A perfect ending is the fresh-daily baklava — thin, crispy phyllo layers sandwiched with toasted nuts, honey and a hint of cinnamon.

MR. GREEK's mission statement, 'Because life has to be enjoyed', is more than an advertising slogan, says Raios. "Being part of our team means living up to that affirmation by ensuring that every customer enjoys their visit to the fullest. We guarantee it."

What gives him the most pleasure, he says, is enabling increasing numbers of people to discover the joys of Mediterranean cuisine. "Everyone deserves the experience of dining in a Greek home. Growing the brand is not just about opening more stores, it's about sharing that experience with as many people as possible."

"Today, everybody's running. Here you don't run. You enjoy."

If an edgy, fast-paced, noisy environment is your idea of a good time, this restaurant is not for you.

If, however, you like to enjoy your meal slowly, peacefully, one luxurious bite at a time — in complete comfort — no other restaurant does it like The Palace.

Delicious food and gracious service are the cornerstones of Greek dining, and nowhere are these qualities better exemplified than at the Palace. It bridges the gap between conventional fine dining and mainstream Greek cuisine. The traditional Greek dishes like souvlaki and moussaka are first-rate, as are the many choices of fresh fish and seafood. But if you're in the mood for steak, the Palace does it as well as any steak house and better than most.

THE PALACE RESTAURANT
722 Pape Avenue
416.462.1166
www.eatatpalace.com

On the ground floor, the main dining area is split into two levels. On the second floor, a sprawling party room awash in natural light accommodates up to 150 guests in complete privacy. For birthday parties, anniversaries, corporate functions and large office luncheons, it's a refreshing departure from cookie-cutter banquet halls.

On both levels, the tables are elegantly set with fine linens. The service is prompt, but never rushed. There's a quiet grace and easy pace to the proceedings that evoke the familial gentility of a bygone era — a quality brought to light in the recently-published *Our Danforth*, in which

The Palace's rich history is detailed and owner Peter Hadjis is pictured with a group of customers including famed singer Nana Mouskouri.

The seating arrangements ooze comfort. Says Hadjis, "You need elbow room in order to digest properly and enjoy the food. Today, everybody's busy — running, running all day long. Here you don't run. You sit and relax. You enjoy."

To that end, Hadjis, wife Stella, son John and staff provide the kind of service that comes only from the heart. The kind that has built relationships lasting not just for years, but for generations.

True to its name, the Palace really does treat you royally. The red carpet rolled out on Day One hasn't been rolled back since.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Historical flavours come alive at Messini

When visiting most websites, you're tempted to "Skip Intro" as prompted. You want to get to the heart of the matter ASAP.

Visit Messini's website, however, and you'll find yourself engrossed in the historical introduction; at Messini, history *is* at the heart of the matter.

A sequence of richly-textured, sepia-toned photographs of the southern Greek village of Messini, circa 1930, set the historical stage for the taste treat you'll experience at 445 Danforth.

After 23 years of restauranteuring in Europe, owner Marinos Dafnas opened Messini with the singular goal of elevating gyros preparation to the lofty level it enjoys in Greece. If you know gyros only as meat on a pita, Messini will open your eyes — and your taste buds — to an exciting new dining experience.

So how does the Messini version of gyros rise above the rest?

- **Meticulous preparation.** Roasted to perfection on a spit, the gyros (pronounced *yee'-ros*, from Modern Green *guros*, "turning") combines the finest marinated cuts of moist and dry meat to ensure that it retains its juiciness and tenderness throughout the cooking process. Unlike your typical fast-food gyros, Messini's are prepared fresh from scratch: no freezing, no precooking;
- **Quality and freshness of trimmings.** The tzatziki, red onions, parsely, spices, and French fries (as per Greek tradition), like the meat, are all up-to-the-minute fresh;
- **Pita made fresh daily on the premises.** As with any fresh homemade bread vs. mass-produced, there's simply no comparison.
- **Variety.** Messini caters to a wide range of palates and dietary preferences by offering chicken and vegetarian gyros in addition to the traditional meat.

MESSINI AUTHENTIC GYROS

445 DANFORTH
416-778-4861
WWW.MESSINI.CA

The result: a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts — a sandwich that melts in your mouth with a rich blend of subtly interwoven flavours.

The prices are more than reasonable, with gyros dinner entrées starting from $8.25, lunch specials from $6.50. The menu also includes mainstream Greek selections, but you'll do yourself a disservice if you don't at least try the gyros.

Messini's immaculate interior flanks an open kitchen. Pleasant brown and cream tones — gleaming ceramic tile floor, rich wood trim and comfortable seating — create an aura of casual dining elegance.

The beaches of Peloponessos may seem far away, but at Messini, some of southern Greece's best tradition and culture is right here for the sampling.

"What do you think this is, a restaurant?"

One of the things we love about GreekTown is that you can't go more than 10 feet without someone wanting to feed you.

If that reminds you of your home and a certain person in that home, then going to Zorba's for dinner may feel like walking from your living room into the kitchen — with one important difference. At Zorba's, that "certain person" isn't Mom, it's Dad.

681 Danforth Ave. at Pape
416-406-1212

"Dad" — owner and chef Kosta Carasoulos — cooks whatever he feels like cooking; what he puts on the table is what you get. (As some mothers might say, "What do you think this is, a restaurant?").

Fortunately for his customers, what Carasoulos "feels like cooking" isn't one or two dishes but 10 to 20, and the "table" he puts it on is a steam table. You choose what you're in the mood for and are generously served by one of seven or eight Carasoulos family members. "We have an informal family reunion here every day," jokes son Bobby.

They have menus here if you insist on à la carte, but unless you're ordering a fresh salad, a shish kebob or hamburgers and french fries for the kids, you can do just as well without them.

On any given day, you might enjoy moussaka, pastitsio, lamb shank, lamb fricassee, roast chicken, roast potatoes, green beans with zucchini, carrots, or cauliflower, soup, and a variety of other specialties. This is as homemade as it gets. You can call ahead to see what's available, but most people don't — they just show up with an appetite and a smile.

Having each dish on piping hot display makes deciding what you want a lot easier; taste buds respond better to immediate stimuli than to menu suggestion. In that respect Zorba's *katsarola* (Greek for "pot", a metaphor for home cooking) is much like a holiday dinner that your Mom has slaved over. It's a labour of love that sees all your old favourites materialize before your eyes.

That's the good news. The bad news is that once these *haymishe* specialties are gone, they're gone, and with an eager clientele weaned on home cooking, it's best to arrive early for best selection.

The service is warm and courteous, but there are no grand formalities here — just the familial ease and grace of people who, like an old friend who never changes, are always easy to be with.

The prices are so low they're almost guilt-inducing; rarely will you enjoy so much food for so little. That may explain why during the week, the take-out lineup sometimes rivals the sit-down crowd. You just can't cook at home for less.

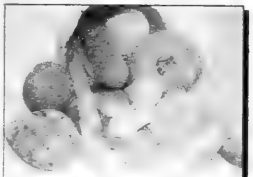
Eating here will, however, rekindle all your good memories of home cooking and of a simpler time and place in life that most of us would dearly love to get back to, if only for an evening.

Here, you can.

Select Bakery brings the past rushing back

Walking into Select Bakery is like taking a step back in time. Your childhood forays into the local bakery — and the irresistible urge to eat everything in sight — come rushing back.

This is noshing heaven on a grand scale. Huge (5,000 sq. ft.) yet intimate (GreekTown's only bakery with a dedicated seating area), the majestic array of baked bounty is the gustatory equivalent of surround sound.



It's kid-in-a-candy-store syndrome, but better. You get to set adult limits on how many fresh-daily delectables to ingest — then disregard those limits as your resolve crumbles faster than a sheet of phyllo pastry.

Enhancing Select's seductiveness is the colour scheme (tan on caramel on chocolate) and a refinement of presentation worthy of the illustrious cafés of Europe after which it's modelled.

The Katsamakis family — father Emmanuel, sons Kosta and Nick, and daughter Areti — lead a cheery staff of skilled bakers and pastry chefs. A full range of traditional Greek, European and continental pastries (baklava, *galaktobourako*, petits fours et al) is complemented by exceptional European breads, specialty cakes of the highest order, and sublime specialty coffees.

For weddings and other events, Select's special occasion cakes score a 10 on 10 for artistic merit. Your input is welcome in the design process, though doing so feels a bit like advising Michelangelo on sculpting techniques.

Further distinguishing Select are its prepared foods. Moussaka, *pastitsio*, and many other entrées — plus the full gamut of Greek dips and sauces — are made fresh daily. Many entrées are available fresh or frozen, and most are suitable for freezing. Need to entertain on short notice? Select is a one-stop destination for party trays, rolls, and related comestibles. And its ultraconvenient location on Donlands just south of O'Connor has ample, inexpensive meter parking at the front door.

No visit to Select is complete without these signature goodies:

- European Village Bread: crusty on the outside, buttery soft on the inside;
- Kalamata Olive Bread: The standard by with others are measured. Buy two;
- Chocolate-covered Baklava: a hybrid pioneered by Select, it picks up where "to die for" leaves off. Don't say we didn't warn you;
- Mille Feuille: Select's version makes a good run at the proverbial thousand sheets, each one shatteringly good.

Bakeries are the stuff of childhood longing; each is measured against our favourites of yesteryear. This bakery belongs in that Select group. Entering its time warp is deliciously easy; leaving is the hard part.

Ouzeri: Danforth's most relaxed dining

A splash of vibrant colour, sweeping sky-blue awnings, and a festive patio beckon you inside. It's as if you stepped straight off the sidewalk onto the beach. **Ouzeri** has the unique ability to relax you in seconds — a valuable asset when you consider that the enjoyment of any meal hinges first and foremost on the absence of stress. This is the one GreekTown restaurant that feels like one giant patio. Even when you're seated inside, the open, airy ambience gives you a sense of freedom, of letting go.

500A Danforth Ave. 416.778.0500
www.ouzeri.com

Like their pride and joy, brothers Chris and Alex Trahiotis are bright, cheery, welcoming people whose love of the restaurant business comes naturally, since they grew up in the business.

Marrying European fine dining with Greek cuisine, Ouzeri's eclectic menu is focused on quality, not volume. The kind of quality that will stir your fondest memories of home cooking. Sacrilegious though it sounds, Ouzeri's Avgolemono Soup will have you drawing favourable comparisons with your Bubie's chicken soup — high praise indeed.

Famed for their appetizers, Ouzeri also offers a number of intriguing entrées. *Strydia Ouzeri* is topped with spinach, tomato, kaseri cheese and Ouzeri's special sauce, then baked to perfection. Lamb rosemary pie, offered in your choice of lamb shank and feta or chicken with a rosemary and mushroom sauce enveloped in filo, is warmly recommended. The moussaka — both meat and vegetarian — is as good as it gets in GreekTown, and the seafood richly deserves the "authentically Greek" label you'll encounter everywhere on the Danforth. Fresh fish is available daily, and may feature Red Snapper, Sea Bass, Salmon, or whatever catch happens to be freshest on the day you visit.

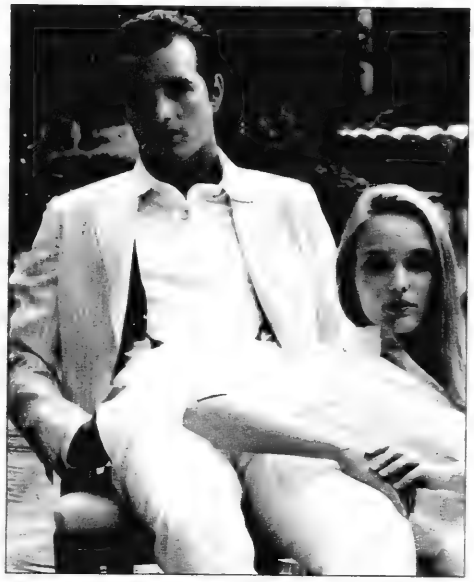
Ouzeri's extensive Greek wine list has a selection that will perfectly complement any of the entrées, or stand on its own as an after-work or after-dinner libation.

The service is friendly and extremely thorough, with ample wait staff to keep pace with your needs. Like the awnings, they're dressed in an extremely comforting shade of blue.

Whether you're looking for a quick bite or a long, pleasurable meal, Ouzeri's three levels of dining all convey the same gentle message: Relax. Relax. *Relax*.

"One of my favourite summer patios" — *Saul Korman*

If the suits fits, chances are you bought it at 569 Da



Someone needs to tell Saul Korman that you don't need to run 60 laps to establish a track record.

With each passing year in business — now 59 going on 60 — and with each suit sold, Canada's quintessential independent menswear store writes a new chapter in Canadian retailing history. His store may not be the oldest. It may not be the largest. But it is arguably the youngest in spirit of a handful of old-school, owner-operated menswear shops, and was considered of sufficient historical importance to warrant its own chapter in the recently-published *Our Danforth*. As he steams into his seventh decade on the Danforth, the author isn't ready to turn the page just yet.

"Don't call it a marathon," says Korman. "Marathons are gruelling. I'm having too much fun."

If we can't call it a marathon, can we say that if you laid all the suits you've sold end to end, they'd stretch from here to Athens?

That's a stretch even for the master of hype. "Maybe from here to Beth Emeth," he chuckles.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a working man on the planet who derives more pleasure from his daily breadwinning. The *shmata* business he's known and loved for 60 years isn't just a livelihood; it is, to borrow a phrase from A. M. Klein, "life and breath to him". And so he marches on, year in, year out. Where did 59 years go? "In the time it takes to cuff a pant", sighs Korman. "It seems like yesterday my father was hanging up his shingle."

Time goes fast when you're having fun.

Korman's gait has slowed considerably due to a double knee replacement and other physical challenges, but he soldiers on. The almost evangelical fervour with which he embraces the menswear trade hasn't abated one iota. Customer service is a religion; woe betide the employee who leaves a client unattended for a nanosecond. Ask any salesperson who's done it and they'll tell you how much Korman has "mellowed".

"If a house "shows well", maybe we should too."

"The customer is not here to wait on us," intones Korman. "We're here to wait on him."

Nor has his passion for fashion diminished. "Every man deserves the pleasure of looking like a *mensch* — whether they buy from me or someone else," he says. "Looking like a million bucks is better than *winning* a million."

But if we do win a million, can we still spend it at Korry's?

"If you insist."

Our sartorial orator continues. "Look at any real estate ad. They always say the house "shows well." We need to show well too. If we don't, who's going to buy what we're selling? There are so many things in life we can't control. The one thing we *can* control is how we present ourselves."

Those who renounce the "look good, feel good" paradigm are in denial, suggests Korman. "When you just throw something on, it shows. It tells whoever you meet on that day that you didn't care enough to make an impression. That they just didn't matter enough to you. If you don't believe that, try looking like a *schlep* at your next meeting or on your next date and see how well you're received. I couldn't even get away with it at home — Myrna would throw me out."

If man's basic needs are food, clothing and shelter, Korman has two of them covered. "We do the clothing. My neighbours look after the food."

So they do — with a little help from Korman. He's almost as well-versed in menus as in mending, and his personal recommendation to a restaurant carries clout. Friendly service is a given on the Danforth, but greet your host with "Korry's sent us" and watch him or her light up like a beacon.

You don't even need to buy a suit to get that referral. Just pop

KOR
569 Danfort
416-463
www.korr

nforth Avenue. Sometime in the past six decades.

nto Korry's and ask.

And if you do buy a suit? Can't hurt.

Having selected a good spot to indulge your taste buds and display your new threads, what will you be wearing?

The skinny, says Korman's son and right-hand man Michael, is that "thin is in." In suits, jackets, shirt and pants, tapering and snug fitting are back, a trend fuelled no doubt by the growing preoccupation with health and fitness. Loose fits have given way to streamlining.

Does that mean the suit fits now, but won't after lunch? Saul said it himself: "You won't go hungry here."

You don't have to be a will-of-the-wisp to get the right fit, says Michael. "It's a trend, not a sea change. We still fit all sizes, and if we don't have yours in ready to wear, we'll custom tailor it. Tapering just lends itself to a clean, crisp look, and gives you added incentive to stay in shape."

RY'S
h Avenue
-1115
ys.com

Korry's has expanded their collection of accessories with a view to achieving a complete look in house. Belts (some designed by Michael), cufflinks, and shoes are all part of the mensch-making process, and of course there's an incredible selection of ties. One snappy number occupies its own shelf: a blue-on-blue diagonal stripe that is the official symbol of — and a revenue generator for — Prostate Cancer Canada. As a prostate cancer survivor, Saul Korman is proud to be one of a select group of retailers to sell it.

Picking the right tie, says Michael, "is not an afterthought, it's an art. It's the focal point of your overall look. A great tie doesn't salvage a bad suit, but a bad tie can really downgrade a good suit."

If your wife says "guys can't pick ties," listen.

And if your better half dismisses your choice of neckwear with "Guys can't pick ties", she might be right, says Saul. "It's true; unless you sell menswear, your wife can probably pick a better tie than you can. So swallow your pride and listen."

The women who rate your appearance also know where to get their own suits custom tailored; luxurious pure wool fabrications know no gender barriers. "It's not something we actively promote, but many of our customers' wives take advantage of it. They see our attention to detail and the quality of fabrics we use, and want the same for themselves. We're happy to accommodate them," says Michael.

Insofar as colours are concerned, black and blue are still the frontrunners in the Boss, Canali, and Pal Zileri collections. Charcoal and chocolate brown have come on strong, however, both in solids and stripes.

Though Korry's carries top-drawer merchandise, versatility and enduring value are still prioritized over exclusivity. "Most of us can't afford to constantly renew our wardrobe," says Michael. "But we can still stay up to date with garments that carry well from season to season."

"Our Roberto label has the kind of value that allows you to do this," interjects Saul. "When we introduced it 18 years ago with the two for one concept, it created the *perception* of value. We then validated that perception with quality. Our two for one sales have never been better. And we make every Roberto suit, shirt and jacket right here in Canada. Our garment industry has a tradition of quality established by our parents and grandparents and we will not abandon that tradition."

True enough. Few are the Jewish families in Toronto today who aren't in some way, going back a generation or two, connected to the garment trade.

"The real legacy is working with good people"

The menswear business may have given Korman a podium, but he uses it to plug far more than *shmatas*. His annual golf tournament, held both this year and last at Angus Glen, raises funds for the Toronto East General Hospital Foundation, of which he is a Board member. He champions the annual Taste Of The Danforth, which also raises money for charity, like no other merchant. He promotes it relentlessly on his dime. Whatever's happening in GreekTown, you'll likely hear about it from Korman before any media outlet. His live, off-the-cuff radio spots are as much a part of his legacy as the cuffs on his three-for-one shirts.

Buttressing Korman's legacy are many prestigious awards and accolades, including the Fashion North Retailer Of The Year Award in 2007 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from *MR* in 2008.

The real legacy, however, is "living and working with good people. First, there's my family who puts up with me. Then there's my customers, my staff, my neighbours and friends on the street, my friends in the trade. I can't wait to turn the key in the morning. Who wants to retire? From *this*? From *my people*?"

The truth is, he can't.

He's having too much fun.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Eighth wonder of the fashion world

If your fashion shopping brings you to **Eight**, you've definitely arrived. The fashions are hot, the music is hip, the service warm and personal. Using a formula that's 20 parts Queen Street urban chic, 40 parts Bloor Street style and 100 parts fashion flair — at *très* friendly prices — Eight flat-out rocks.

541 Danforth Ave. 416•461•5339

Can a store be stroller-friendly, yet still cater to a mature crowd? Eight does. Here, women and men of all ages coexist and co-shop not just peacefully, but *gleefully*. Seven short years after Eight's touchdown in GreekTown, fashion shoppers city-wide continue to feel its vibe.

Part of Eight's special energy emanates from owner Karin Kassabian, whose expertise and unassuming approach resonates with customers. "We operate on a 100 percent comfort zone, not 99 percent," she says.

This comfort level extends to fitting, where K's keen eyes ensure that you'll look great in whatever garment you try on — or it won't leave the shop with you.

Eight is particularly popular among women in the 25-50 age group, though everyone from16 to 66 feels at home here. Eight's target market is "anyone who wants to look good and feel good," says K.

Though Eight carries loads of hip denim, it's much more than a jeans store. From mainstream styles to beyond-the-edge, Eight carries the later-than-latest in casual clothing from Italy, Amsterdam and other European fashion hotbeds, as well as hand-picked domestic fashions from promising new designers like Mark Foreman.

Because Kassabian's buying is intensely personal — "I wear what I sell" — you won't find Eight's pieces all over town. This suits K and her clientele just fine. "My taste may take me out on a limb, but lots of people have climbed onto that limb with me."

K buys with a view not only to style but also to transitional value. "If you really love a piece, you'd like it to carry from season to season insofar as possible," she says.

Obviously, Kassabian feeds off customer satisfaction. "I want you to leave smiling," she grins.

We are. Must have been something we *eight*.

Uplifting salon strictly down to earth

bob + paige SALON

412 Danforth Ave.
416.850.9719
bobandpaige.com

Walking down the handful of steps that form the entranceway to Bob + Paige salon is an elevating descent into high style.

And that's just the décor. If the styling's anywhere near its equal, we're in hair-do heaven.

The magic worked by design consultant Yanna Boland and engineer Louie Katsis — with considerable input from stylist/owners Frank Calandrino and Violet Volovik — garnered Bob + Paige *Salon Magazine*'s prestigious Salon Interior Design Award. The warmth of exposed red brick meets the coolness of steel and slate gray, offset by earthy brown tones and marble-white tiles. But the transformation Calandrino and Volovik have made to the premises pales in comparison to what they'll do with your hair — if you'll sit back and let them.

Like most inspired stylists, Calandrino and Volovik work best when given freedom to create. Accordingly, many of their customers limit their directions to "make me look beautiful".

Just because C and V are artists doesn't mean they're *artistes*, however. "There are no egos here," says Violet. "There's no "I" in Team," concurs Frank. "That goes for all of us. We're here to please the customer. After all, it's *their* hair we're styling."

Calandrino and Volovik met at Leoni Hair Design in Thornhill, where they worked together for several years. Reuniting at Bob + Paige, they selected a Danforth location for its convenience and "positive energy." The salon occupies a middle ground between the local shop that may be short on technique and the über-salon that's too big to give you one-on-one service — and often too full of itself.

C and V favour an integrated approach wherein each stylist washes, blow dries, cuts, colours, and styles you personally. The same applies to other services such as highlights or extensions: one customer, one stylist. No musical chairs, no assembly line.

"Hairstyling is very personal," says Calandrino. "Some of the big salons run you through a gauntlet, passing you from one pair of hands to another. How personal is that?" The creative process also demands a one-on-one approach, he says. "Too many cooks spoil the broth. We like to think of ourselves as artists, but the great masterpieces weren't created in factories."

Whether you're there for a regular wash, cut and trim or an it's-got-to-be-perfect wedding 'do, you'll be greeted by the same friendly smiles and a relaxed but focused approach. "We like to kibbitz, but we stay on task," says Volovik. "Casual work leads to sloppy work. Having someone trust you with their hair is a responsibility you don't take lightly." Nor will a client find it amusing if their mirror doesn't vindicate that trust.

Though the salon counts celebrities among its clients, they don't engage in name-dropping, and they treat every customer with the same reverence and respect. You'll never get bumped or lost in overbooking hell, and punctuality's a priority.

Descending a few steps has never been so uplifting.

Toronto Prep students pave own road to success

What possesses two teachers with a combined 50 years' experience to leave the security of their permanent positions and open **Toronto Prep School**?

"There's never a wrong time to do the right thing," says Steve Tsimikalis.

250 Davisville Avenue
416.545.1020
torontoprepschool.com

TORONTO PREP SCHOOL

For Tsimikalis and wife Fouli, "doing the right thing" meant creating an academic and social environment designed to prepare students not just for admission to university, but for success — both in the post-secondary arena and in later life.

"Having your son or daughter gain admission to university may give you temporary bragging rights, but having them *succeed* is a source of lasting satisfaction for all concerned. We're here to mentor and to facilitate, not to enable," says Tsimikalis.

To that end, Toronto Prep is following a character-building blueprint that would make any old-school educator proud:

- A structured, nurturing environment with a maximum of 15 students per teacher;
- A focus on effort. "Gifted" is great, but the greatest gift is a strong work ethic;
- Learning means earning. No spoon-feeding, no rubber-stamping, no padding of marks;
- Positive discipline and zero tolerance of deleterious extracurricular activities and habits;
- Each student gets a MacBook Pro. That's all many teenagers would need to hear;
- A sound mind in a sound body. Each student gets a full-time membership to GoodLife Fitness (there's a club on the premises);
- Classes start at 10 am to preclude early-morning syndrome, and finish at 3:55 pm. On Friday they conclude at 2:50 pm to facilitate religious observance.

Thus armed for a full and rigorous academic curriculum, your son or daughter will also have the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics. And he or she will enjoy all this in a bright, modern, beautifully renovated midtown facility with abundant natural light and state-of-the-art ventilation.

Having hand-picked their teaching staff, the Tsimikalises are excited about bringing their educational vision to fruition.

"We're passionate about teaching," says Steve. "The opportunity to contribute to the development of young men and women is a mitzvah. Our only enabling mechanism is teaching them how to help themselves."

The flip side — seeing a child gravy-trained into university only to fall back due to lack of preparation — is a tragedy in the making, he says. "You're not just losing a year or two. You're setting the tone for the rest of your life. It's exponentially harder to reverse that trend than it is to do it the right way in the first place."

At the risk of sounding anachronistic, says Tsimikalis, "knowledge is earned, not won. The great Talmudic scholars had input from their mentors, but they never had a recommended mark that I know of."

Nor did they require an iPod and headphones to facilitate their studies. "It's a different world but the fundamentals haven't changed," smiles Fouli. "Cracking a book is still the best way to learn what's in it."

There's never a wrong time to do the right thing. With Toronto Prep rapidly approaching its full capacity of 150 students, however, today might be "more right" than tomorrow to contact them regarding fall enrollment.

With an environment that stimulates learning, fosters responsibility and develops leadership, Toronto Prep School offers compelling advantages for those motivated to learn by doing.

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*Offer available to new activations on a 3 year service agreement until August 31, 2009. Smartphone activation requires a minimum $15.00 data plan add-on. Taxes, long distance, additional airtime, roaming, per use charges, monthly System Access Fee and monthly 911 enhanced 911 service access charge are extra. Rates and products are subject to change without notice. A one-time full service activation setup fee of $35 will apply.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

At Avli, it's what you don't see that counts

Geographic cuisine in general — and Greek in particular — lends itself to spectacular presentation. Even a simple salad becomes a festive medley of colour.

What isn't as readily apparent is the quality of the ingredients. From the grade of olive oil used in your salad to the herbs that season your lamb, everything that goes into the food contributes not only to its taste, but also to its nutritional content — and to your well-being.

Lambrinos Vassiliou knows something about quality.

To his loyal clientele, this storied chef is a GreekTown icon. After learning his trade on the Danforth, he spent 25 years as a head chef in some of the world's finest restaurants before opening Avli in 1994 — a fortuitous homecoming for GTA lovers of Mediterranean cuisine. His innovative menu, featuring specialties from Asia Minor, represented a bold departure from mainstream Greek. He hasn't looked back since.

Avli attracts customers with a discerning palate who can taste the difference quality makes, but the identity of his customers doesn't affect Vassiliou's uncompromising approach. A first-timer who'se never tried Greek food before gets the same respect as the Greek celebrities who dine here.

"I only know one way to cook," shrugs Vassiliou, know to his customers simply as "Lambros". "The day I put less than the best on anybody's plate is the day I walk away from this business."

"Never less than his best" means always using the freshest, purest ingredients he can source and never accepting substitutes, regardless of cost. We've all been disappointed at one time or another that a favourite dish is unavailable; at Avli, it simply means the ingredients needed to prepare it weren't up to Vassiliou's freshness standards on that particular day.

Vassiliou's stubborn refusal to settle for less than perfection does not translate into higher prices, even though most would willingly pay more for such munificence. Avli's prices are typical of most GreekTown restaurants. You'll have to wait longer for your meal here — everything here is prepared fresh from scratch — but the end result is always worth the wait. From the signature entrée pies with hand-made olive oil crust to the organic chicken, every dish makes your palate sing.

With increasing concern about food origins, additives and preservatives, Avli's customers take comfort in a singular fact.

This cuisine is pristine.

AVLI restaurant
401 Danforth Avenue • 416-461-9577
www.avlirestaurant.com

"A delicious meal" – *New York Times* • "Food that is poetry" – *Sara Waxman, Toronto Sun*

"The exotic scent of Byzantium" – *Joanne Kates, Globe and Mail*

"Some of the best food on the Danforth — nongreasy, thoughtfully prepared, and carefully seasoned. The half chicken is exquisite, the meat moussaka the best around" – *Frommer's*

Kalyvia: cooked with love tastes better

Toronto's Kalyvia is easy to find. Just head to the heart of GreekTown and look for the kind of satisfied smiles that only home cooking can produce. Then look up. You'll see a sign that says ***Kalyvia: A Taste Of Our Village.***

It's a good thing they brought that taste here, because finding that village in Greece is a tad harder. With no fewer than 10 Kalyvias, identifying it as your home town without providing further details is like saying you live on Main Street in Canada. And claiming that your town has the best home cooking is certain to bring an argument from the nine other Kalyvias.

KALYVIA
420 DANFORTH AVE.
416 463-3333
WWW.KALYVIA.COM

One thing there's no argument about, however, is the niche *this* Kalyvia has carved in the Toronto culinary landscape as it enters its 20th year on the Danforth.

When founders Mike and Peter Tsafatinos passed the torch to their sons Jim and Jim, they also passed the spatula. All the Tsafatinos men can cook. In this family, knowing your way around a grill isn't just an asset; it's part of your pedigree. "Where we come from, if you can't cook, they revoke your citizenship," chuckles Jim.

There's no pecking order here, just teamwork — an entire family working as one to ensure every customer has a pleasurable dining experience.

That pleasure is enhanced the moment you enter. Of all the restaurants that line the strip, Kalyvia may well offer the best combination of authentic Greek cuisine, pleasing decor, and relaxed, family-friendly environment. Got stress? A visit to Kalyvia will alleviate it.

Even the menu is relaxed, as are the prices. All the classic Greek entrées are here, all splendidly done — the moussaka in particular — but look beyond the mainstream dishes and you'll find some real treasures. The homemade Gyros are first-rate. Once considered casual food, they have exploded in popularity and are now a go-to item on the menu. Vegetarians will enjoy four complete meal selections priced from $9.95 to $12.95.

Kalyvia's homemade goodness can be enjoyed on the premises, or in the privacy of your home or office. Large enough for substantial gatherings, but configured for intimacy, Kalyvia is ideal for birthday parties, Bar Mitzvah parties, and other special events.

Today's kitchens have evolved greatly from the wood-fired stoves of yesteryear, but the act of preparing food with love is timeless. If you grew up in a small village and you had the pleasure of watching your mother or grandmother cooking on and baking in one of those cast-iron relics — and waiting with breathless anticipation for the food to emerge — you'll understand. Cooked with love always tastes better.

At Kalyvia, close your eyes for a moment and you're once again huddled in front of that wooden stove, absorbing its warmth and waiting for the door to open. Here, you're home.

Sher-E-Punjab: new flavour frontiers

Those who enjoy the pleasures of Northern Indian cuisine know Sher-E-Punjab not only as a haven of culinary pleasure, but as a salve to the soul.

It's indisputably Toronto's pre-eminent restaurant in its class, yet it's so much more than food. You may be stressed. You may be rushed. You may have places to go and things to do. But the moment you enter this enclave of tranquility, your troubles fade away. You can literally feel the weight of the world slipping from your shoulders — and you haven't even opened the menu yet.

Earth shades of Indian slate tile — reddish brown, copper, a hint of gold — set a peaceful tone. Magnificent tapestries, hand-woven in Rajastan, adorn butternut-yellow walls. You're greeted with quiet dignity by Amar, Malkit or Jaspal Singh, or by a member of their courteous wait staff.

There's no running here. No shouting. Just *Shalom*.

If you enjoy bread with your meal, you'll have to resist the temptation to overorder. Sher-E's Naan is the standard by which others are measured. Hand-made on the premises, it's baked fresh on demand — every 15 minutes or so at busy times — in a huge Tandoori clay oven. The experience of seeing it emerge from the oven piping hot is surpassed only by the pleasure of eating it — doubly so now that you can enjoy garlic naan in addition to the original recipe. This, truly, is manna from heaven.

For mainstream tastes, the Tandoori chicken is first-rate, but there are many other options worth exploring. A few suggestions:

- **Chicken Tikka Masala**. Boneless chicken is marinated and barbequed with green peppers and onions in a delicious aromatic curry;
- **Lamb Saag**. A distinctively different way to enjoy lamb in GreekTown. Mild chunks of boneless lamb are gently simmered in a spinach purée;
- **Shahi Kofta**. Vegetable balls in a mild sauce. Sounds deceptively simple; tastes divine.

Sher-E-Punjab, in fact, has long been a preferred destination of vegetarians. Even something as simple as cauliflower and potatoes (Aloo Gobi) takes on unexpected subtlety in Sher-E-Punjab's kitchen.

Lentil soup debate?
What debate?

And, of course, there's the timeless favourite — lentil soup. If you're party to the ongoing debate as to who serves the best lentil soup in Toronto, one visit to 351 Danforth Avenue will settle it once and for all. *Case closed.*

After 36 years, the Sher-E-Punjab experience is as fresh and uplifting as the hand-blended spices that flavour its dishes.

SHER-E-PUNJAB RESTAURANT
351 Danforth Avenue
Just West of Chester subway
416-465-2125
www.sher-e-punjab.ca

Athens Pastries redefines taste buds

When you see a name like **Athens Pastries**, it's natural to wonder whether their product really lives up to the back-home standard or whether it's just a good facsimile trading on the reputation of the namesake city.

Ask any Torontonian who's been to Athens Pastries and they'll invariably rave about the exquisite taste, texture, and freshness. Would an Athenian do the same?

George Tsioutsioulas breaks into a wide grin. "You wouldn't believe how many people from Greece tell us that our pies and pastries are the best they've ever tasted — *anywhere*," he beams. So if you're planning to hop a plane to Athens for a taste test, you might want to save yourself the airfare; Athens Pastries' 30-year reputation for quality already stretches across the pond.

Simply stated, comparing Athens' spanakopita (spinach pie), cheese pie, meat pie and bougatsa to any other brands is like comparing homemade fresh-baked bread to the store-bought variety. For freshness, crispness, and flavour, no comparison is even possible.

The Athens version will permanently redefine your taste buds. Baked continuously throughout the day from the purest ingredients, with no additives or preservatives, the pastries and pies served up at this little gem of a shop have made Athens a prime destination of Danforth-goers seeking a light meal or delicious dessert.

There's table seating at both locations, and ample free parking at the Victoria Park location, but you really have to see the take-out action to understand how seriously Greeks take their pastries — and how zeroed in they are on Athens. There are more whole pies leaving here in boxes than at some pizza take-outs.

Reminiscent of the French mille feuilles, or the English custard slice, Athens' rendition of bougatsa is as close to perfection as a dessert gets: ultracrisp, delicate crust outside, light, mildly sweet vanilla custard inside. And here's the best part: even with a liberal sprinkling of icing sugar and cinnamon, at no time does it taste too sweet, and the cloying aftertaste so common with commercial desserts is noticeably absent.

This second-generation family business (owner George Tsioutsioulas, father Evangelos and their dedicated staff) has probably rolled enough pastry dough to stretch from here to Greece, so the name "Athens" is perfectly apt. The fact that it's rolled lovingly, with constant attention to quality, is confirmed by your first bite.

ATHENS PASTRIES
509 Danforth Ave.
416-463-5144
(near Logan)
2567 Victoria Park
416-491-0095
(1 block South of Sheppard)

GreekTown on the Danforth: Canadian heritage in the making

Alexander The Great Parkette at Danforth and Logan: a popular spot to pause, relax, and reflect

More than a tourist area, GreekTown on the Danforth is a community. In the summer, when the trees reach their full green and Toronto's restauranteurs put out their patio tables, GreekTown puts on its Mediterranean face.

Plenty to woo your senses

Here, when friends and acquaintances greet, you are as likely to hear *"Kall' imera! Ti kanis?"* as "Hi! How are you?" In the restaurants and cafés, you hear patrons converse in every language of the world.

While the music of Greek polysyllables will appeal to your ears, the most important thing is not the language, but the fact that people do greet each other. Bustling and busy as the community is, everyone — not just tourists, but everyone who lives and works here — is as liable to stroll as to hurry.

There is plenty on the Danforth to woo your senses, and make you want to slow your steps: bright color and exotic decor; the sounds of the bouzouki; the aroma of lamb souvlaki wafting from a grill; and the tastes of exotic foods. It is the restaurants above all — and the atmosphere they help create, at once lively and relaxed — which draw people from all over the city and beyond.

Many restaurants capture, in their decor, the pleasing colours and terraced style associated with the Greek islands and mountainsides. And while souvlaki is everywhere on the Danforth, its dining establishments take pride in offering the full range and flavours of Greek and other Mediterranean cuisines.

But the Danforth boasts many other fine ethnic restaurants as well. To name but a few, Japanese, Italian, and East Indian cuisine are well represented. And its cafés and dessert houses are unparalleled, both in number and quality.

GreekTown is also home to Toronto's finest natural and specialty food stores and many alternative health practitioners. And it's become a leading fashion destination, with a host of fine specialty boutiques for men, women, and children, as well as European-quality beauty salons and spas.

A solid community with solid values

There is plenty of live entertainment here. At many establishments, audience participation is the rule, though after a fine, full meal, you may feel disinclined to dance on a tabletop.

There are a few other Toronto streets which are wider in actual metres, but the Danforth has an expansive feel about it which you don't find anywhere else. Majestic trees shade well-kept homes; here and there are streetside parks, where you can sit and rest your feet.

If you look closely, you see there is a solid community here. You see not only the tourists, but also the elderly and the children, as they shop, stroll or sit and chat in the cafés and parks. In the restaurants, waiters and bartenders offer everyone prompt, friendly service; there are plenty of regular guests whom they greet by name.

Nor is it just staff who do this. You will see the owners showing guests to their tables, greeting them warmly; in GreekTown, customers are family.

Also here are the institutions that belong in any healthy city neighborhood: schools, houses of worship, clubs, and community centres. People not only work here, they *live* here; and it is in great part because they keep GreekTown pleasant to live in, that it is pleasant to visit.

If you really want to get to know the community, chat a little with the staffs of different restaurants; you'll find that everyone knows everyone else. There is plenty of competition here, but it is friendly. To thrive, a restauranteur has to cherish the firm conviction that his or her establishment is the best; but in GreekTown, they do so without knocking the competition. If anything, the reverse is true.

It is from this wealth of restaurants that the "Taste of the Danforth" festival was born. This annual event has become so popular that GreekTown is closed to traffic for its duration. It's a great opportunity to sample the Danforth's culinary delights while enjoying its ambience, all in support of worthy charities like the Toronto East General Hospital Foundation.

While the Danforth is a community, it has never been a closed enclave. Saul Korman of Korry's Clothiers, an active member of the Jewish community, is also an enthusiastic promoter of GreekTown. Having been there for half a century — Korry's is now celebrating its 50th anniversary — Korman knows the people of this community, many of whom started as dishwashers and short-order cooks in the '50's and '60's, then opened the first modest Greek restaurants in the '70's. Many of them came here seeking both prosperity and freedom; the late Andreas Papandreou (a recent Prime Minister of Greece) lived in Canada from 1969 to 1974.

Korman shares with the people who live and work on the Danforth their joy in the prosperity and freedom of Canada. If you come to GreekTown, you are breathing, hearing and tasting Canadian heritage — not in a museum, but as contemporary history in the making.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Sun Valley a paradise for food shoppers

If you value quality, hate spending hours schlepping through faceless supermarkets and need more than the corner store can offer, **Sun Valley Fine Foods** is tailor-made for you.

Larger than a neighbourhood European food store, yet small enough to navigate your way through quickly, Sun Valley is boutique food shopping at its very finest. Just about every sought-after brand name is here, from gourmet grocery items to breads, cakes and pastries. And if there's a hot new product on the market, you'll find it here first.

The produce here is simply spectacular. The fruit has fewer blemishes than the average Hollywood actress. The meat, fish and poultry are exquisite, a boon to homemakers and BBQ enthusiasts alike.

Unlike most supermarkets that include high-end brand names and quality as part of their overall mix, Sun Valley sells nothing *but* quality. You won't have to sift through five brands to find one good one. And the layout of the store lends itself to ease and efficiency, with the produce, bakery and grocery areas surrounding a central meat department. You'll find exactly what you need for your family and special occasion dining with friendly, knowledgeable personal service.

It's these attributes which keep customers coming back — not only the locals, but shoppers from North York, Thornhill, and even Richmond Hill, armed with the temperature-controlled bags that have become standard equipment among shoppers willing to go the extra mile for the very best.

People come from outside GreekTown to shop Sun Valley "for the same reasons they patronize the restaurants," says Spiro Aravantinos: "quality, freshness, flavour, and value."

Ah yes, value. What Aravantinos doesn't mention — but what's common knowledge among Sun Valley shoppers — is that they've resisted "snob appeal". In true GreekTown spirit, they've kept their prices affordable even as their reputation has continued to grow.

The bottom line is that under this one roof you'll find exactly what you want in less time — yet at a more leisurely pace — than in the "big box" supermarkets. And, if you're a husband who'se been "commissioned" to bring home the groceries, your chances of getting a glowing report card on arrival are better here than just about anywhere else.

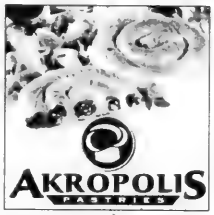
The reason is simple. Sun Valley just doesn't sell anything that won't get the spousal seal of approval — no matter how hard that may be to come by in your household.

Sun Valley Fine Foods
583 Danforth Ave.
416•469•5227
www.sunvalleyfinefoods.com
Open to 9 p.m. 7 days • Delivery available

New twist has Akropolis pies on upward spiral

Having your life spiral out of control isn't always a bad thing. Just ask Peter and Bill Gekas of **Akropolis Pastries**.

Involved since childhood in their parents' business (Akropolis Pastries at 708 Danforth Avenue), both boys took an adult hiatus to pursue other careers — Peter in teaching, Bill in operations management. During this period, while continuing to help out their parents, they watched the demand for Akropolis' handmade products grow to exceed supply and the ability to replenish it by traditional methods. Says Peter, "It occurred to us that if we could produce our pies on a larger scale without compromising quality, it might enable us to meet demand and create new markets for our products."



STORE
708 Danforth Ave.
416-465-8175

FACTORY
746 Warden Ave. Unit 4
416-615-2774

akropolispastries.com

Extensive testing and tweaking led to a recipe that would allow them to produce their *Spanakopita* (Spinach/Feta), *Tyropita* (Feta/Ricotta), *Kreatopita* (Beef), and *Bougatsa* (Custard) pies in larger quantities with the same old-world quality and flaky pastry as the hand-made variety. They then had a brainstorm: Why not change the shape of things to come? Thus was born North America's first and only "twister": a signature swirl of proprietarily-prepared pastry that, much like a twister bagel, offers endless undulations to enjoy.

That's when things began to spiral out of control.

It didn't take long for the Gekas twister to whip up a tornado of wholesale activity. Pusateri's and Highland Farms quickly bought in, and other fine stores, including Whole Foods in the U.S., soon followed. Today, dozens of better food stores and restaurants proudly sell Akropolis' pies — in twister, mini rolls, and other formulations.

Further enhancing the line's appeal is the fact that all the pies are egg-free and trans-fat free, made with non-hydrogenated vegetable oil and unbleached flour. The combination of great taste, healthy ingredients and reasonable prices has proven irresistible to vendors and consumers alike.

The increased popularity of Akropolis' products has made staying ahead of the production curve a full-time job. Through constant machinery and equipment upgrades, the Gekas brothers have spared no expense to ensure a steady flow of supply to their eager clientele.

Akropolis' state-of-the-art factory in Scarborough is open to the public for large catering and party orders. The hubbub of production, however, is nowhere in evidence at the original Akropolis Pastries on the Danforth. At the little shop that Thomas and Aliki Gekas opened in 1979, nine years after immigrating from Thessaloniki, serenity is the rule. "Our parents are old-school," says Peter. "They sell our products but they still make all the sweet pastries by hand — the baklava, the galaktoboureko, the loukoumades, the katafi."

At the pleasant, licensed Akropolis bakery restaurant, in addition to the pies, pastries and a variety of coffees, you can also enjoy a combination platter consisting of your choice of spinach, meat or cheese pie with a Greek salad and tzatziki for a mere $6. "We may be innovative, but our prices are retro," says Peter.

So the next time your hectic lifestyle has you spiralling out of control, head down to the Danforth or to your nearest fine food store for the antidote: another type of spiral that goes down smoother than a Scarlett O'Hara staircase.

Danforth Jewish Circle: building community values

Some ten years ago, a handful of interested parents met in Debbie Plested's living room and decided to start a Jewish studies program in the Riverdale area.

They were all members of the newly formed **Danforth Jewish Circle** (DJC), a grassroots, liberal egalitarian congregation in Toronto's east end, established in 1996 and then chaired by Marlee Wyman.

Giving children a sense of community

At the time, Plested, co-chair of the DJC education committee, said children's education was a priority for many DJC members.

"We were really a community," she recently said. "We wanted our kids to learn and study within our community and feel a part of the community."

Plested said the group recognized the necessity of setting up a program that could meet the diverse educational needs of the children.

At that time, the local Hebrew heritage program, a school board program that had been operating in the neighbourhood for some 15 years, could only offer a basic introduction to Jewish studies, she said.

"The program was instrumental in creating a sense of Jewish identity and a sense of community," she said. "But [it] had trouble developing as a curriculum because it had to cater to a wide age group. What was happening was that our families had no choice but to look outside the community to further their child's Jewish education."

The group of parents met many times in the course of the year to establish a community-based supplementary school. They had to develop a curriculum, hire teachers and publicize the program to attract students, find funding and find a space to hold classes, Plested said.

Now in its 12th year, the DJC Children's Jewish Studies program runs weekly classes for elementary school students out of a local school. Through discussion, debate, music, drama and art, the children study Hebrew, Torah, Jewish history and current events, Jewish holidays and rituals, Plested said.

"Our program values Judaism as a dynamic, living religion. Our students learn to understand what it means to be a Jew and how being Jewish affects our values, beliefs and behaviour."

While the exploration of Jewish identity is a key component of the curriculum, Plested said that given the high proportion of interfaith families, there is also an emphasis on "respect for the broad spectrum of multiculturalism which exists within Judaism and in the neighbourhood."

The goal of the Hebrew language program is to help the children learn to read Hebrew, recite the basic prayers and gain familiarity with Hebrew songs, she said.

"We want the children to be able to decode Hebrew so that they'll be able to prepare for their Bat or Bar Mitzvah...If they have more of an interest in conversational Hebrew, we encourage and assist them [with] supplementing their studies by connecting them with a tutor."

416-825-7431
www.djctoronto.com

B'Nai Mitzvah program: building and bonding

In addition to the school, the DJC offers a B'nai Mitzvah program, which is run by parents and not funded by any group. "This group is the beginning of a connection to the community for the future because the kids are building friendships and bonding as a group," Wyman said.

Wyman said she marvels at the growth of the community education program. "It shows you what a group of dedicated volunteers can accomplish. They're incredibly motivated. That's the whole thing about volunteerism: action is taken because we want to see results."

Persons interested in learning more about the Danforth Jewish Circle may do so by calling 416-825-7431.

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Greeks with a Taste for building something bigger than themselves

Circa 447–432 B.C., the Greeks built the Parthenon. Today, the same tradition of architectural excellence is alive and well in GreekTown, under the watchful eyes of Takis Liris, Adonis Artemakis, and their dedicated crew. The showcase of their efforts is a small, nondescript storefront at 921 Danforth Avenue.

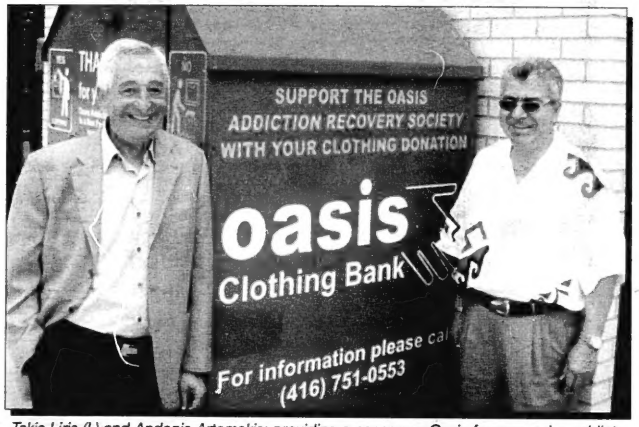
A storefront on Danforth Avenue? A showcase for architectural excellence?

No towering columns? No sculpted statues?

A different kind of architectural renaissance

If the venue seems odd, it's because this team of "architects" specializes in historical reconstruction — not of buildings, but of people. Under their direction, a team of volunteers helps those laid low by alcohol and drug addiction to rebuild their lives and self-esteem and become functioning members of society.

With financial assistance from Employment Ontario and the City of Toronto — as well as funds generated from the sale of clothing donations to the Oasis green bins throughout the GTA — the **Oasis Movement** acts as an umbrella organization for a myriad of programs designed to assist addicts every step of the way through the recovery process. There's an Employment Preparation Program, a Pre-Employment Personal Life Management Program, a Volunteer Program including participants from Toronto Social Services and the general public, a Job Development and Employment Placement Services Program, Casual Labour Placements, and the Oasis Employment Resource Centre.



Takis Liris (L) and Andonis Artemakis: providing a necessary Oasis for recovering addicts

Building is nothing new to Artemakis. A fireplug of a man, he has been instrumental in many important initiatives both inside and outside the Greek community. In 1993 he was involved in changing the name of the then Danforth Village to the current GreekTown On The Danforth. The following year, Artemakis and several other key players — including Stephane Abbat, Dr. Andy Syriopoulos, Sue Graham-Nuttier, and Saul Korman — spearheaded the creation of the Taste of the Danforth. With the financial support of Alex Alexakis of Krinos Foods and the ongoing contributions of many others, the Taste has grown from a small festival with a first-year attendance of some 6,000 to what today is North America's largest street festival with an annual attendance in excess of one million.

Despite his key role in heightening the profile of Toronto's Greek community and its important contributions to the GTA's culture and economy, Artemakis sees the Danforth as "a multicultural community with a Greek character. The beauty of a cultural mosaic is that each culture or "tile" enhances the others," he says. "We have here a dynamic of mutual enrichment that all communities should be proud to be part of."

If the growth of the Taste makes him smile, the work he and Takis Liris are involved in at Oasis makes him positively light up. Says Liris, who founded the Oasis Movement in 1992, "To assist someone who is already on an upcurve is nice. But to help someone who's down pick himself up — now *there's* an accomplishment. We may think we know what it's like to hit rock bottom, but unless we've experienced it

The birth of an area, the Taste, a movement

ourselves or seen it first-hand, we really don't know what it's like. When we can reach out to someone in that position and help him or her regain the ability to function, be gainfully employed, mend broken relationships, restore their faith — that's a success story for everybody."

Continues Artemakis, who's been involved with Oasis since 1992 in a supportive and Advisory capacity, "There's no stage here, no award presentations, no trophies. Everyone who is here is part of something bigger than themselves. People talk of "relationship building". Here, we are helping people rebuild their relationship with themself. No office tower, theatre or concert hall is a greater monument to a person's accomplishment than helping another human being get back on his feet again."

For more information on the Oasis Movement, call 416-461-7739 or visit www.oasismovement.org

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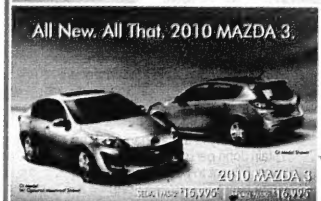

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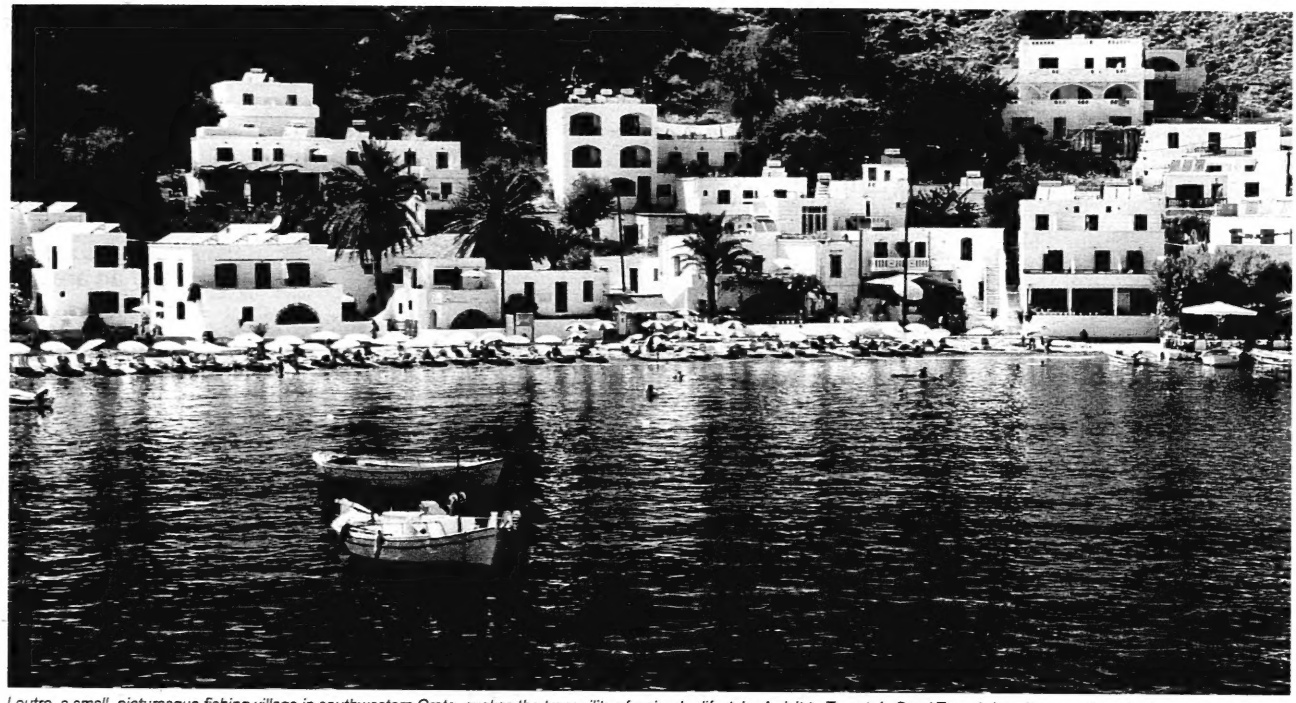
GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH



Loutro, a small, picturesque fishing village in southwestern Crete, evokes the tranquility of a simpler lifestyle. A visit to Toronto's GreekTown brings its warmth and values closer to home.

All fish and chips not created equal

Fish and chips is fish and chips, right? *Wrong*, say those for whom this dish is sacrosanct. As it happens, most of them are customers of **Captain John,** whose reputation for fish and chips is city-wide.

Generally believed to have originated in the United Kingdom, fish and chips is considered casual food by many. Not this crowd: they take their fish and chips seriously. They'll not only tell you that all fish and chips are not created equal, they'll *prove* it — with a dissertation so eloquent it resembles a doctoral thesis. Here are the broad strokes:

800 Danforth Ave.
416-463-8666

373 Donlands Ave.
416-422-3474

Crispness. The quality prized above all by fish and chip lovers. A feather-light batter and impeccable timing are essential to ensure your fish is always crisp — never oily or greasy. There's a fine line between just right and soggy, and that line that takes only a few nanoseconds for the inexperienced fish fryer to cross. Captain John knows that line and avoids the soggy side like the Bermuda Triangle. There are no electronic timers here — just old pros with an innate sense of timing for maximum crispness. Any fisherman who's ever tugged on his line at precisely the right moment would appreciate the sudden swiftness with which Captain John scoops its catch from the fryer.

The same principle applies to the chips, with a bit more room for error. We're talking seconds here as opposed to nanoseconds.

Freshness. No amount of crispness will compensate for lack of freshness, which affects taste, texture and aroma. Captain John buys the freshest halibut, haddock and cod and the highest quality cooking oil, which is changed with great regularity.

It's not unusual to find a "chippy" — as the British call it — in an area with many Greek restaurants. What *is* unusual is to find one as expansive and festive as the Danforth location. Big, bright and attractively tiled, it's a fish and chips "destination store" as opposed to a small neighbourhood shop, which their Donlands location more closely resembles. Both are immaculate, with identical menus, and fully licensed. There are a variety of other items on the menu to accommodate those who aren't yet on the fish and chip bandwagon — errr, boat.

There really is a man named John behind the Captain John persona, but he's not not big on last names. "I want to be known for my fish and chips, not my name," he smiles. Truth be told, he's very well known to fish and chip lovers who have enjoyed his culinary expertise in other GTA establishments for close to four decades. No relation to or affiliation with Captain John harbour boat restaurant, he came by his fish pedigree honestly, having grown up in a small fishing village in Greece. "If you didn't catch anything, you didn't eat," he grins.

An apt metaphor for all parnossah.

So the next time you want to enjoy fresh fish and chips with a high crispness quotient and a taste as big as the ocean, set sail for Captain John. And say hi to the man at the rudder. He's got a big smile for friends and customers, both old and new.

And a great sense of timing.

In this *thouliamou,* they don't count the hours

Thouliamou. Parnossah. Livelihood. It's what most of us are lucky to have. And what most of us still complain about in our weaker moments.

The most common complaint is long hours. For many of us, 12- or 15-hour days mean overtime. For the average GreekTown restauranteur, they're standard time.

For most of us, one a.m. and unable to sleep means it's time to take a sedative. For the GreekTown restauranteur, it means it's time to serve another customer.

Long hours? Long days? These people eat long days for breakfast.

In fact, some of their days are so long, they finish up just in time to see their *children* eat breakfast.

Passing the torch is a metaphor frequently used in GreekTown. Mom and Dad or Dad and Uncle start a business, build it up, and pass the torch to their children. Here, the metaphor's doubly apt because with the hours some restauranteurs keep, that torch could well be a flashlight.

Time was, it was almost automatic for children to take up that torch. Today, less so. Times have changed. Children can now count their options because Mom and Dad didn't count their hours.

Good thing they didn't. How could they? In this business, serving food is just the tip of the iceberg. In order to be able to serve it, you have to first take inventory, buy supplies, bring them to the restaurant, and prepare them. As well as do a few other things like cleaning, washing, maintenance, linens, laundry, cuttlery, payroll, hiring, paying bill after bill after bill — a triplication of your bills at home — the list goes on.

Unless you're so successful you can afford hired help for everything, you won't get it all done in eight hours. You might not get it done in ten hours. But in 12 or 15 hours, slowly slowly, you get it all done. Or enough of it to enjoy the few hours of sleep that remain — far more than the eight hours you *wouldn't* enjoy if you left all those loose ends hanging.

Times change, but values don't. Of the restaurants featured in this section, the vast majority are family businesses. Some have been passed on from parents to children, but in many of them, the parents are still active.

The inability to count can be habit-forming; many of these people don't count the *years*, let alone hours. Why should they? Why pass the torch when you're having so much fun carrying it yourself?

The children who do take up that torch — because the restaurant business is locked into their DNA — inherit not only a lifestyle but a lesson.

They learn that in this *thouliamou*, time is a relative concept. It's easier to work the hours than to count them. And it's relatively easier to work them with a relative or two working alongside you.

They learn that the 12- or 15-hour days that Mom and Dad worked — those long hours that might have deprived them of their favourite audience for a hockey game or soccer game or dance class — weren't really too many hours all. Turns out they were just the right number of hours needed to put bread on the table.

They learn that even though it's impossible not to feel enslaved by the business occasionally, it's more often liberating to discover just how much you can accomplish when you push your limits. And how much more time you had than you thought you had when less time is spent sleeping.

Most importantly, they learn that — in this *thouliamou* at least — long hours aren't the problem.

They're the *solution*.

Sholom Wargon
swargon@cjnews.com

GREEKTOWN ON THE DANFORTH

Really? A private party in a beautifully reconstructed theatre? With amazing food and a vibrant ambience? Is that true or is it an urban

myth

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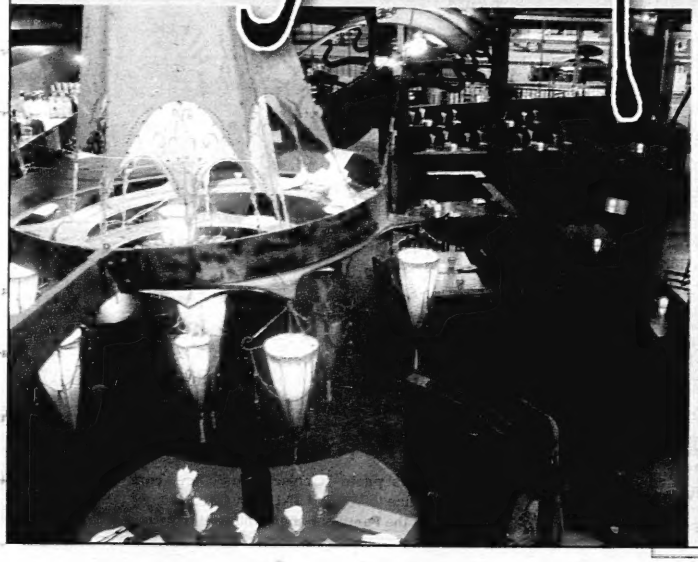

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— Saul Korman

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